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**DÉTENTE OR AGGRESSION?
— SOUTH AFRICA'S NAMIBIAN POLICY**

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OCCASIONAL PAPER

**The South African Institute
of
International Affairs**



GELEENTHEIDSPUBLIKASIE

**Die Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut
van
Internasionale Aangeleenthede**

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This paper is based on Professor Töttemeyer's talk given to the Institute members in Cape Town in August 1985, which was based on his recent extensive tour of South West Africa/Namibia where he held several meetings and discussions with leading personalities.

It should be noted that any opinions expressed in this article are the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.

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ISBN: 0-908371-41-1

The South African Institute of International Affairs
Jan Smuts House
PO Box 31596
BRAAMFONTEIN
2017
South Africa

November 1985

So much has been said on the political development and possible independence of Namibia that one can hardly add anything new. The purpose of this paper is to examine answers to the question : Why no independence yet?

At the beginning of my deliberations, I intend to put two preliminary hypotheses: 1) that the independence of Namibia is determined by South Africa's interests in the Southern African region; 2) that independence in Namibia will only come about when South Africa wants it and according to its preconditions, but that this attitude may only prevail as long as South Africa has the power to do so.

South Africa disagrees with the UN Security Council Resolution that its continued presence in Namibia is considered illegal. The legality of South Africa's continued presence in Namibia is, however, presently not debated, although one cannot but notice the sensitivity with which South Africa reacts to the claim of illegal occupation. Only recently, the American Secretary of State reiterated his attitude on the illegal presence of South Africa in Namibia. This attitude may be considered somewhat contradictory as the USA continues to negotiate with South Africa on the independence of Namibia.

To come back to my first hypothesis. It is not only Namibia which is at stake. What South Africa endeavours to do is to ensure its strategic dominance in Southern Africa. This is part of the government's realpolitik or, to put it differently, part of purposive power politics in the Southern African region. We leave aside for the moment consideration of the moral basis of what could also be described as survival politics. This new sub-regional strategy was devised as a long-overdue counter to the total onslaught theory.

The weak link in the regional policy of South Africa remains Angola. The treaties and agreements with Mozambique and the BLS (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) states were each time the result of the negotiations between two sovereign partners only. In the case of Angola, third parties are heavily involved, such as the UN, the USA, UNITA, the Soviet Union and Cuba. The same are also directly and indirectly involved in the Namibia issue. The withdrawal of the Cubans from Angola, although South Africa seems to be sceptical that they will ever leave, has become linked to the independence of Namibia.

South Africa has been involved in Angola since 1976. Its military forces have in the past occupied large parts of Angola. Simultaneously, South Africa supports the UNITA movement militarily, logistically and otherwise, in the hope that UNITA can destabilise the MPLA government, that it can harass the Cubans and that it can be of assistance in South Africa's military struggle against SWAPO.

The West's attitude is seemingly that it does not deny South Africa the right to defend and pursue its legitimate security interests but it has, however, severe doubts about any destabilisation strategy in the Southern African region. This is definitely contrary to the interest of the West in the Southern African subcontinent. And the West is no longer hesitant to show where its support and sympathy lies.

The American Senate and House of Representatives decided in July 1985 to support UNITA actively, although probably covertly for a start. It would seem that the USA intends to replace South Africa as the most trusted ally of UNITA, with the intention not to support UNITA in co-operation with South Africa, but rather to eliminate South Africa as the most important patron of UNITA. South Africa's hegemonial policy in Southern Africa has put it on a collision course with American interests in this region.

With South Africa's deteriorating position in international politics it has become a political embarrassment to many countries to be associated with it. The prevailing situation has become intolerable to many Western nations, of which France is only one recent example, with probably more to follow. It seems that the United States is caught between moral opposition to apartheid and the economic and perceived benefits of the status quo. The USA may eventually judge it too much of a risk to consider South Africa as an ally. It may become too costly in political terms to be associated with a country which is condemned by the whole world for its internal policy and also for interference in neighbouring states. Even if the USA should change its policy from constructive engagement to critical engagement it is doubtful whether this would be more acceptable to most countries in the world and the vast majority of blacks in South Africa.

