POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE CLOUDS
NAMIBIAN CELEBRATIONS

Euphoria over SWAPO's victory gave way to fear in many sections of the North, as former members of South Africa's "security forces" took revenge on known SWAPO supporters.

Describing the situation as "tense, with people being beaten and stabbed by DTA supporters," Bishop Kleopas Dumeni appealed to the South African Administrator General to restore "law and order."

After a relatively peaceful election process, the violence began as the election results were announced on 15 November. Random attacks on individuals wearing SWAPO colors soon resulted in 28 persons being admitted to hospitals.

Local South West African Police officials, seem unwilling or unable to curb the violence, their apathy supported by a statement from the Administrator General that the situation "did not give cause for alarm."

The attacks have steadily continued, with new reports of violence each day. Following the deaths of nine Namibians on November 25th and 26th, Dr. Abisai Shanjivali accused the South West African Police (SWAPOL) of being in collusion with these "vigilantes" who are apparently former members of South Africa's counter-insurgency force, Koevoet.

The notorious Koevoet unit was officially demobilized from SWAPOL last month, but UN monitors have confirmed that since the election, Koevoets have been attacking SWAPO supporters.

Indeed, observers accuse South Africa of leaving behind a local territorial army, even including some South African officers at bases in the Kaoko and Caprivi regions. In addition, the UN has reported UNITA activity (the Angolan rebel group backed by South Africa and the U.S.) in the Kavango area with links to the DTA and Koevoet.
A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

It is a time of rejoicing in Namibia.

We can only begin to imagine the happiness in the hearts of our Namibian friends this Christmas season. Their sons and daughters are home from exile, new lives are beginning! For the first time in their lives they have voted in a real election, a new nation is being born! The convention has begun to draft a constitution, a new sense of Namibian unity is beginning to blossom!

Of course there are still enormous problems to be dealt with in this new nation.

- Former Koevoet still roam the North. Ignorant, afraid and bitter, having been “used” by South Africa, they continue to attack and destroy the people and places that are symbolic of the “free Namibia.” Reconciliation will be arduous and painful.

- A government will have to be organized, a difficult task in this complex world. A society which cares for its own people must rise from the ashes of exploitation.

- The economy must be rescued from the bankruptcy that South Africa has bequeathed to this new nation.

And on and on . . .

But in spite of these difficulties there is rejoicing!

For many of us, the Advent/Christmas season is a special time of the church year—a time when we are reminded of God’s love and concern for the weak, the powerless, the “little ones” of this world. During these weeks, we read the promises of the Old Testament prophets.

This year, during Advent, the Namibian Christians are gathering in their churches, as they have done for a hundred years, to hear the familiar passages read:

From Isaiah 40: “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended…”

From Isaiah 62: “The nations shall see your vindication...you shall no more be termed Forsaken and your land shall no more be called Desolate…”

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:5

From Jeremiah 23: “Then I will gather the remnant of my flock...and bring them back to their fold. I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more...neither shall any be missing.”

Even from this distance, one can almost hear the singing of thanksgiving, one can almost see the tears of happiness, one can almost feel the toes start tapping as the dancing begins!

Let us join in their rejoicing...and then let us commit ourselves to work with them in the difficult tasks of reconciliation and rebuilding.

Solveig Kjeseth
For a week in November, it seemed as if time were standing still. Namibia watchers all over the world held their breath as the balloting began on November 7th.

As the days of voting wore on, there were fewer and fewer reports of difficulties with the process, and almost no incidents of election violence. National Public Radio reporters began to comment that “the whole world should take an example from the Namibian people” for the seriousness with which they took their voting responsibilities and the patience and determination they showed in overcoming numerous obstacles in order to cast their ballots.

Ralston Deffenbaugh, director of the Lutheran Office for World Community, who currently is serving as a legal advisor for the Lutheran churches in Namibia, reported that “Countrywide, the elections went peacefully. Voter turnout was fantastic—96% of those registered actually voted. In Ovamboland, the turnout was approximately 98%. Only 8,532 ballots were spoiled, a remarkably low number given Namibia’s high illiteracy rate and the fact that this was the first time that most Namibians had voted.”

