

Bitter Legacy Of War Still Haunts Namibia

I AM SHOCKED by Mr Groth's book *Namibia: The Wall Of Silence*. Why not 'Namibia: The Country Of Secrets' as both sides did the same.

Mr Groth, you should have written two books opening up all sides of the story.

Swapo was a party that fought for our freedom, therefore it was supposed to be suspicious of anyone coming to join Swapo.

You don't expect Swapo could have taken anyone coming from Namibia just like that. Some tips were sent that people on their way to them were spies. What do you think they could do? Sit by and watch them arrive and do whatever they were sent to do? I don't think so.

Swapo was fighting for freedom and Swapo was haunted by South African soldiers and Koevoet.

Let's look back. Here in Namibia, the South African regime and its collaborators tortured people, many of them innocent civilians. People were dragged out of their houses early and taken away. No-one knew where they were being taken, even our grandfathers and mothers did not know.

Our fathers and brothers disappeared and up to now we don't know where some of them are. Some of our fathers and brothers who were found at the villages were killed like dogs and their bodies were tied to the tyres of Casspirs. They dressed the bodies in Plan uniforms and drove around with them, calling the people and telling them come and look! We have killed Swapo! Come, Swapo is dead! Sometimes the body was only tied onto the Casspir with rope and dragged around.

It hurt to see things like that, knowing that maybe tomorrow it would be my father or brother even though that person had never been in Angola.

The worst was the the South African security forces learned that a Swapo fighter had passed through a village. It was hell. The village was turned upside down, old women and even children beaten.

The DTA did what they liked. Who were we to say. We were Swapo members and the DTA got the say. We were nothing in their eyes, just like animals.

I don't see any need to mention names, they know who they were.

Why don't you write a story about the other side too? Where are our fathers and brothers? Maybe it

would be better if the DTA also explained and asked for forgiveness and told us where our fathers and brothers, those who were never found, are now.

Mr Groth, if people are saying that some of those who tortured people in Angola and Zambia are in parliament, what about those who were against Swapo? Some of them commanded squads to kill Swapo members, but they are also in the parliament, police, defence force and some even hold the higher ranks.

Talking about spies.

Mr Groth, I, who am writing this letter, was a Swapo member during the struggle. I was beaten many times and shot at with rubber bullets. They really did send spies to Swapo camps.

I was approached by a certain cop at that time a lieutenant but now holding a higher rank. He wanted me to betray my fellow members by pretending that I also wanted to go into exile. I was to fetch him the day the people would leave so that they could capture them. I refused. I could not do that to my fellow Namibians.

He came to me again and this time he wanted me to go to Angola, gain information, escape and come back to tell them the plans, where the camps were and many things I can't mention. I still refused and after that I was watched like hell.

Mr Groth, there is a lot you don't know. Start writing a book about the other side, things mustn't be seen from one side only. Only both sides can clean the wounds.

Swapo won the war and they didn't take revenge. Instead they asked for peace, forgiveness and to reconcile. Is that too much to ask?

When people came back from exile they were full of bitterness and hatred and wanted revenge, but the President told them not to go ahead but to forgive even though we remember and will never forget.

If you want to know about those who disappeared and were tortured by Swapo, why should the DTA not do the same? Let both sides do the same. It is not a one-sided story.

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* Note: This letter has been shortened. - Ed.