The USA realises that Angola also plays an important role in the Soviet Union's strategy. Angola is dependent on the military and economic assistance supplied by the Soviet Union. Although SWAPO is equally heavily supported by the Soviet Union, the MPLA government remains the Soviet Union's first priority in Angola. It is the combined Soviet/Cuban help which has brought the MPLA government to power and the Angolan government is constantly made aware of this.

A protracted military stalemate in Namibia would suit the Soviet Union. It would also keep SWAPO dependent on the Soviet Union for military assistance. It is an irony of history that both the Soviet Union and South Africa are opposed to UN Resolution 435. With the Soviet Union's interest in keeping SWAPO dependent on its support and also hoping for time to cement the relationship, it would actually be in the best interests of South Africa not to retard the independence process in Namibia.

South Africa has, on the whole, found that the Angolan government is not as tractable as the Mozambican government. One can also convincingly argue that it would be not in the best interest of South Africa that the MPLA

government be replaced by a UNITA government. This would certainly compromise the Soviet Union's stance as guarantor of Marxist principles and doctrine in the region with consequent pressure to save 'face' even at the risk of greater involvement. It seems that South Africa has two immediate objectives: the withdrawal of the Cuban forces from Angola and the support of any endeavour which could lead to a government of national unity between the MPLA and UNITA. Furthermore, it would seem that South Africa's first concern is not the overthrow of the present Angolan government or even its support of UNITA, but the presence of SWAPO and the ANC in Angola. South Africa's ultimate objective, therefore, is to deprive SWAPO and the ANC of their bases in Angola; in other words to force both of them to leave one of their last hiding places in Southern Africa. This has so far been proved not to be as easy as in the case of Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. The recent Cabinda debacle has not only confirmed South Africa's ultimate aim, its close military co-operation with UNITA and other anti-MPLA forces in northern Angola, but also its eagerness to act against ANC bases in that country.

Although no definite figures are available, it is estimated that more than three thousand ANC guerillas are being trained in camps north of Luanda and that more than 25 000 black South African refugees presently live in Angolan camps or temporary settlements. Added to this are the 8 000 PLAN members, trained and hosted in Angola, as well as most of the approximately 80 000 black Namibians who fled Namibia during the last twenty years. One should therefore not be surprised by South Africa's concern.

I find the thoughts of Professor Ansprenger of the Free University of Berlin very interesting. His argument is that it could be to the disadvantage of South Africa if the Cubans and the Soviet Union should withdraw from Angola. Before continuing with this hypothesis of Ansprenger, may I add that I consider the withdrawal of Cubans from Angola of more importance to the USA than independence in Namibia.

Ansprenger believes that should the Cubans be forced to withdraw from Angola this could affect the Angolan political system, and nobody, including South Africa, knows whether Savimbi's UNITA would be in a position to rule Angola on its own, thus, without outside help, even if it should do so with the internal help of a MPLA under compulsion, militarily and politically. One could argue, Ansprenger says, the more successful South Africa is in integrating SWAPO in a government of national unity in Namibia, the less it is in its interest to get rid of the Cubans in Angola. A Namibian buffer state could suffice to weather the anticipated communist total onslaught from the north-west.

I am not optimistic that Namibia will become independent in the foreseeable future and least of all in accordance with Resolution 435. Against the background of the deliberations on South Africa's hegemonial policy in Southern Africa I am convinced that the South African government is not

against the independence of Namibia per se, if it is achieved on its terms: an independent Namibia must not contradict or harm South Africa's strategic security and economic interests in the Southern African region.

