TERROR IN NAMIBIA

The state of terror in Namibia has been deepened with public floggings of hundreds of women and men in the remote northern tier area of Ovamboland. South African police have been detaining incommunicado and interrogating its suspected opponents and handing them over to puppet 'tribal authorities' for savage beatings in full view of the populace. The first victim was Mr. Johannes Nangutuula of the Democratic Cooperative Development Party, a man prominent in the 1971/72 general strike of black workers. The following day, 25 October, Mr. Andreeas Nuukwawo, executive member of the South West Africa People's Organization, was similarly flogged with the rib of a palm frond, a weapon as incisive as steel.

THE SUNDAY TRIBUNE of Durban, South Africa, in a dispatch from Windhoek, capital of Namibia, quotes the Anglican Suffragan Bishop of Damaraland, the Right Rev. Richard Wood, as saying 8 black male students received 20 lashes each; 4 women students were given 6 strokes each. The floggings were administered for such 'crimes' as referring to the country not as South West Africa but as Namibia. The bishop said: "It is impossible to say how many people have been flogged since it began. It runs into more than 100 that I know of - possibly 300 or 400."

Bishop Wood sought and received -- too late -- an order barring one flogging. The two political leaders were subsequently given permission to go to Windhoek to consult legal advisers. Meanwhile, THE JOHANNESBURG STAR reports two more SWAPO members, Mr. Mattheus Joseph (who went through the 1968 Pretoria Terrorism Trial and who has been detained since August of this year under emergency regulations still applying in Ovamboland) and Mr. Keshii Nathaniel were handed over by the South African Police to tribal authorities. Mr. Joseph was fined 50 Rand and sentenced to 20 lashes; Mr. Nathaniel's fate is unknown.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Write or wire your Senators and Congressmen to demand that the United States government protest to the South African government these acts it perpetrates in defiance of the United Nations and humanity.
- Send your demand to: Secretary of State Henry Kissinger
  Department of State
  Washington, D.C. 20520
- Protest directly to: Ambassador J.S.F. Botha
  South African Embassy
  3051 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
  Washington, D.C. 20008
- Support a legal aid fund for the Diocese of Damaraland's efforts to help pay legal costs to defend these innocent people.
  Send your contributions to:
  EPISCOPAL CHURCHMEN FOR SOUTH AFRICA
  14 West 11th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011
The Right Rev. Colin O'Brien Winter, Bishop of Damaraland-in-exile, who was on tour in the USA at the time of the atrocities, reacted with shock "Time and time again, headmen have demonstrated their subservience and compliance to the South African illegal regime by cowardly acts of which the recent floggings are but a part."

South African Prime Minister Balthazar Johannes Vorster continues to refuse comment, even though there was disturbed reaction among some of his domestic political opponents, from the world and despite upcoming United Nations Security Council discussion on continuing dialogue between the Secretary General and South Africa over the future of Namibia.

The International Commission of Jurists from its Geneva headquarters said: "The commission expresses its revulsion at the barbaric floggings which have been occurring in the Ovambo tribal area of Namibia...The South African Government must be held responsible for them."

Britisher Peter Fraenkel, who traveled in Ovamboland just prior to these atrocities, stated in a November 4 article in THE LONDON OBSERVER that he spoke with an Ovambo man identified only as a devout Anglican who told of the terror during the 1971/72 strike: "I was locked up in a steel-barred cage with 104 other men rounded up by the police at the same time as me. The cage wasn't big enough for everyone to lie down at night, so we took it in turns to sleep...We were in worse conditions than animals. The police thought I had helped to organize the strike and took me away twice to beat me and give me electric shocks. I was never charged with any offense, nor were any of the others. After 107 days they suddenly let me go."

The degeneracy of the South African regime and its contagion are nowhere more apparent than in the floggings in Ovamboland. The racist, totalitarian state and its all-powerful security police — usurpers defying both the United Nations and the Namibian people — have devised that its bantustan puppets administer public corporeal harm to Namibian women and men. Like Pilate, South African officials, after interrogation, turn over those they consider enemies to pampered and well-paid 'tribal authorities'.

Public floggings are intended to inspire fear among the Namibian people who have increasingly in vast numbers demonstrated their firm opposition to South African occupation and rule by hand-picked stooges, especially in Ovamboland in August where the people overwhelmingly boycotted elections rigged by South African authorities. The public beatings are an attempt to crush popular support for the South West Africa People's Organization of Namibia which has a field army fighting South African forces in the nearby Caprivi Strip.

South Africa strikes at the churches, particularly the Lutheran and the Anglican, which support the aspirations of the Namibian people for freedom and self-determination. The actions against Archdeacons Shilongo and Haukongo are the latest perpetrated on Anglicans: parishioners have been beaten and detained, one priest tortured, two successive bishops deported and a score of clergy and lay workers expelled.

By encouraging the floggings, South Africa creates hostility among the Namibian people, pitting black against black, so better to divide and rule. And, South Africa's white racist regime — which maintains one of the world's most sadistic secret police establishments — will say, you see what savages these blacks are, what a problem we have with them.