

While the churches of the United States have not been silent on the Namibian situation in past months, no formal update has appeared from the Office on World Community. This has been due to a variety of factors, but two have been most significant. The first is that news about southern Africa in general, and Zimbabwe and Namibia in particular, has been given wide coverage by the media. National news programs, weekly magazines and many daily newspapers have chronicled the fast-moving events in that area of the world. The second is that church periodicals have also reported on relevant material on Namibia, especially when Dr. Robert Marshall and Dr. David Preus returned from their visit.

There is another reason, however, and that has to do with the fluidity of the situation and our hesitancy to interpret actions which may lose their relevance by the next week! Add to this the time required to build relationships in new administrations in the U.S. government, which will be highlighted later in this article, and in the Office of the Commissioner for Namibia, where Mr. Martti Ahtisaari has succeeded Sean MacBride. Under such circumstances, it is understandable why normal routines are slowed down.

A brief summary of events since May, 1976, provide background for the present situation.

# NAMIBIA

MEMORANDUM  
LUTHERAN COUNCIL IN THE U.S.A.  
300 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10010

NAMIBIA UPDATE  
EDWARD C. MAY, DIRECTOR  
OFFICE ON WORLD COMMUNITY  
LUTHERAN WORLD MINISTRIES  
31 JULY 1977

## CHURCH ACTIONS

In May, 1976, the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. and the Johnson Foundation co-convened the Wingspread Conference on Namibia. The report of that conference has now been distributed, primarily by the Johnson Foundation, to over 20,000 persons including leaders in all branches of the U.S. government, in labor and management positions of major U.S. corporations, and in all non-governmental organizations represented at the United Nations. The Wingspread Conference endorsed completely U.N. Security Council Resolution 385 of 30 January 1976, which calls upon South Africa to withdraw its administration from Namibia; to release all political prisoners, and permit the return of exiles without penalty, so that they may participate in free elections under United Nations supervision and control. The Wingspread Conference anticipated that South Africa would continue to promote its illegitimate, puppet-run

constitutional conference in Windhoek (Turnhalle Talks) as an authentic expression of the will of the Namibian people. The Wingspread Conference called for the rejection of any decision of the Turnhalle Talks since those who participated in it were not elected representatives of the Namibian people. Finally, if South Africa did not comply with S.C. Resolution 385 in an acceptable manner, the Wingspread Conference urged the United States to make the judgment that the continued presence of South Africa is a threat to international peace and security and call for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.

THIS HAS BEEN AND REMAINS THE CONVICTION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES IN THE U.S.A. AS WELL AS THE LEADERSHIP OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF OTHER CHRISTIAN GROUPS, AS INDICATED BY THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS.

## LUTHERAN REAFFIRMATION

On 19 October 1976, the United States vetoed a draft resolution which would have invoked an arms embargo against South Africa for its non-compliance with S.C. Resolution 385. The Office on World Community protested that action by letter to U.N. Ambassador Scranton and challenged the U.S. to initiate some constructive program of action in behalf of the Namibians rather than to simply react negatively to proposals offered by others. The letter was affirmed by the Executive Committee of Lutheran Council-USA on 16 November and thus went on record again in

support of the Wingspread recommendations.

It is appropriate to mention here that Dr. Robert Marshall and Dr. David Preus, upon their return from fraternal visits to the churches in South Africa and Namibia on 6 April 1977, stressed the resentment felt by the Namibians in Ovamboland because of the presence of the South African army. They also emphasized the need for economic reforms. Both agreed that there should be no further investment by U.S. corporations in South Africa or Namibia.

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## ECUMENICAL AFFIRMATION

On 7-11 March 1977, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the United States Catholic Conference convened a consultation on "The Church and Southern Africa" in which Namibian church leaders took part. The recommendations of that consultation to North American churches generally coincided with Lutheran policies and positions, but in some instances expanded on them or addressed new developments. The responsible units for responding to these recommendations will study these recom-

mendations at their next meeting. They include:

1. A call for legislation by the U.S. government to prohibit U.S. firms from further development of a nuclear capability by the South African government.
2. Supply resources of people and money to support the Institute for Social Advancement, an educational agency designed to serve inside Namibia as a voluntary counterpart to the United Nations Institute in Lusaka.
3. Support Namibia's claim to Walvis Bay.

