Dear Friends,

As you see from the articles in this Namibia Newsletter, it has been a busy summer. The "homecoming" of Abisai Shejavali to Wartburg was short, but good. He brought with him pictures of his family, reminisced about old times, and we talked about the present. In the enclosed article we share some of this with you.

Also in this issue is a report of Pastor Zephaniah Kameeta's visit to Minneapolis for the Festival of Worship and Witness, during which he received an honorary doctorate from Wartburg Seminary.

For years I have heard about this man. Considered a hero in a land where all people seem to be unusually courageous, Zephaniah Kameeta is almost larger than life.

Susie and Red Burchfield and I had the privilege of hosting Kameeta during his days in Minneapolis. From the first time we met, through his busy schedule, I wished that each word could have been recorded. His intelligence, his humor, and his wisdom were evident in every conversation. One was constantly aware of his deep Christian faith. He is a man of uncompromising honesty and integrity.

And still, in this brilliant, profound man, I sensed genuine humility, a characteristic not often found among leaders. It was a rare honor to spend time with Zephaniah Kameeta.

I have just returned from an ALC Women's Leadership Training Seminar in Kenosha, Wisconsin. I was tremendously encouraged by the eagerness and energies that are being poured into the struggle by the women who attended the Namibia Conference at Wartburg.

Most of them were first introduced to the subject last March. Most had never before been involved in advocacy. Yet the fervor with which they are working is an inspiration. Resolutions, letters to President Reagan and to President Preus, letters about the IMF loan, letters of support to Namibian church leaders—all are being sent in impressive numbers. Several had called their congressional representatives; one had visited her Senator during a trip to Washington. Another was sending letters to congregations suggesting resources for a program on Namibia. They have made posters, with maps and statistics, which are being circulated among the women's groups.

Significant things can be accomplished when Christians answer the call to seek justice for the oppressed in God's world.

In Christ,

Solveig Kjeseth

for the Namibia Concerns Committee

August, 1983

"NO LIGHT IN THE TUNNEL" SAYS NAMIBIAN CHURCHMAN

There is no light now in the long, dark tunnel of life in Namibia, according to the Rev. Zephaniah Kameeta, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southwest Africa.

Speaking to North American Lutherans gathered in Minneapolis for the inter-Lutheran Festival of Worship and Witness, Kameeta said, "There have been glimmers of light and hope in the tunnel of humiliation, despair, and degradation, but the tiny lights go out each time apartheid is supported." Now that the United States government is quite openly supportive of South Africa, hope for freedom in Namibia seems further away than ever.

"God's miracle in Namibia is that the church is still alive, very alive, exciting, and filled with servants. The work and the life of the church belong to the Lord of the church, even in times of tribulation."

Kameeta describes the apartheid system as "not only sin, but a form of violence, regarding people as God's mistakes in creation. It is not entirely political, but pseudo-religious. White people are regarded as the crown of God's creation, blacks as the flaw of creation. It is not only an ideology, but a reality that is killing people daily, and it is practised in the name of Jesus Christ."

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During a question-answer forum, Kameeta was asked his opinion about divestment from South African related corporations. He indicated that this is a question that we must ask ourselves. "Why do you ask me, a Namibian? Did the United States ask the people of Poland before they imposed economic sanctions on their country? Did they ask the people of Argentina? Of Afghanistan? Of Iran?" (Eds. note: It is against South African law for a person to speak in favor of divestment or economic sanctions.) Kameeta stated that opponents of divestiture often argue that it will be the poor black worker who will suffer if corporations withdraw. "Do you really believe that the corporations are there to benefit the poor black worker? Isn't it more likely that they are there because of the profits to be made under the apartheid system? I am surprised that divestment is even a problem."

Pastor Kameeta contrasted the U.S. attitude toward southern Africa with that toward Poland. "When martial law is imposed in Poland it causes hysteria here. Yet the most restrictive kind of martial law has existed for years in Namibia. If a woman's time to give birth comes after the 6 p.m. curfew, no one can go for help. Her husband must try to help her until curfew has ended."

