

Objective view

ASA socalled white South African, living in Johannesburg, and not a member of any one of the great number of political parties in Namibia, I feel I have the right to try and objectively assess the incident of November 30 where the supporters of Swapo were routed by what is generally known here as Koevoet.

I was invited to the peace rally (sic) by friends. I went there because, being a South African, I thought 'How wonderful. I always thought Swapo was a banned organisation'. (At least that is the way I was indoctrinated by the press in South Africa). So I went.

It was quite an experience. People singing and dancing, a group of children splendidly dressed in Swapo colours, dancing to the tune of a whistle, blown by a small boy. And the Swapo police! Dressed resplendently, some with wooden AK-47 rifles, painted blue, green and red. Traditional kieres and spears (covered with coldrink cans to make sure the sharp points cause no incidental harm).

The peace rally was opened with a prayer. An old black man, praying in Afrikaans, for the rally to be peaceful and in the name of God. There were some speeches and then a group of socalled vigilantes started injuring people and damaging cars in the road. They were chased away by the Swapo police and we all started singing again, determined to allow peace to get the upper hand.

The next moment Casspirs arrived. Much too soon to have been summoned from the police station. They were close and ready. The hatches flew open and the firing started. Horribly sudden. A terrible and unnecessary act of unprovoked violence.

The air was thick with teargas and rubber bullets. We all ran, blinded and choking. They never stopped. On and on. We hid in houses from the choking fumes, babies gasping old men lying on the ground. They chased us from house to house. I ran like a scared animal, jumping over fences, chicken coops, washing the burning skin of my face and eyes in basins filled with soapy washing water.

After half an hour, things quietened down. I ventured back to the area. I crossed a pool of mud in a street, suddenly realising my my stomach churning, that it hadn't rained. It was blood. Red mud. I put a note under a windscreen of a friend's car.

Then they came again. I crawled wormlike under the car. I knew I would be at the very least injured if they saw me, a white person, there.

By now they were firing teargas at random into houses. Houses of people who weren't even at the rally. Houses with small babies, screaming and choking.

I was eventually picked up by reporters, one bruised from a straight hit with a teargas cannister. Brave people, whom I shall never forget. Then we had a flat tyre. People came to help us change the wheel. Too many people, looking like a gathering. The Casspirs charged once more. We managed to

hide. In the house, an old woman, maybe ninety years old, embraced me, saying over and over 'Jy moet leef, my kind. Jy moet leef, my kind'.

Eventually I reached safety through rides with other reporters. That was yesterday (Sunday). Today (Monday) I read the news: "People started fighting among themselves ... the police endeavoured to bring peace ..." and worst of all, this line in an editorial column: "This time Swapo will have to do much more than the traditional accusation that the police are responsible for the violence" (Translated from Afrikaans).

What can I say, except, that if these are the workings of democracy, Namibians should wake up to reality. Do not allow your future, and the future of your children, to be placed in the hands of demented perpetrators of violence, acting under the cover of reality. I beg you, wake up.

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Matjila's woes

ANDREW Matjila, socalled Minister for Education of the interim government, participated in an international symposium organised by the Hans-Seidel Foundation (CSU) in Munich.

On November 20, he was asked to hold a lecture at Cologne University by Henning von Lowis of Menar, an extremely right-wing professor for political science at Cologne university, who closely cooperates with the Namibia Information Service in Bonn as well as working as a journalist for the SABC.

The subject of this propaganda show was the Namibian education system. But Matjila did not even speak for 10 minutes.

Members of progressive students organisations, of the Anti-Apartheid Movement and some progressive African students, as well as Swapo members, heard about the lecture.

About half the audience of 90 students supported a demand for Matjila to leave the room while others wanted him to continue.

While police waited in front of the building, and supporters of the neo-facist student organisation *Ring freiheitliche Studenten (RFS)* tried to influence the atmosphere in favour of Matjila, the progressive audience made such a noise that Matjila was not able to continue.

Henning von Lowis of Menar and Volker Stoltz, of the Namibia Information Office in Bonn, did not dare to call in the police perhaps because there was a German journalist in the audience, and they feared 'negative' reports in the newspapers.

After an hour of quarrelling, Matjila left the room, accompanied by the neo-facist students. Swapo members fixed posters to the wall reading: 'Matjila go home to Pietermaritzburg' and 'Down with the interim government', and they continued with the discussion with the rest of