

country, and if not, could someone please inform us of his whereabouts. - Ed.

Detainees respond

THE New Era of November 12-18 published a letter from a certain Shoye Sheya (Oshakati) under the heading 'Detainees debate irks reader'.

The letter is characterised by outdated rhetoric and not only aims at disgracing the status of the former Swapo detainees but to stir hatred and bloodshed among Namibians. It is incomprehensible how a newspaper wholly funded by the taxpayer can descend that low and spread such sick views.

Mr Sheya and New Era writes, among others, that 'the former South African agents must bear in mind that it was not Swapo which sent them to spy in the organisation'. The letter further portrays the Swapo detainees as having been responsible for the deaths of many Namibians through 'treacherous ways'.

It must have been during such a time that Jesus Christ shook his head and said 'Lord, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing..' It is a sad case. Yet, we shall forgive the naive 'revolutionary' Shoye Sheya. But the Shoyas and the New Eras should be taught to understand our bitterness.

Let us start with the basics. The former Swapo detainees are also former freedom fighters and many are former Plan combatants. When the heroic exploits of Plan fighters and the herculean efforts of Swapo diplomats, nurses, teachers, mechanics ... will be reflected in the history books, many ex-Swapo detainees will be there.

Yes, the Swapo ex-detainees and indeed those still being detained by Swapo, are made out of possibly the finest sons and daughters this country could ever produce.

One does not know where Comrade Shoye was when those people he calls South African agents and today's government and military leaders (of course, not all, please note) stood in one trench and fought the South Africans or carried each other in times of defeat.

But today's Shoye's can do one thing: just open their eyes and watch a casual meeting between the 'great, militant and

reconciliation' us take a similar two very powerful fighting. They and never let each hopes to knockout blow.

Naturally and each real wishful thinking the simplest the fight and again be that they start to then they to

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radical' Swapos and a former detainee. For a moment they remember the past, you know those old days, and lock in a warm embrace.

Then, usually the former detainee becomes bitter and the Swapo looks down or starts crying in despair.

There were and are still many such episodes. During such times, the sympathisers of the ex-detainees ask in wonder how is it possible you can embrace your tormentor. I am sure the Shoyes in turn ask the comrades how he/she dare embrace a 'spy'. Those who were not there will not understand many things.

Certainly it must be mind-boggling to Shoye how those very 'traitors' are allowed to occupy top positions in government and how they are embraced under the NBC TV eye by Ministers before given the honour of standing for Swapo in a constituency. Of course simple minds are told or believe the trick is done by the magic concept of reconciliation.

There is no such thing as reconciliation just like that. Let us take a simple example. See two very persistent persons fighting. They fight and fight and never listen to reason as each hopes to deliver the final knockout blow.

Naturally exhaustion sets in and each realises a knockout is wishful thinking. At that stage the simplest gesture can stop the fight and the two will never again be the same. For one, they start to respect each other, then they tolerate each other.

Reconciliation, on the other hand, is more noble, divine. It is the expression of a mind that delves deeper and discovers the largely unknown but sacred meaning and essence of existence. A proponent of such a concept is no longer able to hate.

In the Swapo detainee saga, the organisation still fails to say sorry. They refuse to talk and leave tens of unanswered questions.

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Sorry does not heal wounds; it does not erase memories, it does not bring life to the dead. But that little word is magic. Swapo is too cowardly to utter that word, which will surely bring Swapo to its knees if it is ignored much longer.

The ANC has allowed an internal investigation into its abuse of human rights. Former ANC detainees will be compensated and steps taken against the officials responsible. One can only applaud the organisation's courage to come out and admit its wrongs and say 'sorry'.

The ANC does this for one reason: It knows that the past can haunt them for the rest of the future, and by tackling it now, they will be able to stand tall.

If Swapo does not openly clear our names, we have no option but to continue our campaign even if it 'irks readers'.

**FORMER SWAPO DETAINÉES
WINDHOEK**

Note: This letter has been shortened. - Ed.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY
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OR NEWS TIPS,
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