

On the other side of the picture are elements in the police force who are not neutral, or are trigger-happy, or are both. They may well be covert rightwingers trying to sabotage reform. Other rightwingers seem set on making the mining town of Welkom a no-go area for Blacks. They may not stop there.

More disturbing than any of this has been the resurrection of the dreaded "necklace", surely one of the most despicable and dehumanising methods ever conceived for dealing with people you think might not be on your side. The leaders of the liberation movement who failed, for whatever reason, to put a stop to this ghastly practice when it first reared its head amongst their supporters all those years ago, may well live to rue that day. Only Desmond Tutu and a few other brave individuals ever risked their own lives to stop it. Now reports of its renaissance are returning to haunt us all.

We may also live to rue the day when young people were urged to forget about education until they had liberation,

and to devote their energies instead to making the country ungovernable. Such lessons are more easily learnt than forgotten. Ungovernability down there, where the necklace lies in wait for non-conformists, and the incentive to learn has been largely lost, presents the ANC with a major problem. For Mr De Klerk it certainly makes his task of persuading Whites to accept a future in a non-racial democracy a thousand times more difficult.

So what has to be done if what is threatening to become a lost generation is to be saved, and if something like the Namibian miracle is to be made to happen here?

People need to be given something they feel is important and constructive to do. What better than building a new society?

But until the negotiators agree on what shape that society will take, nobody else can do very much. They should get a move on. □

by Randolph Vigne

NAMIBIA AFTER 26 YEARS

Randolph Vigne was first in Namibia just over a year after the Windhoek shootings of 10 December 1959. Namibia's Sharpeville, they launched the 30-year struggle, completed with independence on 21 March 1990 which he attended as a guest of the new government. When vice-chairman of the Liberal Party of South Africa he was banned in 1963, and left the country without a passport the following year. In England he kept in close touch with Swapo, and in 1969 became founding chairman of the Namibia Support Committee, a UN-recognized body which has worked in solidarity with Swapo throughout this period. He is today its Hon Secretary.

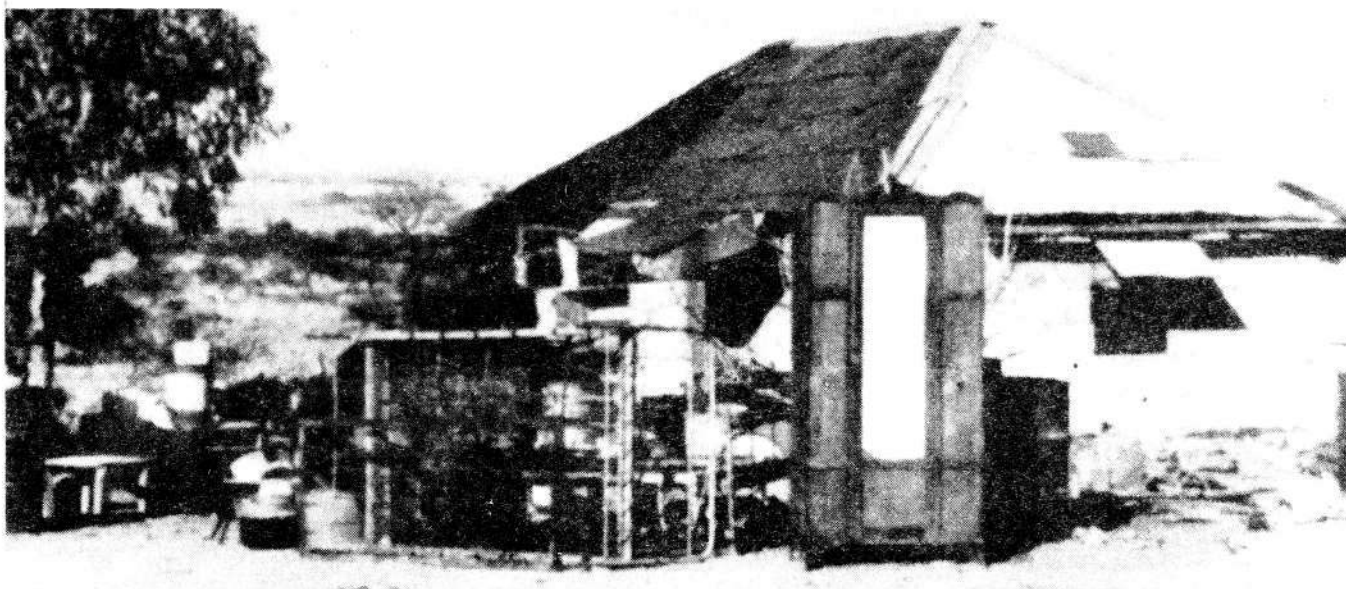
Revisiting Namibia this year recalled my first and only visit there before leaving Verwoerd's South Africa 26 years ago. I had introductions from Swapo friends in Cape Town, a commission for **Contact** articles, and a brief from the Liberal Party to report on the situation, while seeking also possible conveners of a non-racial Liberal pressure group. A bonus was a meeting on the aircraft with the Anglican Bishop Mize, who got off at Keetmanshoop but offered me his empty house (now the Deanery) next to the tiny St George's Cathedral in Klein Windhoek. Here, and in the Old Location, I met leaders of Swapo, Swanu and the Herero Chiefs' Council, thanks to the Bishop's manservant who took the necessary messages. I could thus lie