Obstacles to “free and fair”

Several conditions were of concern to election observers who saw them as continuing barriers to a truly “free and fair” election. These included:

(a) the intimidating presence of Koevoet and former SADF soldiers continued to be felt right through the voting process;
(b) the election law itself was published only a week before the voting began, giving organizers little time to educate prospective voters;
(c) the ballot was complicated, and for the many illiterate voters the party symbols were confusing. For example, three of the parties had chosen symbols usually associated with SWAPO;
(d) the low number of polling places meant that voters had to travel long distances and wait for hours in the broiling sun in order to vote.
(e) registration law, which permitted thousands of non-residents to vote in Namibia were obviously not “fair.”

Perhaps one of the most infuriating examples of South Africa’s attempts to influence the elections were the planeloads of South African residents who arrived to vote (for the DTA) at a polling station right at the Windhoek airport. With return flights to Johannesburg already scheduled, the white South Africans were dismayed to discover a delay caused by black Namibians in the voting lines.

The second day of voting found two lines—one for black Namibians who were instructed to let the whites go first lest they miss their return flights! It is hard to imagine the arrogance of the apartheid mentality! Complaints to the UN remedied the situation on the third day.

Long lines of voters wait patiently to cast their ballots.

Photo by John Liebenberg
Election results certified by the UN

Deffenbaugh reported: "The first district results began coming over the radio Monday morning (November 13, 1989) from the smaller southern districts. By midnight all districts were in except Ovamboland and Kavango. These partial results gave the DTA a 43% - 53% lead over SWAPO.

"At Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital in the north, the atmosphere was one of depression and fear. "Does this mean they will come to kill us again?" the nurses asked. "Does this mean that the makakunyas (literally "bone-pickers" a derogatory term referring to the black members of the South African army and police) will come back?" Little wonder than at the people's joy when the Ovamboland and Kavango results were broadcast late Tuesday morning. There was shouting and dancing and ululation.

"The following election results for the Constituent Assembly were officially announced on November 14, 1989.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>SEATS</th>
<th>VOTES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACN-Action Christian National</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA-Christian Democratic Action</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTA-Democratic Turnhalle Alliance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>191,532</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCN-Federal Convention/Namibia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,452</td>
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<td>NNDP-Namibia National Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>NNF-Namibia National Front</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5,344</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPF-National Patriotic Front</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,693</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWAPO-D-SWAPO Democrats</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,161</td>
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<td>SWAPO-SWAPO of Namibia</td>
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<td>384,567</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDF-United Democratic Front</td>
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<td>37,874</td>
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</table>

TOTALS: 72 670,830

"Shortly after the announcement, UN Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari certified the election, stating that he was satisfied that the election had been free and fair in compliance with the requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 435. Ahtisaari said that the election had "given the whole world a shining lesson in democracy."

Constituent Assembly begins deliberations

Amid an atmosphere of goodwill and accommodation, the Constituent Assembly held its first meeting on November 21st, in the Tintenpalast, the main government building in Windhoek and once seat of the German colonial government.

Lutheran Deputy Bishop, Zephania Kameeta, opened the meeting with prayer, thanking God for having been with the Namibian people throughout the painful time of oppression, and asking God's blessing on the work of the Assembly.

Six of the SWAPO candidates elected to the 72-member Assembly are ordained ministers, reflecting the church's involvement in the liberation struggle. In addition to Kameeta, Dean Matti Amadhila and Rev. Heikki Hausiku are Lutheran pastors. SWAPO vice-president, Hendrik Witbooi and Rev. Willum Konjore are leaders in the African Methodist Episcopal church, and the Rev. Danie Botha was ordained by the Dutch Reformed Church. (Perhaps because of his outspoken opposition to apartheid, Botha has not served in a Dutch Reformed church.)
SWAPO's director of elections and former director of the UN's Namibia Institute in Zambia, Hage Geingob, was elected to chair the Assembly.

After a few days of sparring between the DTA and SWAPO, the Constituent Assembly appears to be making significant progress; indeed some observers believe that agreement on a constitution will come relatively quickly, enabling Namibians to celebrate their independence before the April 1, 1990, goal.

Both SWAPO and the DTA have submitted their draft constitutions to a standing committee which will isolate the areas of difference and report back to the Assembly by December 11th. While there are certain differences, both constitutions call for an independent judiciary and a strong bill of rights.