Only if these optimum conditions have been met, including a non-aggression treaty, would Namibia be welcome to become an integral part of South Africa's hegemonial policy in Southern Africa.

The South African State President, PW Botha, has repeatedly expressed his distrust in the UN Security Council Resolution 435 and has emphasized that his government cannot and will not change its commitment to the linkage of Cuban withdrawal from Angola with the independence of Namibia. One has the impression the South African government regrets ever having accepted UN Resolution 435. South Africa is deeply opposed to a SWAPO-ruled Namibia. It can certainly not eliminate SWAPO'S position and role in Namibia but it would do everything in its power to exclude the military component of SWAPO'S present struggle, although one doubts the ultimate success of this strategy. South Africa may, however, be able to contain the military conflict to some degree. For SWAPO, on the other hand, it has become essential to its political survival to continue with the military struggle.

From a military point of view, at present a no-win situation prevails. The South African government has, in co-operation with the Angolan government, introduced a no-man's land military zone (the part previously occupied by South African military forces). Not all South African military leaders are very pleased with South Africa's withdrawal as SWAPO forces have already infiltrated the deserted so-called neutral zone. The understanding was, however, that this zone should remain free of SWAPO's bases and activities.

The intention is to minimize any further direct military confrontation between South African forces and PLAN, in other words to neutralise SWAPO's military activities without entering into a ceasefire agreement with SWAPO. The South African government may be partly and temporarily successful with this endeavour but it will be more difficult if not impossible to get the ANC supporters removed from the territory. The presence of the ANC in Angola is only endangered if the MPLA government were to fall. This is unlikely in the immediate future and UNITA is certainly not in a position to achieve it. For this it needs to capture the towns, especially the larger cities and the capital Luanda.

The South African government's hope may also be that a demilitarized zone in Southern Angola could support an internal arrangement in Namibia, and could eventually make the application of the UN Resolution 435 obsolete. But this will not materialise easily. The Multi-Party Conference was not a success. Its successor, a non-representative transitional government, has to operate within constraints and a hostile environment. Its success is severely doubted.

South Africa should certainly not cease its efforts to negotiate directly with SWAPO. Despite the South African State President's attitude that his government does not need to enter into a ceasefire with SWAPO as it claims that it has not declared war against any party in Namibia, the factual situation is that both have been engaged in a prolonged military struggle. Some kind of formal agreement to end the military conflict could certainly be of help to hasten the independence process of Namibia. It is, however, doubtful whether SWAPO at this stage is prepared to be drawn into a solution which does not comply with UN Resolution 435.

It is known that President Botha said in Parliament last year that the population of Namibia cannot wait indefinitely for a breakthrough on the withdrawal of the Cubans from Angola and that the South African government would not stand in the way of the internal political parties (including SWAPO) finding a solution. But what kind of a solution does South Africa envisage? Is it a solution outside Resolution 435, which will emphasize Namibia's dependence on South Africa - another 'independent homeland'?

What is Namibia's reaction to the present situation? Has it become tired of all the delaying tactics? Has it become so disillusioned that it is prepared to accept any kind of solution as long as it is an improvement on the present impasse? One cannot help but notice the increasing cynicism in the Namibian population and a deep-rooted distrust of South Africa.

One has also to ask the question whether at this time the South African government is really interested in a speedy Namibian independence process. Such a process will undoubtedly have internal political ramifications in South Africa itself - surely not wanted by the South African government at this juncture?

To sum up our argument thus far: the South African government has through power politics, economic assistance, shrewdness and the exploitation of weakness in neighbouring countries, achieved some external success in the Southern African region.

But this success has also diminished in credibility the South African propaganda claim of 'total onslaught' by the Soviet Union, with the help of socialist states surrounding South Africa. Now that these countries have become dependent peripheral entities of the hegemonial metropolis South Africa, the total onslaught idea has lost its substance and justification - if it ever had one.

