SLAVES OF HOPE

"We are slaves of hope!"

That was the answer of the Rt. Rev. James Kauluma, when asked if he had any hope that Namibia would be brought to independence through the UN pre-implementation meeting in Geneva. Dr. Kauluma is the bishop of Namibia's Anglican Church and the president of the Council of Churches in Namibia. He spoke for himself to be sure, but he was also speaking for hundreds of thousands of other Christians in his country. They are all slaves of hope. The hope for success of that January meeting was not realized. The South African government saw to that. It imposed on its unwilling subjects another indefinite period of bloodshed, destruction, and tyranny. But the Namibians refuse to allow despair to become their master. They remain slaves of hope. At the end of the meeting, Rev. Paul Kauffenstein of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church. The latter three were invited by the Foreign Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany to consult with the German delegation, but Father Henning participated in practically all of the daily joint meetings of staff members of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. Both Catholics joined in the ecumenical prayer service at the Ecumenical Center.

NAMIBIA UPDATE

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Edward C. May

Church leaders were in Geneva under several auspices. Some were numbered among the official delegations of the South West Africa Peoples Organization and South Africa. Among the SWAPO delegates were: The Rev. Bartholomew Karuaera, president of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Namibia, the Rev. Sidney Witbooi, an AME pastor, the Rev. Joshua Hoebeb, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South West Africa, the Rev. Philip Tjerije, Editor of Immanuel, and Dr. Thomas Ihuhwa, medical director of Onandjokwe Hospital, now confined to practice in the Windhoek area. That kind of representation should lay to rest once and for all the allegation that SWAPO is nothing but a Marxist terrorist group.

There was one minister on South Africa's delegation, namely Rev. P. Kalangula, a renegade from the Anglican Church, who is the President of the DTA.

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Others came from the Council of Churches in Namibia. In addition to Bishop Kauluma, there was Dr. Albertus Maasdorp, the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, Dr. Kleopas Dumeni, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-kavango Church, Father Rudolf Koppmann, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, and Father H. Henning, a Catholic priest from Windhoek, and part time, the Rev. Paul Kauffenstein of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church. The latter three were
cease-fire and cooperate with the United Nations in the implementation of SC Resolution 435 and that the meeting failed because of South Africa's stonewalling, the question arises about the future. What's next? SWAPO announced that it has no choice but to continue the armed struggle on the one hand and the political process on the other. South Africa and the internal parties seem bent on the destruction of SWAPO by bombs since they have concluded they cannot defeat SWAPO by ballots. SWAPO has called on the international community to invoke comprehensive economic sanctions, including an oil embargo, against South Africa.

South Africa has enigmatically moved its 1982 elections from an earlier anticipated date in October 1981 to the end of April this year. Some speculate that if P.M. Pieter Botha is re-elected, he may risk letting go of Namibia. They believe that the reason for South Africa's hard line at Geneva was primarily for its own internal politics; the Prime Minister did not want to be accused of "turning Namibia over to the Communists." If this speculation has any validity at all, the scenario will call for increased bloodshed preceding the election in order to satisfy South Africa's need for macho. Even while the Geneva meeting was in progress, the South African Defense (sic) Force was bombing people in Angola, some of whom may even have been SWAPO troops, for according to many reports its bombing includes Angolans as well.

COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

South Africa is becoming increasingly uncomfortable about its involvement in this carnage, however. Its latest idea is to Namibianize the army. Young (15 years and over) Namibians are being conscripted to fight against their brothers in the liberation army. Enlistment started in earnest at the time of the Geneva meeting. The young men don't like the idea of fratricide, however, so they are fleeing the country in the biggest exodus since the aftermath of flogging in '73-74. More than 5000 went into exile in January 1981. These youth insist they are willing to fight for an independent Namibia but not for the perpetuation of an illegal regime. The conscription decree was proclaimed in October of 1980, and protested by the Council of Churches in a confidential letter to the State President a few weeks later. Its letter was simply acknowledged as received, so the CCN made it public after the Geneva meeting with the hope (again!) that South Africa would be responsive and revoke the decree.

South Africa, of course, has not reconsidered, but has increased its efforts to recruit. Reliable reports come out of Namibia that everything from deception to coercion is employed in the conscription process. It is no wonder the youth cross the borders into Botswana and Angola. The Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches are currently supplying $600,000 worth of tents, blankets, clothes, food, and medical supplies, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to care for these new exiles. Regrettably, some were reported killed as they fled, and then numbered among the "terrorists" in South Africa's daily count.