low and was saved the frustrations of my Cape Town neighbour, Brian Bunting, editor of *New Age*, who had visited shortly before me and had been followed or watched by security policeman 24 hours a day. Or yet Oliver Tambo who had been put on the 'plane straight back to Johannesburg when he had arrived in 1960 to act for the Chief's Council over the Old Location shootings.

The men I met contrasted sharply with the human scene around them. This was still an old German colonial town, the oppressive atmosphere further charged with tension since the Old Location shootings, and the African community contained a sort of sub-species, the Ovambo contract labourers in domestic service, minding the gardens and cleaning the red-roofed bungalows or mock schlosses of the town, rightless people of whom terrible stories of physical punishments were told. Yet here they were – the 90 year old Hosea Kutako, deeply impressive figure, his face scarred by a German bullet, who had been left to look after the fragment of the Herero nation when Samuel Maharero and a few thousand survivors of Von Trotha's *Vernichtungsbefehl* escaped across the sandveld to what is now Botswana; Ciemens Kapuuu, his secretary and successor; Levi Nganjone, a dynamic Swapo organizer who had travelled across the endless sands of Ovamboland on a bicycle, visiting embryonic Swapo

branches, meeting Ya Toivo, Tuhadalen, Simon Kaukungua and the other northern leaders; Zedekia Ngavirue, a neutral hoping to unite Swapo and Swanu, then editing the first African newspaper in Namibia, *South-West News*; John Garvey Muundjua of Swanu, and others. Confident, upstanding characters, they bore out the promise of our Cape Town Swapo Colleagues that the nascent liberation movement would prove equal to its task.

Only the last two of those I met in 1961 were still in action in 1990. Zed Ngavirue had petitioned at the UN with Sam Nujoma later the same year, joined Swanu, did a D Phil at Oxford, where we met again, later becoming chairman of the Rössing Corporation, and was now to be Director of National Planning in the new Independence government. Muundjua I met in the members' tearoom at the Tintenpalast during the constituent assembly session in February. The old Chief had died in 1970 and Clemens Kapuu, his successor as Herero chief, had been killed by an assassin's bullet 17 years later. Nganjone had left politics.



Old location removals: Windhoek 1962.

In 1961 they had all been eager for intercession with the United Nations, for aid for widows and children of the shootings or for those disabled, and for political opposition to the threatened imposition of Bantu Education on the already neglected and backward school system. I was told that, after 40 years of the mandate, there were only two Namibians at university, Kerina of Swapo and Kozonguizi of Swanu: I met both later, in Ghana and England, and back in Windhoek as delegates from other parties in the constituent assembly. I learned that no school went beyond Standard VI – Kapuu and others had been sent on to the Stofberggedenkskool in the Transvaal to do Junior Certificate. That denial of education was a major grievance then and since, and taken by the Africans as planned to sustain the claim that they were not ready to govern themselves. Bantu Education would strengthen that claim: the UN must block its introduction into Namibia.

With Ngavirue and two others I drove to the Waterberg reserve, along the dirt roads of the time. Heavy rain had fallen, the country was green and veld flowers were everywhere. But the *omurambas* were full and, bare-legged, we had to push the elderly car (hired from a member of the Chief's Council, our driver) across several. In the reserve we met leaders who, interpreted from Herero or German, urged their local causes on us, chiefly the right to market their own cattle rather than hand them over to the government's marketing boards to their great loss. I saw the timetable of local *vendusies* displayed in the Ovitoto reserve on my February 1990 visit, and wondered what prices the cattle would fetch, even though the old grievance seemed to have gone: after a too-recently broken nine-year drought, they were half-starved. In 1990 Ovitoto had a school, store and administration building Waterberg in 1961 had had none of these but far better grazing and fatter cattle.