Most recently the total onslaught slogan has been replaced by PW Botha's accusation that the Soviet Union has succeeded in manoeuvring Western governments into a situation where they promote Soviet aims in Southern Africa.

PW Botha's recent speeches indicate with more than usual forthrightness that he has decided on power politics, or more accurately, military power politics, in the Southern African region to achieve political ends. It also seems that he has decided to underplay the importance of the West in finding an acceptable settlement in the Southern African region. He seems to be more interested in a regional than international acceptance of his policy. Or could it be that the misfortunes in international politics must be compensated for by a strong regional policy? It is evident that South Africa is not prepared to relinquish any regional interests in Southern Africa.

The constraints of the Nkomati Accord, the incursion into Botswana and the Cabinda affair have left the South African government scarred and more vulnerable internally. The Cabinda and Gaborone incursions had an impact on the South African black population as a great part of it sympathises with its black brethren in neighbouring countries. It is the same black population which has been excluded from the new constitutional dispensation of South Africa. The South African government also knows that black nationalists in South Africa will be jubilant once Namibia has achieved true independence under a black majority government. It will be said that another black liberation struggle has been won with South Africa next on the agenda.

The South African government will, however, also be faced with a negative feedback in the white population if Namibia should become independent according to UN Resolution 435. Reactionary white forces in South Africa will without any doubt accuse the government of being sell-outs to communists and having established a second Zimbabwe on its border. The reactionary forces will certainly exploit right-wing sentiments and the unexpected feedback of disillusioned whites flocking back from Namibia to South Africa.

More needs to be said about the present state of affairs in Namibia. One of the most important questions, now that the transitional government has been installed, is how much credence this government will gain with the population and how powerful can or will it be? The answer to this question will not only help to determine the credibility of the transitional mechanism but also South Africa's decision whether to proceed with an independence process other than the one envisaged by UN Resolution 435. As indicated, South Africa still hopes to avoid a SWAPO-dominated government but if not, then at least a SWAPO government which remains dependent on South Africa and not on the Soviet Union.

The new transitional government consists of 62 members nominated by the political parties who were members of the Multi Party Conference on 18 April 1985. Altogether 22 members come from the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) while the five remaining parties (Labour Party, National Party, Rehoboth Bevryde Demokratiese Party, South West Africa National Union and

SWAPO-Democrats) are allocated eight members each. Of the eight cabinet members three are of the DTA and one each from the other constituent parties.

In its declaration of intent the Multi-Party Conference set out the following tasks as the main aims of the interim government: to lead Namibia to a nationally-accepted independence which can gain international recognition; to work out a permanent constitutional system; to guarantee a free economy; to comply with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; to conduct talks and/or negotiations with interested bodies in preparation and implementation of the stated aims and, to enter into relations with other states to secure the security of Namibia and to have co-operative links in a number of areas.

The interim government can make laws for Namibia, can alter or repeal South African laws related to Namibia, but cannot change the international status of the territory. It also cannot pass any law abolishing, diminishing or derogating from any fundamental right.

The proclamation which has led to the institution of the new government contains a bill of fundamental rights and objectives laying down the right to life, liberty, security of person and privacy; equality before the law; a fair trial; freedom of expression and association; participation in political activity and government; to enjoy, practice, profess and promote culture, language, tradition and religion; freedom of movement and residence; and, to own property. Provision is also made for the enforcement of these rights.

Many of the stated fundamental rights are either still not applied in Namibia, not adhered to or are violated freely. Some of these rights are also severely curtailed by the proviso in the proclamation that they are not applicable should they endanger national security, impair public order and morals, or limit the rights of others. These limitations are open to arbitrary misuse, prone to misinterpretation and actually contradict the spirit and inviolable character of fundamental human rights.