Some final observations

With the certification of elections and the convening of the Constituent Assembly, the Namibian nation moves forward on its long journey to independence. We share in their rejoicing!

Election observers report that it was a thrilling experience to be present in Namibia at this historic moment.

The eagerness of all Namibians to vote, and especially the determination on the part of thousands of Namibia's elderly to play a role in their nation's future was an inspiration to all observers. They told of old women, bent nearly double, trudging through the hot sand, ignoring the jibes of DTA supporters, overcoming their fear of South African officials, in order to put their thumbprint in the proper box.

The painful journey toward independence, toward economic autonomy, toward freedom of expression and individual human rights is by no means over. In fact, it perhaps becomes more complex, more difficult as the Namibians begin the arduous task of rebuilding their society and building a new nation.

Formidable obstacles lie in their path. There is no money to run the government...South Africa has emptied the coffers. Decades of war have damaged the fabric of family life and left divisions and suspicion among the people. (Certainly SWAPO lost some of the support it had had among the ethnic groups in the south because of the “detainee issue” which continues to fester.) South Africa leaves behind thousands of bitter, uneducated “makakunyas,” many of whom are armed. Reports indicate that South Africa has appointed hundreds of new “Game Wardens” in the north—apparently the new disguise for Koevoet.

No, the path is still difficult. We, our churches and our government need to provide support of all kinds so that through the years the new Namibia may emerge as a land of peace and justice.

“We Namibians have passed our examination. After decades of violence and suffering, of foreign occupation and violations of human rights, we have finally been able to determine our own future in a democratic, free and fair election. We thank God. We rejoice and are happy. We give thanks for the prayers of Christians inside Namibia and around the world. I ask that your prayers continue. God answers prayer. ‘Happy are those who work for peace.’ (Mt. 5:9)”.

Lutheran Bishop Kleopas Dumeni
1989 has been a momentous year for Namibia!

Namibia’s twenty-two year war for independence has come to an end. Over 40,000 exiles have returned to their homes and families. For the first time in history, a genuine election was held—and 97% of eligible voters participated!

A year ago, we would not have believed this possible!

Credit must first be given to the Namibian people for their courage, and determination and faith. But we are also sure that the letters and calls from concerned citizens to the U.S. government and members of Congress, calling attention to Namibia and its illegal occupation by South Africa, helped to bring about this day.

We thank all of you who have made these efforts on behalf of our sisters and brothers in Namibia.

And now we ask that you continue! The struggle is not over!

What can we do?

Please take a few minutes during the Christmas holidays and New Year to write to President Bush, the U.S. State Department, and your congressional representatives. Tell them about the obstacles faced by Namibians as they begin to build their nation. Ask that the United States pledge full support to Namibia, diplomatically and financially. Urge that this country commit significant funds for the development of a free Namibia.

Contact:

President George Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Secretary of State James Baker
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
CHURCH COUNCIL SEeks REPORT ON DIVESTMENT

CHICAGO (ELCA)—Church Council members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America criticized the manner in which the ELCA Board of Pensions has handled the divestment issue and authorized a "working group" to prepare a comprehensive report on the situation for the April meeting of the Church Council.

The report will "describe possible options for implementing" the action of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly last August which called for divestment of all direct and indirect investments by the Board of Pensions in companies doing business in South Africa by September 1991.

At its October meeting the Board of Pensions had recommended to the Church Council that the action of the churchwide assembly not be implemented.

"I am disgusted by the political ineptitude of the Board of Pensions in handling this issue," said the Rev. Lowell Almen, ELCA Secretary. He said he does have some sympathy for the pension board members and realizes that there are pressures from both those who want immediate divestment and those who have real fears about what divestment may mean for their future security.

Sean McMillan of New York, a representative to the Church Council from the Lutheran Youth Organization, expressed concerns about continued investment in South Africa. "There is something wrong with a church that does not see this as a moral issue," he said.

Meanwhile, the Church Council said it expects the Board of Pensions to make "significant progress toward divestment" by the April meeting and urged the board to make no new investments in companies doing business in South Africa.

NEW STAFF IN DENVER AND Dubuque

During the last months of "pre-election" activity, NNC has been fortunate to have the help of three new people. In Dubuque, Alice Martin, a retired "special ed" teacher, is assisting Ilah Weiblen in meeting resource needs and generating legislative advocacy.