Asked about "keeping politics out of the pulpit", Kameeta responded that there are two standards in South Africa. "Preaching an ideology that is an attack on communism is considered 'pure Gospel'. But to condemn oppression is considered 'politics' and is criticized."

It remains to be seen what South Africa's reaction will be to this courageous Christian who, on behalf of his suffering people, "says what needs to be said." Pastor Kameeta has been arrested twice, and is currently under attack by the South African pres. Letters of support and concern should be sent to:

Dr. Zephaniah Kameeta, Vice-President
Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa
P.O. Box 5069
Windhoek 9000
Namibia/South West Africa

NEW BOOK COMPARES
APARTHEID AND NAZIISM

We call your attention to a new book. Apartheid: South African Nazism by Rev. Sipo Mzimela which explores the spiritual linkage between the two regimes, and the evil that both still cast across the world. Father Mzimela, who as a young man fled South Africa, is now an Anglican priest in the United States. This book studies the role of the churches under the Hitler regime, and compares this to the role of the churches in South Africa. The reactions among church people under both regimes are strikingly similar. Father Mzimela also discusses the acquiescence among church members in Western countries, and the ties that transnational corporations and Western governments maintain with South Africa.

Available from: Episcopal Churchmen for South Africa
Room 1005
853 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

Cost: $8.50 plus postage.

ABISAI SHEJAVALI'S JUNE VISIT RENEWS FRIENDSHIPS, HEIGHTENS CONCERNS

Abisai Shejavali came back to Wartburg in June for a quick, one-day visit. It was good to see him, yet the striking red bandana he wore around his neck reminded all of us of the harsh reality of the Namibian situation.

"Blood continues to be shed," said Dr. Abisai Shejavali, secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia, a country in Southern Africa, "and my scarf is a symbol to North American people that they participate in that blood shedding because they continue to support South Africa."

Shejavali, who received his divinity degree from Wartburg Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Aquinas Institute, lived in Dubuque for 7 years, with his family from 1971-78.

In his remarks to a group of about fifty friends who gathered for a supper in his honor, he brought greetings from his wife Selma, and their four daughters, who he said miss Dubuque a great deal. This is particularly true, he said, because the war situation in Namibia continues to worsen.

"The war doesn't allow us to participate fully in life," he stated. "This war, forced on us by the South African government, affects the entire life of the Namibian people and there is great suffering taking place."

Shejavali's work with the Council of Churches in Namibia has recently been recognized because of the brave and outspoken stance of those five church bodies (Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal) in an open letter to South Africa and the "western contact group". (See the last "Namibia Newsletter," May 1983, for the complete text.)
SOUTH AFRICA PROPAGANDA MACHINE REMAINS EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN U.S.

As the grim facts of life under South Africa's brutal system of apartheid become known, people in this country discover that Hitler's ideas and policies are practiced every day in Namibia and South Africa. The reaction is anger, and a demand that the system be changed.

South Africa stands isolated; world opinion is overwhelmingly against the continued repression and extermination of its citizens. South Africa has, according to Newsweek magazine (March 21, 1983), only one main ally left—the United States.

In a desperate effort to mislead the American people and retain support for their policies, South Africa is engaged in a multi-million dollar propaganda blitz in this country. As people concerned about the suffering in Namibia and South Africa, we need to be aware of what the government of South Africa is doing in their attempt to deceive us. Following are a few examples of the pervasiveness of their efforts.

1) Newsweek magazine (March 28, 1983) published the following: "A Reagan Alumnus on South Africa's Team." Stuart Spencer, who has served as an adviser to Ronald Reagan in a number of capacities over the years, has registered as a lobbyist for South Africa. In return for $150,000 a year, Spencer's public relations firm will help the South African government promote its policies on Namibia. The contract calls for Spencer to assist South African officials "in establishing close links" with U.S. officials, members of Congress and their staffs. The South African government also retains two well-connected law firms— one Republican, one Democratic—to represent its interests in Washington.