What are the chances of success for the new transitional government? This will depend on a number of issues. One is whether it can bring about fundamental changes in the nature of Namibian society which can benefit it as a whole and not only particular groups and interests. A peaceful revolution some term it, meaning progressive change or as Wolfgang Thomas aptly calls it "aggressive reformism". This includes a progressive settlement of prevailing ideological differences in the community. Can the new transitional government, although less representative than its predecessor and without a clear mandate, bridge the gaps between reality and expectations, between lack of funds and economic demands, as well as between distrust and hope? Can it become sufficiently independent not to be considered any longer an extended arm of South African interests in the

region? Can it lessen the economic dependency on South Africa and overcome the divisive force of ethnicity?

Will it abolish AG8, the foundation for ethnically-based development and a reason for discontent in Namibia (as well as AG9 and 26)? By no means can the transitional government be called at present a government of national unity. Will it be able to broaden its political base - and especially enlist the support of the mass of the population in northern Namibia (Ovambo, Kavango and Caprivi), which it has failed to do so far? Will it make its voice heard on the rumour that South Africa would welcome an independent Caprivi should Namibia become independent under a SWAPO government? Will it bring an end to what Moses Katjiuonga, one of the ministers (and former Maoist) in the transitional government, calls 'vacillation, blunders, failures, double-dealing, dishonesty, bribery and corruption' in the Namibian society? Will it be successful in 'Namibianization' of the economy, education, politics, administration and other areas of human activity? Can it establish an environment conducive to the establishment of a viable political and economic order? Can it bring to an end the overt military rule of the past as well as to collaboration with UNITA?

Pretoria has committed itself to retention of all its existing powers in Namibia, including the conduct of foreign relations and defence. It will retain significant control over the interim government. It has stipulated that all laws made by the legislature require the signature of the South African appointed Administrator-General in Namibia. The South African State President has the power to alter or repeal any law signed by the Administrator-General. International negotiations on the independence of the territory can only be conducted by South Africa on behalf of Namibia although it could be done in co-operation with the internal forces. South Africa has furthermore clearly indicated that any draft constitution produced by the appointed constitutional council can only be regarded as a basis for future discussion, or as a proposal which could be submitted to the constituent assembly envisaged in the international settlement plan.

The transitional government is thus considered, in South African eyes, to be an interim arrangement which does not violate the government's international commitments. With this the rest of the world disagrees, especially as South Africa has indicated that if the Cubans should not withdraw, it 'will obviously have to reconsider how internationally acceptable independence may be best attained in the light of the prevailing circumstances'. South Africa has thus given a clear indication that it is determined to keep its options open. It is a carefully designed double-track approach: South Africa agrees to the establishment of an interim transition government in Namibia while keeping the options open to agree to an internationally acceptable solution according to Resolution 435 or a revised version of it. The groundwork for the eventual constitutional form seems already to be in course of preparation with the rapid elevation to the Namibian Bench of a South African functionary allegedly closely involved with the drafting of

the transitional government legislation and his consecutive appointment as President of the Constitutional Council (subsequently abrogated at the time of going to press following vigorous objections from members of the transitional government).

When inaugurating the transitional government on 17 June 1985, the South African State President reiterated his view that this government was only an interim mechanism for internationally acceptable independence and only a stage in the territory's constitutional development and not its culmination. But he once again stated his doubts about UN impartiality, accused the UN and SWAPO of having deviated from the Western Five Contact Group's proposals, and warned that should it eventually become evident that there is no realistic prospect of a breakthrough on the Cuban withdrawal, all the parties most intimately affected by the present negotiations will obviously have to reconsider how internationally acceptable independence may best be attained in the light of prevailing circumstances. Namibia's independence must, according to Botha, be gained in terms of freedom, fairness and security.

How does the Namibian population react to the present situation in Namibia? In most authoritative writings on Namibia reference is made to the important role of the indigenous black churches in Namibia and the contribution they have made in the past to sociological upliftment in the territory. Over many years they have worked to raise the level of spiritual and cultural awareness in the population, have shown their commitment to social justice and have taken a stand on a vast array of socio-political and socio-economic issues. In this process they have always tried to stand clear of becoming political institutions. This does not deny that many black clergymen have become politicised or have explicitly expressed their sympathy with political movements of their choice.

