

Meaning of peace

IN THE WAKE of Christmas and my dealings with The Namibian during 1987 I feel myself compelled to write you this letter in my personal capacity in order to set the record straight on the real meaning of the words peace and goodwill.

After an in-depth study and research on the reporting as presented by The Namibian during the past year I come to the conclusion that no objectivity was portrayed by your newspaper concerning the South West Africa situation. Instead, you tried to portray the enemy, Swapo, including all its wings and associates as the "peace-seekers". Nowhere could I find a call to stop actions by these organisations which are detrimental to our country and all its inhabitants, such as boycotts, sabotage, etc. No, you rather opted to go for the "alternative view" of revolution.


Let me give you only one example: just about every week some kind of atrocity by the security forces was reported. The security forces spelt it out clearly that **no atrocities by members of the security forces would be tolerated**. Members who are found guilty by a court of law will be punished accordingly. However, when Swapo claimed responsibility for the bomb blast at the Gustav Voigts Centre you reported it to be "a demonstration of Namibian people's resolve to shake off the yoke of colonialism by all necessary means". Is this promoting peace and goodwill?

Swapo opted for the revolutionary methods some 21 years ago and let us be honest, they've lost face, both militarily and politically. Although you portray this organisation to be the "true liberators" of this country, I guarantee that freedom will be something of the past IF they should take over the reins. However, that is hardly to be foreseen.

In your so-called "bumper edition" dated December 18, 1987, to January 8, 1988, you predict another year of war in your "political perspective" column, however, in the same breath you call upon organisations and individuals "to re-assess and come up with a concrete and effective plan of action to break the chains in 1988 and reach the goal of a free Namibia". Thus, I accept that you are at the same time wishing for peace and war. This is a contradiction I'll never be able to understand.

Please keep in mind: Swapo opted for war. This is what they got. The security forces were in being long before the existence of Swapo and if you look at the aim of any defence force in the world, you will notice that their duty is, amongst other, the safeguarding of life, property and freedom. During

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1988 the security forces will maintain this aim!

May I wish you not a worldly "happy" festive season, but my prayers are that you may also experience the love of God towards mankind manifested through the birth of His Son, our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom we trust to build the future of this beautiful country with all its inhabitants.

G R C BESTER (COMMANDANT)
PRIVATE BAG 13220
WINDHOEK 9000

NOTE: Don't talk absolute rubbish, Commandant. You should know better. An in-depth study and research of the reporting in The Namibian, and frequent, virtual weekly reports of security force atrocities (on your own admission) should be telling you something.

You would prefer, obviously, that because the Defence Force has stated that "no atrocities by members of the security forces will be tolerated", that we should not report them at all. Is this what you define as "objectivity"? While on the subject, perhaps you could tell us how many members of the 'security' forces appeared in court for atrocities, and how much, in claims of compensation, has been paid out by the military to members of the civilian population in the past year? We wonder whether you even keep such statistics.

Interesting too, to see that you classify Swapo as "the enemy", and small wonder 'security' forces target civilian members of the population who support the movement. Have you forgotten that you are apparently fighting against the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), and not Swapo, which is a legitimate and legal political organisation in this country?

The Namibian never claimed the bomb blast at the Gustav Voigts Centre was a "demonstration of the Namibian people's resolve to shake off the yoke of colonialism by all

necessary means". Your assertion in this regard is entirely without factual basis.

The 'security' forces in this country have not maintained the aim of "safeguarding of life, property and freedom" as you claim. Quite the contrary, in fact.

And since you have the temerity to talk about spreading the "love of God", perhaps you could explain to us why a so-called 'Christian' defence force commits such 'un-Christian' actions and why the majority of Christians in this country call for the withdrawal of your defence force? - Gwen Lister.

SADF answer call

Dear Editor

Your comment: latest act of sabotage

1. It is not normal procedure for the SWA Territory Force to seek comment from a newspaper, however, in the light of your openly anti-SWA Territory Force campaign, we feel it necessary to ask your comment on the incident on Saturday, December 19 1987, at Pep Stores.
2. If this act of sabotage would have been successful, hundreds of people could have been either dead or maimed or seriously injured. It was only the grace of God that saved South West Africa of a disaster, initiated by a terrorist who obviously has no feeling for human life. If, and we are sure they will, Swapo claims responsibility for this senseless deed, will it be portrayed again as "an act to demonstrate the will of the people to free themselves from colonial rule"?
3. We trust that The Namibian will react to this in order to show exactly where it stands.

COMMANDANT G R C BESTER
on behalf of THE OFFICER
COMMANDING SWATF
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NOTE: No, it is not "normal procedure" for a defence force to seek comment from a newspaper, but