In Denver, volunteer Barbara Griffin, mother of two pre-schoolers, is hard at work keeping the mailing list current, while Brenda Carter, a volunteer with the Lutheran Servant Corps, is organizing a rapid-response network.

Our thanks to these women and to all who have spent hours and energy on the Namibia issue.

ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

Persons in the Blanchardville, Wisconsin, area are perhaps the best informed in the nation on issues of Namibia, thanks to the untiring efforts of Ruth Jorenby. For the last six years, Ruth has seized every opportunity to tell the story of Namibia.

By writing reports for her church's monthly newsletter, and by regularly producing in-depth opinion pieces for the local Blanchardville Blade, Ruth has provided comprehensive coverage of Namibia issues.

Since news from Namibia is usually ignored by our public media, we need to use these alternative means of educating the public. Once more we are grateful for the example of Ruth Jorenby!

And in Sudbury, Connecticut, Laura Weiblen, a young employee of a neighborhood video store noticed her boss was about to stock the "Red Scorpion" movie. Objecting that this movie was filmed in an occupied Namibia, with the assistance of the South African army, and that it was a thinly disguised propaganda piece glorifying the activities of UNITA, Laura was able to convince her employer not to carry "Red Scorpion."

Laura's courage to speak out on the Namibia issue is a reflection of the activities of her mother, Barbara, and the passion of her grandmother, Ilah Weiblen. Three generations of Namibia activists!

CELEBRATE THE ELECTIONS WITH A NEW T-SHIRT!

National Namibia Concerns has a new t-shirt design! On the upper left front, the new shirts have a strand of barbed wire and the words "Free Namibia." Centered on the back is an outline map of Africa, with Namibia highlighted.

The shirts come in red, green, royal blue, navy, grey and white, in sizes Small to XXLarge.

These may be ordered either from the Denver office or from Dubuque. Cost: $8.00 plus $1.00 for shipping.
"Nation-building will be a deepened, intensified form of the struggle for Namibian liberation. The simple 'good-guys, bad-guys' segment is behind us." So political science experts in this country and in Africa warn Namibians and their friends as the Constituting Convention opens and the light at the end of Namibia's liberation tunnel shines beckoningly.

The Devils Are Among Us, the new book by Herbststein and Evenson is no handbook for nation building, but it is indispensable reading for those who want to clear their minds of romantic illusions as they look toward the first decade of Namibia's life as a free nation.

The first chapter, titled, "Give Us Back a Dwelling Place," sketches Namibia's tragic existence from 1945-80. The remaining five chapters concentrate on the tumultuous decade just past, when the stakes in "the war for Namibia" were raised: the role of SWAPO and the churches as twin poles in the liberation struggle; the years of terror inaugurated by the founding of the counter-insurgency force, Kevoet (Crowbar in Afrikaans); the oppression of the people in the North and their invincible endurance; the plundering of Namibia's resources by transnationals based in England, the U.S., France, Germany and Canada (the "Gang of Five" according to Herbststein and Evenson); the bankruptcy of the Reagan policy of "Constructive Engagement"; the boomerang of the "Cuban Linkage"; the victory of Angola and Cuba at Cuito Cuanavale in the colonial war with South Africa where "not to win is to lose."

It's all there, the tough, brutal and victorious last decade in Namibia. It would seem all neatly packaged and tied with a bow now that SWAPO has won a majority and the Constituting Convention has begun.

Yet any notion of the tidy end of things is illusion. The forces which struggled in the war for Namibia are still present, even if the theatre of struggle has changed. Weeks after the election, Kevoet forces are still intimidating northern Namibians (unofficially, of course). The new government in Namibia will still have to negotiate relationships with the powerful transnationals who have exploited Namibia's minerals, land and fisheries. They will have to deal with the governments which stand behind the transnationals. South Africa still holds Walvis Bay, and controls communications, transportation and commerce.

Namibians and their friends cannot afford to see this book, The Devils Are Among Us, as past history. At a time when reconciliation, new beginnings, cooperation and compromise must be the method of operation, it is still important to remember who the enemy was...and still might be. This book helps us do that.

Peter Kjeseth