More recently one can observe the declining influence of the black churches on political development in Namibia. This can be ascribed to the ascending influence and role of political parties. This development does not downgrade or negate the commitment of the major black churches in Namibia (e.g. the Lutheran, Anglican and Roman Catholic Church) to the total liberation process of Namibia. They are unanimous in their stand that independence should be achieved according to UN Resolution 435.

The credibility of the black churches remains high in the population although this may not automatically remain the case in the future. It may become challenged by an upcoming generation, more articulate and educated than the present generation of church leaders, more radical and impatient. It is a relatively young progressive-minded generation which questions a number of thus far accepted beliefs and norms. A process has been generated by which belief systems are critically scrutinised, including those of the churches. Churches are questioned and challenged on their stand on the use of revolutionary means to bring about change and their stand on a socialist

order. It is obvious that this upcoming generation has increasingly become disillusioned with national and international endeavours to bring about independence to a war-torn and suffering Namibia. For any objective observer, a visit to the war zone in northern Namibia is a devastating and disheartening experience. It is a militarily-occupied territory suffering all the consequences of war. People suffer severely in this part of Namibia, not only physically but psychologically too.

In a recent discussion, the Chairman of the Executive of the Ovambo Legislative Assembly, Mr P Kalangula, proclaimed that all trust has been lost by the population, that people are constantly intimidated, that the population has been betrayed in the past as it is now, that truth is twisted, that people do not trust one another any longer, that people never know whether the people they converse with are friends or foes, and that apartheid is still being maintained. Rules and regulations have changed but not the heart of the white man.

According to Bishop Dumeni of the Ovambo-Kavango Church, the population has reached the limit of human suffering. It is not only the suffering of people he is concerned about, but the deaths daily as a result of the war. Bishop Dumeni maintains that people are still very much oppressed and persecuted. His impression is that whites are not particularly concerned about independence and that if they had suffered as much as the blacks in Namibia they would have opted for independence long ago. Instead, he says, 'the whites are more interested in their economic wellbeing than in human suffering'.

The attitudes of these two leaders reflect a mood of despair. The security forces in northern Namibia are distrusted and feared, although this is denied by officers in command. The police force Koevoet, to be renamed and integrated into the ordinary police force of Namibia, is hated and despised. The general comment by people in northern Namibia is that the members of this unit are trained to kill.

When one reaches the heavily manned border of the military zone at Oshivelo, checked by guards with their weapons pointed towards the people crossing the border, one gets the same feeling of anxiety and despair as when one crosses the border from East to West Germany.

The change in the attitude of the population in northern Namibia compared with ten years ago, is an incredible experience. The formerly peaceful and friendly population has changed to one full of fear and utter distrust. Both SWAPO and the combined South African/Namibian security forces are feared. The situation has become desperate.

Part of the guerilla war strategy is to win the hearts and minds of the people. Both SWAPO and the Namibian/South African security forces try and hope to achieve this. The impression prevails - and this has been confirmed

by many black Namibians living in this area - that SWAPO is preferred to the South African/Namibian forces.

The South African military in northern Namibia have over years tried their best to influence the population to support the moderate political forces in Namibia such as AKTUR, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, and at one stage the National Democratic Party, but not to much avail. AKTUR has no identifiable support in northern Namibia while the support for the DTA has declined severely. Kalangula's ruling party in Ovamboland is not trusted any longer by the security forces while the Christian Democratic Party (CDP) of Hans Röhr can only command minority support despite his admirable personal engagement to bring to the outside world's attention many cases of torture, detention and other forms of human suffering and misery. Knowledgeable people are convinced that SWAPO could get as much as ninety percent support in Owambo in a free and fair election. This view is also supported by prominent community leaders in Kavango. Opinions differ, however: the SWATF commanding officer in Kavango maintains that in a general election the Kavango people would support either the CDP, the DTA, or the party led by a leading businessman in Kavango, Mr R Ngondo.

