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SWAPO AND 'UNSCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM'

THE EVENT

Late in November 1988, SWAPO accepted the text of a new constitution and economic policy, which will form the basis of its political campaign for the independence elections in Namibia planned for November this year.¹ If SWAPO wins the elections with a two-thirds majority, this will become the constitution and economic policy of the new Republic of Namibia.

ANALYSIS

Constitutional provisions

SWAPO'S constitutional proposals provide for 'an independent, sovereign, unitary, democratic and secular state'. The official language will be English, although provision is made for mother tongue instruction. Walvis Bay - contrary to South Africa's legal claim - is regarded as an integral part of Namibia.

Citizenship would be based on either birth or naturalisation - the latter subject to certain conditions. The constitution will guarantee the right to work, social benefits, health care, education, housing, cultural rights, personal freedom, human dignity, association, life, property, trade unions, and demonstration.

While the constitution is not specific on the question of a new national army, it is probable that the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) will be the nucleus of such an army. This implies dissolution of the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF).

Head of state and government will be an executive president. Provision is made for a National Assembly, 'the supreme organ of state power'. This will consist of sixty members directly elected by secret ballot for a period of five years. In turn,

the National Assembly may elect ten non-voting members from lists submitted by 'national mass organisations. A quorum will be sixty percent. The president will have executive power, preside over a council of ministers, and nominate the prime minister and other members of the council, the chief justice and the associate judges of the Supreme Court, the attorney-general, the governor-general of the central bank, the director-general of planning, the inspector-general of police, the commanders of the armed forces, and the ombudsman. The president must be at least thirty-six years old and will hold office for five years. Local government structures will be established in the form of regions, districts, sub-districts and municipalities.

The economic system

Informed by the principle of social justice, the economic system will be that of a mixed economy, with 'the state promoting economic development according to plan' and with 'public, joint, public, private, cooperative and small-scale family ownership and initiative' [Article 59].

The private sector would be expected 'to cooperate with the State to ensure the realization of the State of social and economic goals for the benefit for the entire population'. Cooperative economic enterprises, village industries and 'small-scale family activities' would be supported by the state.

Provision is made for both cooperative and individual land ownership. The State would carry out 'land reform programmes' [Article 61] to provide for the control and use of land on a more equitable basis.

Foreign private fixed investment would be encouraged, subject to 'specific desired economic objectives' [Article 63 (2)]. The state would establish a central bank and a central planning commission. The latter would fall under the prime minister and would prepare 'short-term, medium-term and long-term national development plans' [Article 65 (2)]. All public enterprises would subject to public accountability.

SWAPO's mineral development strategy would aim at the integration of the mining sector with the rest of the economy and will include the development of mineral-based processing industries.

CONCLUSIONS

SWAPO does not hide its belief in the inherent moral superiority of social ownership and control of the economic realm. Egalitarianism forms the basis of its vision for a just social order, but SWAPO is none the less realistic and pragmatic enough to emphasise the importance of a mixed economy, dependence on foreign fixed investment, as well as managerial and technical expertise. Economic ties would be maintained with South Africa - at least in the short-term and possibly beyond. Namibia would,

however, become the tenth member of the Southern African Development Conference (SADCC) and join Lomé² and the Commonwealth. Reducing economic dependence on South Africa will remain a medium to long-term objective.

ANDRÉ DU PISANI
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Notes

¹ The text will be published in the March/April 1989 edition of the *Southern African Record*.

² The Lomé Convention is an association of largely West African states enjoying preferential trade and other benefits under the aegis of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (the ACP Group).