## SIXTH ASSEMBLY--LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

At the Dar es Salaam meeting the delegates addressed southern Africa issues in a variety of ways. Key paragraphs from several resolutions follow.

*"It is noted by this Assembly that progress has been made in Namibia regarding the fellowship between the three Lutheran churches there in the decision of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church to join a United Evangelical Lutheran Church with the expressed understanding that the GELC is also willing to take part in merger negotiations. Likewise it is noted that the synod of UELCSA at its meeting just two weeks ago has resolved to establish a commission to actively explore with the other Lutheran churches in Southern Africa the possibilities of further Lutheran unity. Remembering the difficulties that have attended such moves in the past and recognizing the ever-present possibility for new tensions, the Assembly notes the continuing encouragement from LWF and others that all who are concerned particularly where hesitation might still linger, to boldly continue such efforts, thereby witnessing to the communion of all races."*

*(From the Preamble, Southern Africa Resolution)*

*"Under normal circumstances Christians may have different opinions in political questions. However, political and social systems might become perverted and oppressive so that to reject them and to work for change is consistent with the confession."*

*"We especially appeal to our white member churches in southern Africa to recognize that the situation in southern Africa constitutes a status confessionis. This means that on the basis of faith and in order to manifest the unity*

*of the church, churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system."*

*(From section on Confessional Integrity--Southern Africa Resolution)*

*"...that the LWF continue to seek to establish clarity on the fellowship of all Christians on the basis of Lutheran theological thinking including the practical consequences for a public witness of the churches. This clarification must reject any biblical argumentation in support of apartheid, whether expressly stated or not, as well as any such argumentation based on the first article of the creed."*

*(From Southern Africa Resolution)*

*"With regard to the Republic of South Africa specifically, it is recommended:*

*i. that the Assembly call upon its member churches to recognize that from the viewpoint of Lutheran theology, the present government of South Africa has consistently violated the proper role of government and of law in relation to basic human rights;*

*ii. that the LWF and its member churches especially those in Southern Africa and their partner churches overseas publicly support those calling for change which will ensure universal suffrage; and*

*iii. that the member churches avoid anything that could give the impression that the churches support racism and injustice."*

*(From Southern Africa Resolution)*

*"Human rights violations still persist on all continents. Since we are meeting on African soil, we are particularly aware of the suffering of human beings on this continent. We are certainly saying nothing new when we express*

our concern and our protest about the continuing threat to human dignity and the manifold violations of human rights by the white minority in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. But, we cannot keep silent about the fact that a number of industrialized nations through their manifold links with South Africa are closely involved with the present system and, therefore, bear significant co-responsibility.

"Our advocacy of human rights in Southern Africa also obliges us to take an equally emphatic stand in favour of human dignity in the whole

of Africa. We have been confronted with frightening news also from some independent African states. We share the shock of world opinion about the boundless atrocities in Uganda. We are in the paradoxical situation that public advocacy of human rights also provokes retaliation against those on whose behalf we would like to speak. This sad statement applies not only to the African continent. We have heard about numerous violations of human rights in many nations of our earth, which touch the participants in our conference."  
(From Human Rights Resolution)

#### THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

During the past year the interventions with the U.S. government in behalf of the Namibian people have been with two administrations. The stance of the Carter Administration is much more congenial to the African positions our churches have been advocating. There has been a change in direction as evidenced by the repeal of the Byrd Amendment and Vice-president Mondale's firm stand against apartheid and for majority rule. Human rights have been opened up to public discussion and related to foreign policy. From 16-21 May, Andrew Young attended a United Nations sponsored International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia. He addressed the Conference at the very time that Mr. Mondale was meeting with Mr. Vorster and this made for an awkward situation. Mr. Young sought to build credibility for the United States by emphasizing that in the context of African policy the Carter Administration was not only new, but it was different, and that its policies would be a more authentic

reflection of the attitudes of the American people. Unfortunately Mr. Young compared the struggle for liberation and self-determination in southern Africa too closely with the civil rights movement in the U.S. and invested too much confidence in the willingness of business and industry to bring about constructive change. Sharp criticism came from leaders of the liberation movements and from the chairman of the U.N. Special Committee Against Apartheid, Ambassador Leslie O. Harriman of Nigeria who said, "We are not talking about improving the lot of Africans. We are talking about liberation."