It is even more astonishing that the South African military in northern Namibia have not given up trying to find a political party which is prepared to reflect ideas that concur with those of the mentors. A new party, Etango (=the sun), with a similar counterpart in Kavango, has recently come into being in Ovamboland with the active support of the military. The chances for its success are slim if not negligible. It is perceived by the inhabitants as a collaborationist puppet party.

The question, therefore, which is constantly asked by the people is: who then can bring independence to Namibia? The present transitional government in Namibia is not trusted by the majority of black Namibians, although most whites are hopeful that it can produce some tangible results. The faith in the capability of the Five Western Powers (the Contact Group) to bring about independence has diminished rapidly even among moderate leaders in Namibia. The belief has taken root that the Western Powers are not really interested in the independence of Namibia but that they are more concerned about their economic interests in Southern Africa and in the Cubans' presence in Angola.

Of all the Western powers, the USA is distrusted most. It is considered to be a willing collaborator and ally of South Africa. Arguments are put forward that it is convenient for the USA to have South African military forces on the northern border of Namibia to exert pressure on the Angolan government to send the Cubans home. There were times when black Namibians admired the USA as the champion of democracy and Christian values. This belief has received a severe if not crucial set-back. The black churches in Namibia realise all too well that a waning belief in the Christian values the USA is supposed to represent may have consequences for themselves.

It is feared that if the West, with its ascribed Christian values and its adherence to liberal democratic systems, cannot succeed in bringing about peace and independence to Namibia, both the Western democratic system and Christian values will increasingly be doubted in the black population. This eventually cannot but affect the role and credibility of the Churches in Namibia with their strong Western ties.

The search for an alternative to the Western democratic system is detectable in the Namibian population, more so in the younger than in the older generation. The population is equally aware that socialist states have never ceased to support the Namibian liberation struggle. Many blacks, especially the progressive minded, have increasingly become cynical about the seriousness of the West's claims of opposition to apartheid. It is more impressed by the socialist states' support before and after the independence of states such as Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe. The help given to SWAPO by socialist states is noticed and appreciated by many. Comments can be heard such as 'socialist countries help to liberate, are concerned with the liberation of the oppressed and train people for African liberation from colonial legacies'. Such observations reflect the ongoing discussions of ideological alternatives taking place throughout Namibia and South Africa too, for that matter. Their growing acceptance must not be dismissed lightly.

The growing distrust in the ability of the West, especially of the USA, to achieve independence for Namibia has caused severe doubts in the Namibian population about the real power status and the honesty of the West. The socialist system, in its essence at least, the antithesis of capitalism and exploitation, has definitely gained in attraction.

The present transitional government stands accused by the population not only of being unrepresentative in terms of support and intellectual leadership but also of being dishonest to the liberation process and in its commitments to UN Resolution 435. It is considered as not being democratically elected.

The members of the transitional government are not unaware of these accusations. Their counter-argument is that the interim government may lack legitimacy but that it has the effective power to rule. It is argued that if legitimacy is matched against effective political power the latter is stronger even if it should lack legitimacy. Political power enables effective decisions, their implementation and the ability to coerce. Legitimacy alone, as a purely moral objective, cannot do so, it is claimed.

One should not underestimate the strength of the opposition to the interim government both inside and outside Namibia. The urge to free oneself from suppressive forces and from a too South African-orientated attitude is strong. The new upcoming, predominantly young generation, more articulate than its predecessor, increasingly doubts that the liberal-democratic system

as proclaimed by the interim government is adaptable enough to satisfy the demands of those who support fundamental change. As a liberal-democratic system is not prone to radical socio-economic and socio-political changes, their concept of socialism - predominantly and pre-eminently concerned with fundamental change - becomes more attractive. The claim that the maintenance of political freedom depends on the maintenance of capitalism - which is equated with white domination - is rejected. The morality and respectability of a capitalistic system as practiced in a liberal democracy is substantially doubted.