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS PROCEDURE

SWAPO's call for comprehensive economic sanctions must come before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The normal procedure will be that African members of the UNSC will introduce the resolution after the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has pledged its support. The OAU has called a special meeting from 23 February to 2 March in Addis Ababa to consider this matter. The question comes before the OAU at a time when drought prevails in East Africa and many African states are buying their food from South Africa, which has not experienced the severity of the drought to the same extent. Enforcement of sanctions would bring great hardship and hunger to the people of those
On every occasion in the past when sanctions were proposed against South Africa, they have been vetoed by the United States, the United Kingdom and France, three countries which have vast economic interests in South Africa. It is difficult to imagine that sanctions would not be vetoed again in spite of veiled threats by the Western group to support them. Margaret Thatcher has said something to the effect, "Don't count on us to save you (SA) by a veto." Spokesmen at the U.S. Mission said similar things, but that was before 20 January 1981. No direct statement has been made by the Reagan Administration, but its responses to El Salvador and South Korea, as well as various appointments, certainly imply that South Africa would be "protected" because of its anti-communist rhetoric, its strategic location and its mineral wealth. But voices must be raised against that implied position, for if Africans are ready to suffer for their brothers and sisters through the imposition of sanctions, how much more should we support this non-violent option!

ACTION REQUIRED

On the basis of this analysis, what can be done by concerned people who believe a cease-fire between South Africa and SWAPO, followed by free and fair elections under United Nations auspices, is the best way to bring Namibia to independence without more killing and destruction?

1974, thousands of youth fled Namibia to escape the oppression of that time, and to seek educational opportunities abroad. Since that time, the following prayer has been used in the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church every Sunday, and it takes on an increased meaning in the current crisis.

Our Father and Lord, ruler of all nations, you lead and govern the whole world with your power. We pray to you as great decisions concerning our country are being made by the nations. Help those who are responsible for resolving these questions to use their power according to your will and righteousness. Guard them from all evil thoughts and actions. Strengthen all proposals which aim at the good of your people, who have been saved through the blood of your Son and called to be your disciples and citizens of your kingdom.

Merciful Father, we praise you for your Gospel which in times past brought the message of peace to our people. We pray during this difficult time that you will renew us with your Gospel. Free us from greed and hatred and so restore peace among us. Liberate us from slavery to sin so that we may walk your ways. For your great name's sake help us all to be servants so that our nation may seek not only its own good but also the good of all people.

Christ, the hope of the world and ruler of all people, we pray to you for the youth of our country. Protect them and guide them in developing our nation and advancing its cause. In your mercy protect all who have crossed the borders, save them from every danger of body and soul, and make it possible for them to return to their country in peace.

Our Father and Lord, we intercede for all those whose beloved ones have left the country. Comfort them. Give them strength and courage to carry their loved ones in constant prayer. Help us all to humble ourselves before you. Give your peace.
among all nations and people as we await the coming of your kingdom.

Join in that prayer.

Submit yourself to the bondage of hope as the Namibian people have done. Join in their hope. Encourage them by expressions of solidarity. Remember that a portion of your gifts channeled through churches which are members of the Lutheran World Federation or the World Council of Churches are used to respond to the humanitarian needs of refugees and others who suffer for righteousness' sake. Send those gifts on their way in a spirit of love and with a prayer for the emergence of a just and humane society in that land.

POLITICAL ADVOCACY

Politically, now is the time to express your views to your congressional representatives. They need to know of the interest, concern and convictions of members of their constituencies, especially as new chairmen are being elected to the Africa subcommittees in the House and Senate and appointments are being made in the Department of State. Many who voted for President Reagan have said that it was out of domestic economic concerns and that they do not support a denigration of human rights and independence movements. Strong signals must be given to South Africa that its system of governmentally enforced racism and its continued illegal military occupation of Namibia are abhorrent to the values of American people in general and Christians in particular.

ECONOMIC ACTION

Economically, churches and individual Christians can do a variety of things to emphasize their dissatisfaction with the repressive policies and practices of the South African government and U.S. companies which accommodate themselves to them. At times stock is sold or shareholders resolutions are sponsored. Those who own stock should read their proxy statements carefully this spring, giving earnest consideration to supporting resolutions which call for such things as disclosure of business operations in South Africa, terminating sales to South Africa military or police, etc.

On the level of banking, churches and other advocates have had some success in halting loans to the South African government. This needs constant vigilance, however, because South Africa is constantly bidding for loans under the guise that they will assist in the development of housing for blacks, or similar causes. The hidden agenda is that any loan from foreign banks builds the illusion that the South African government is stable and that in turn will attract more foreign investment.

Some individuals feel that gold is a good investment and the South African government has a multi-million dollar public relations program underway to promote the sale of the Krugerrand. Those who want to invest in gold could consider it a good neighbor policy to favor coins from Canada or Mexico. At any rate, investment in South African gold supports the Apartheid system.

SLAVES OF HOPE

Prayer, Support, Political Advocacy, Economic Action. These can combine to demonstrate our solidarity with those who work for an independent, self-governing and peaceful Namibia where justice and equality can prevail.

Keep the faith. We are slaves of hope.