The Conference in Maputo did two things for the Zimbabwean and Namibian people. In biblical parlance, it "lengthened the cords and strengthened the stakes" of international support. Ninety-two nations participated and only a few western powers expressed reservations about the comprehensive Plan of Action which was adopted by consensus.

#### U.S. GOVERNMENT "AFRICA TEAM"

International Bulletin of 20 June 1977 makes the following report:

"Richard Moose has replaced Kissinger's appointee, William Schaufele, as Assistant Secretary for Africa. The Washington Post reported June 4 that Moose 'will join the activists directly shaping African policy'--Vice-president Mondale, U.N. Ambassador Andy Young, deputy national security adviser David Aaron, and State Department director of policy planning Anthony Lake. 'Aaron, Lake and Moose,' says the Post, 'are leaders in the younger coterie of liberals inside the administration, with close ties to liberals in Congress.' Moose, 45, reportedly worked with Sen. Dick Clark (D-Iowa)

to block the Kissinger-CIA strategy in Angola of secretly arming the pro-Western factions."

To this must be added three other names. Donald McHenry is Ambassador Young's Africa deputy. A member of the U.N. delegation, he was formerly with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Mrs. Goler Butcher, an international lawyer, formerly Africa consultant to Senator Humphrey and Congressman Diggs, now heads the Africa division for the Agency for International Development. Her deputy is Douglas Wachholz, formerly the Director of the Southern Africa Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

## FIVE WESTERN POWERS

As anticipated, the Turnhalle Talks produced a constitution built on the bantustan system and called for an interim administration which would be staffed by appointees of the South African government. Moreover, the army, police, Supreme Court, and communications system would all be controlled directly by South Africa.

In spite of objections from the international community, South Africa was determined to proceed with this arrangement. In this atmosphere, the five western powers currently holding seats on the U.N. Security Council (United States, United Kingdom, France, Federal Republic of Germany, and Canada) took an initiative which involved meetings with the South African

government, Turnhalle Talks delegates, Namibian church leaders and, belatedly, the South West Africa People's Organization. These meetings are still being held but several things seem to be emerging.

Mr. Vorster has withdrawn his plan to appoint an interim government. He has been told that this is totally unacceptable. He has also been told that the constitution from the Turnhalle Talks is not acceptable and that SWAPO must be involved in negotiations leading up to a new government. While South Africa is said to have agreed to abandon the Turnhalle constitution and interim government, there has been little progress, if any, on getting it to agree to talk to SWAPO.

## A CHURCH INITIATIVE

It has been reported in the Windhoek (Namibia) Advertiser that Dr. de Vries and Dr. Auala met with SWAPO officials and on the basis of their understanding of SWAPO's position, have joined with the Catholic Bishop Rudolf Koopmann and the Vicar General of the Anglican Church, the Rev. Edward Morrow, in presenting a plan which they believe will be acceptable to both South Africa and SWAPO. According to the Advertiser, the plan contains four main elements as follows:

*"The establishment of a neutral 12-man head committee, consisting of six South African-appointed representatives and six members of the United Nations Security Council; the United Nations team to include representatives from the five Western powers and preferably, the President of the Organization of African Unity.*

*"This head body, operating either from South Africa or preferably Gaborone, Botswana, could then appoint two co-administrators to take charge of the administration and preparations for elections in South West Africa.*

*"The task of the co-administrators would be to reorganize the administration, scrap discrimination, prepare and supervise the elections for a constituent assembly.*

*"After this assembly had worked out a constitution, further elections could be held for an*

*independent government."*

Dr. de Vries has emphasized that there can be no peace as long as the South African army is stationed in Namibia.

South Africa, however, will not "negotiate" with church leaders, but only with Turnhalle delegates. It is doubtful that this initiative will be formally recognized.

As this is being written a meeting of the Executive Committee of SWAPO is taking place in Africa.

The Namibian churches have called for an expansion of their regular meeting with the Finnish and German mission boards to include representation from North America. That meeting is to take place 29-31 August. Perhaps by then some firm recommendations can be made to all who have committed their support to our brothers and sisters in Namibia and the cause they represent.

It is evident that desperate attempts to limit violence and arrive at a just and honorable solution to Namibia's independence are being made by several groups in the repressive atmosphere of injustice and violence which characterize the illegal racist regime presently in power.