In addition, nothing could be more conducive to turn black Namibians increasingly to an alternative political system than a prolonged war situation in Namibia. There are many black Namibians who conceive South Africa's military presence and involvement in Namibia as basically anti-black directed.

The counter-argument is that sixty percent of the present security forces active in Namibia are indigenous and that seventy percent thereof are black (cf Battalion 101, 102, 201, 202, 203, 701 and 911), that Battalion 202 in Kavango represents 44% of the total buying power in Kavango and that black Namibians are eager to fight SWAPO as it is held responsible for killing their relatives.

It is one of the tragedies of the war in Namibia that blacks fight blacks. Most black members of the South African/Namibian security forces are exposed to a personal conscience crisis. Many join the security forces for practical reasons, many are conscripted and yet more may do it out of conviction. Some even join for the sake of killing provided they are paid for it. Not long ago Koevoet members were wearing T-shirts with the slogan printed on them 'Our business is killing and business is good'.

Lack of employment, the sheer need not to go hungry, has then forced many black Namibians to join the armed forces. Employment opportunities are scarce in Namibia and not many of them can guarantee a monthly income of R500, the minimum amount paid to black members of the security forces.

It is also feasible that many of the present black Namibian members of the security forces would not mind joining the army in an independent Namibia, and would thus be prepared to change allegiance overnight. Whether this willingness will materialise will depend on the attitude of the future rulers of Namibia and their willingness to pursue a policy of reconciliation.

As the achievement of independence may still take some time, the most pragmatically minded Namibians consider it almost their duty to become more intensively involved in an open debate on both the present and the sought-after political and economic structures in an independent Namibia. It would be interesting to analyse how this debate differs in content and aim with

the thoughts in SWAPO ranks outside Namibia. One cannot escape the impression that the new generation in Namibia is growing up, physically separated, but probably not ideologically, from the SWAPO cadres outside Namibia, although with its own independent mind. Differences between those within and without the border may prevail on details of strategy rather than on principles and objectives.

What is appreciated among the 'progressive' minded in Namibia is the most recent endeavour by SWAPO to exchange views with other political groupings in Namibia such as the break-away wing of SWANU under Rukoro and Kanguuehi, the Damara Council of Justus Garoeb, the Namibia Independence Party and Hans Röhr's NCDP. One can detect other 'progressive' groups in Namibia eager to be included in consultations with SWAPO. Its decision to open up channels of communication is timely and necessary for the reconciliation of the progressive forces in Namibia. External pressures from Africa's other governments may have contributed to this air of compromise.

Many of these groups may not consider an amalgamation with SWAPO at the present pre-independence stage because group consciousness and self-interests are still too entrenched. To break down these obstacles needs time and understanding but SWAPO could contribute much in the achievement thereof. Confidence building has become one of the most important issues in Namibia. It is not doubted that SWAPO can convincingly command majority support in an open and free election. Politically it can thus afford to play and commit itself to the role of a reconciliator.

Against the background of all the questions and issues raised, the task facing the present interim government and Namibia as a whole is not an easy one. Namibia desperately needs tranquility and hope. Human suffering has reached a degree which has become unbearable and counter-productive to a stable society. The Namibian population is tired of broken promises, of conflict, strife and war. It longs for justice, peace and freedom, real freedom, because nothing ultimately can be more expensive for human-kind than the illusion of freedom cheaply bought. Namibia is torn apart and needs independence before so much hate is generated that complete trust in one another and in the future is lost. Violence cannot but beget more violence. An end to it is desperately needed. One earnestly hopes that human concern will ultimately override the political and strategic self-interests of the powers that be.