2) One of the "well-connected" law firms that the above article refers to might be that of Marion H. Smoak and Carl H. Shipley. These men, who on September 2, 1980, registered with the U.S. Department of Justice as Foreign Agents working on behalf of another government, seem to be tireless in their efforts to deceive the American people.

We became aware of their work when the "letters to the editor" columns in the Dubuque paper and in a small town paper in Illinois contained letters supposedly signed by persons in Namibia. After we challenged the authenticity of the signatures, further letters have appeared, now signed by Marion Smoak. In one he denied being an agent; however, we have photocopies of his registration papers in which he attests that he will use newspapers, films, pamphlets, lectures, TV, and advertising campaigns to disseminate political propaganda.

We know that letters from Smoak or Shipley have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the Philadelphia Enquirer, the Columbus, Ohio Dispatch, as well as in several smaller papers.

In an article printed in Africa News, Smoak boasted of his sophisticated computer system containing the names of thousands of "opinion makers" in this country, educators, legislators, newspaper editors, businessmen. He explained how easy it was to send letters geared to the vested interests of particular groups.

3) Recently the president of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, received a letter which, though it was personally addressed, had apparently been sent to many "leaders of America's important educational institutions." The president was asked to "circulate this letter and the information it contains" to faculty and students.
The letter, purportedly written by a black Namibian member of the government of South West Africa/Namibia, is a transparent propaganda smear against the Namibian independence movement, SWAPO. Repeatedly raising the spectre of communism, and appealing to U.S. self-interest, i.e., access to oil and other valuable minerals, the letter is full of blatant lies.

Two examples: It insists that the status of Namibia as a colony mandated to South Africa still continues today. The truth is that the United Nations, with the full support of the United States, revoked that mandate in 1966. In 1971, the World Court upheld this revocation and ruled that South African presence in Namibia was illegal. Clearly, Namibia is no longer mandated to South Africa.

The letter also states that "South Africa has already agreed to our independence...SWAPO has constantly blocked any plan which would provide a fair and free election." Again, it is a matter of public record that it was South Africa that walked out of the U.N. talks in Geneva in January, 1981, when SWAPO had agreed to an immediate cease fire and free elections.

We know these things, but how many college presidents will have followed the Namibia question closely enough to recognize the dishonesty of the letter?

4) Another indication that South Africa will go to any lengths to improve its image in this country, is the amount of money it is spending to open new consulates in various cities. We have followed some of the activities of Mr. Gert Grobler, South African Consul General based in Chicago. He was actively fighting against the Michigan State bill that called for divestiture from companies doing business in South Africa. He very smoothly "presented the case for South Africa" in a debate at Wartburg College. He flew to Minneapolis for a meeting with ALC officials. And recently we received clipping from the Minot, North Dakota, newspaper. A large picture of our friend, Mr. Grobler "providing instruction" to a sixth grade class at Edison Elementary School in Minot!! The article which accompanied the photo was nothing but a South African propaganda piece, full of lies and half truths. It is incredible that, in the heart of Lutheran North Dakota, this man should be allowed to spread his propaganda in the schools and in the press without anyone challenging him.

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg, but they indicate what we are up against. The forces of evil are strong...and they have money! We would like to ask your help in combating them. If you see articles in your newspaper, if you hear that representatives of South Africa are planning to speak, if you receive any of the many publications prepared by the South African Embassy, or the U.S. South West Africa/Namibia Trade and Cultural Council, please let us know and send us copies. We would like to see that some truthful information is presented to counteract the propaganda.

Certainly it is a David vs. Goliath effort. We have no money, they have millions. But it is an effort which must be made, and, eventually, we believe that truth is a power that will triumph.