At Otjiwarongo we split, I to a neat little German hotel, they to friends in the location. At Okahandja we stopped to visit the graves of Maharero and his heirs, where Kutako now lies too, the scene so unforgettably described later in Michael Scott's *A Time to Speak*. And all they way we talked, to my infinite advantage. Where was the notorious *hauteur*? Where the deep scar of anti-white hatred left by the German genocide of 1904 and the near-enslavement of the remnant? I began to understand the attitude of a proud people who, though defeated, yet felt themselves superior to their conquerors, whether Germans or Afrikaners.

They were sceptical about my hopes of the non-racial Liberal group. Zed and two friends, I learned, on asking if they could attend a public meeting for Alan Paton, organized by a few of these liberals, had been told first 'of course,' and then 'no, for your own safety'. (When I told Paton this he wrote to them that he would have cancelled the visit had he known.) The scepticism was right: an

architect who had been of some service to Michael Scott years before cut me short. A lawyer to whom the architect directed me was abusive: 'You know the natives don't pay any income tax? And all they do is complain.' But Hans Berker, Judge-President at Independence, and his wife hospitably gave a braaivleis for me and some of their liberal friends, non of whom, however, would agree to convene a non-racial group, or even join one. In his chambers, Bryan O'Linn, now on the bench, was sympathetic but felt the time was far from ripe, and Hannes Smith, another Afrikaner and then editing the *Advertiser*, advised me to leave it to the Africans: 'Forget about Kerina - Kozonguizi's the one with the brains.' The famous 'Smitty' has since volunteered that Nujoma was the one that should have been backed. He had left the year before.

My last attempts failed too. Herr Lempp, a German bookseller who had African friends, told me he would be ostracized and ruined if he stood up to be counted. Percy Niehaus, leader of the local equivalent of the United Party, was courteous but dismissive. Most memorably, Israel Goldblatt, senior member of the South African bar and recently counsel for African interests in the Old Location shootings enquiry, offered serious discussion and reminiscence, but when he asked 'What are they saying in the location?' I realized how far there was to go. And Bishop Mize, back in Windhoek, expressed his admiration for our President but rejected the boycott weapon Paton had recently espoused, since this implied

coercion and as a Christian he could only bear witness to the evils of *apartheid* and *baasskap* (making the Bishop's expulsion from the country a few years later sadly ironic.)

I took the Skymaster back to Cape Town, made my report, wrote my articles, and did what I could in correspondence with Chief Kutako, through Kapuuu, and with the Hereros in Botswana, a representative of whom I had met with the old Chief (he had taken a year to make the journey, mostly spent in hiding from the South African authorities.) The visit also committed me to the Namibian struggle from then on.

The non-racial group was decades away, however, and the assembly I observed from the gallery in February 1990, with black and white Swapos, DTAs, Nats and others bringing in a liberal, democratic constitution by consensus, an amazing manifestation of it. (With, *plus ca change*, near the top of the agenda was the country's educational need, and new beef export outlets not far below.) It had taken 23 years of the 'border war' and an estimated 90 000 Namibian deaths from all causes to bring about that non-racial assembly, a cost item that must painfully be put down on the white side of the ledger. And the magnanimity, as before, on the black, who had done the fighting and suffering, and brought down Goliath. □

by David Lush

INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA: SOME EARLY OBSERVATIONS

"In 17 years of dealing with black leaders, I have never respected any of them more than I do the Swapo people I have been working with in the Constituent Assembly."

Lofty praise indeed considering it comes from one of Swapo's most bitter opponents, Dirk Mudge, chairperson of the DTA (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance), and is indicative of the rapid change in attitudes- "Boerestroika" as it has become known - of Namibia's predominantly right-wing white community.

This has been in no small part due to Swapo's highly successful policy of "national reconciliation" which has helped persuade whites to stay on in Namibia with their much needed skills and capital. But this same policy is in danger of eroding Swapo's own power base as the liberation movement's grassroots support grows disillusioned with what many see as maintenance of the status quo.

National reconciliation has been a central plank in Swapo policy since the launch of their election campaign last June, although it was not until after the results of the

November poll were known (Swapo won 57 per cent of the vote) that this policy was seen to work.

As the newly elected Constituent Assembly started to meet, opposition parties found to their surprise that Swapo was prepared to negotiate and compromise - as it had to in order to achieve its aim of having the constitution passed by the required two-thirds majority without delay so the country could become independent as quickly as possible. Koos Pretorius, leader of the whites-only Action Christian National (ACN) party, admits he is "impressed" with Swapo's give and take approach - "as long as I didn't make the proposals," he jokes.

Swapo's immediate acceptance of what are now known as the 1982 Principles - internationally-approved, democratic guidelines now written into the constitution - stole the DTA's thunder and the latter had no choice but to settle down and become what Mudge calls a "loyal opposition". "What must be clear to everybody is that we are now in a new ball game.

"We have had an election, we have a constitution which guarantees a multi-party system and which has been