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CRISIS NEWS

No 28

A bulletin of news and theological reflection on the
South African emergency

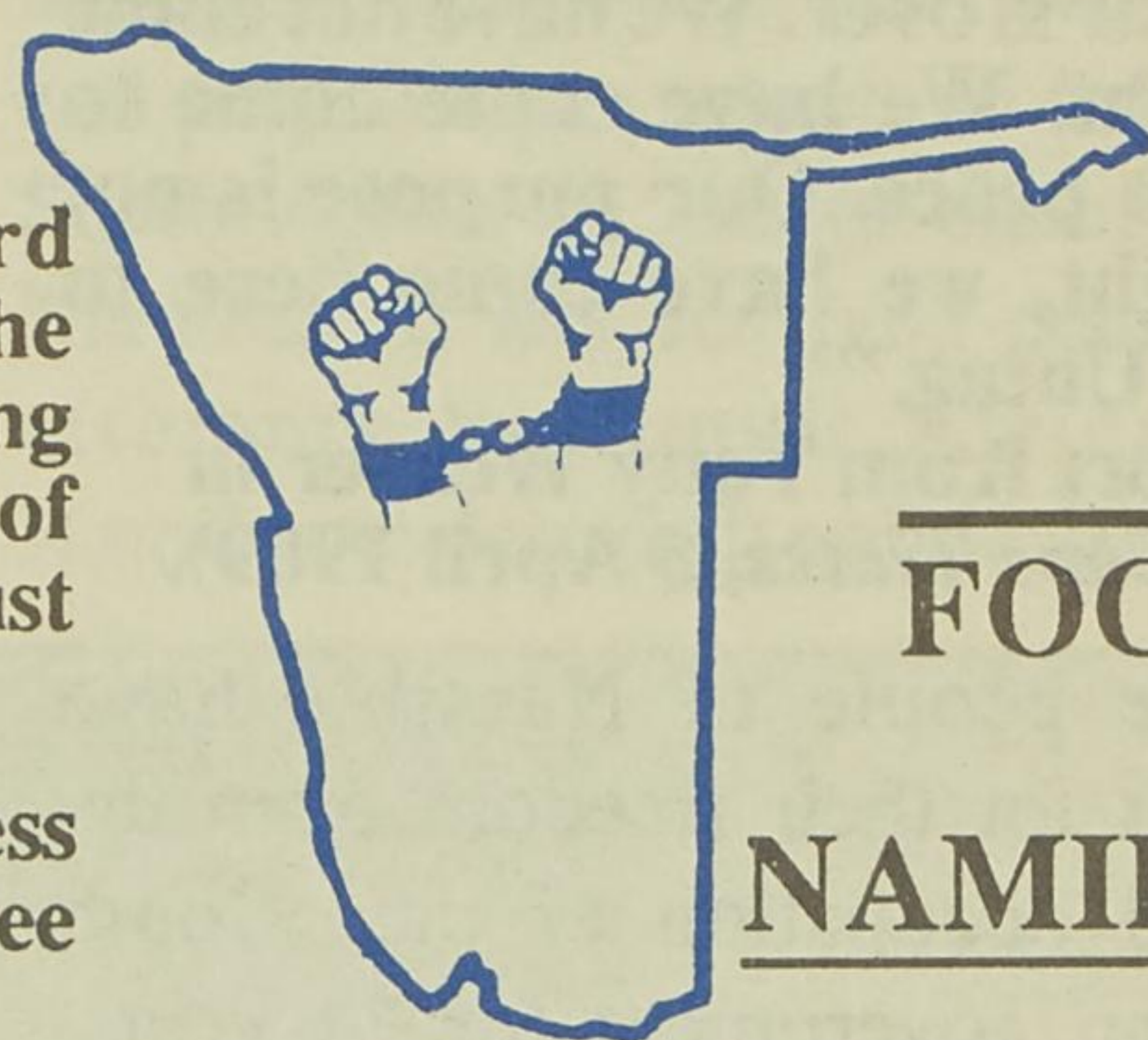
April 1989

CRY FREEDOM

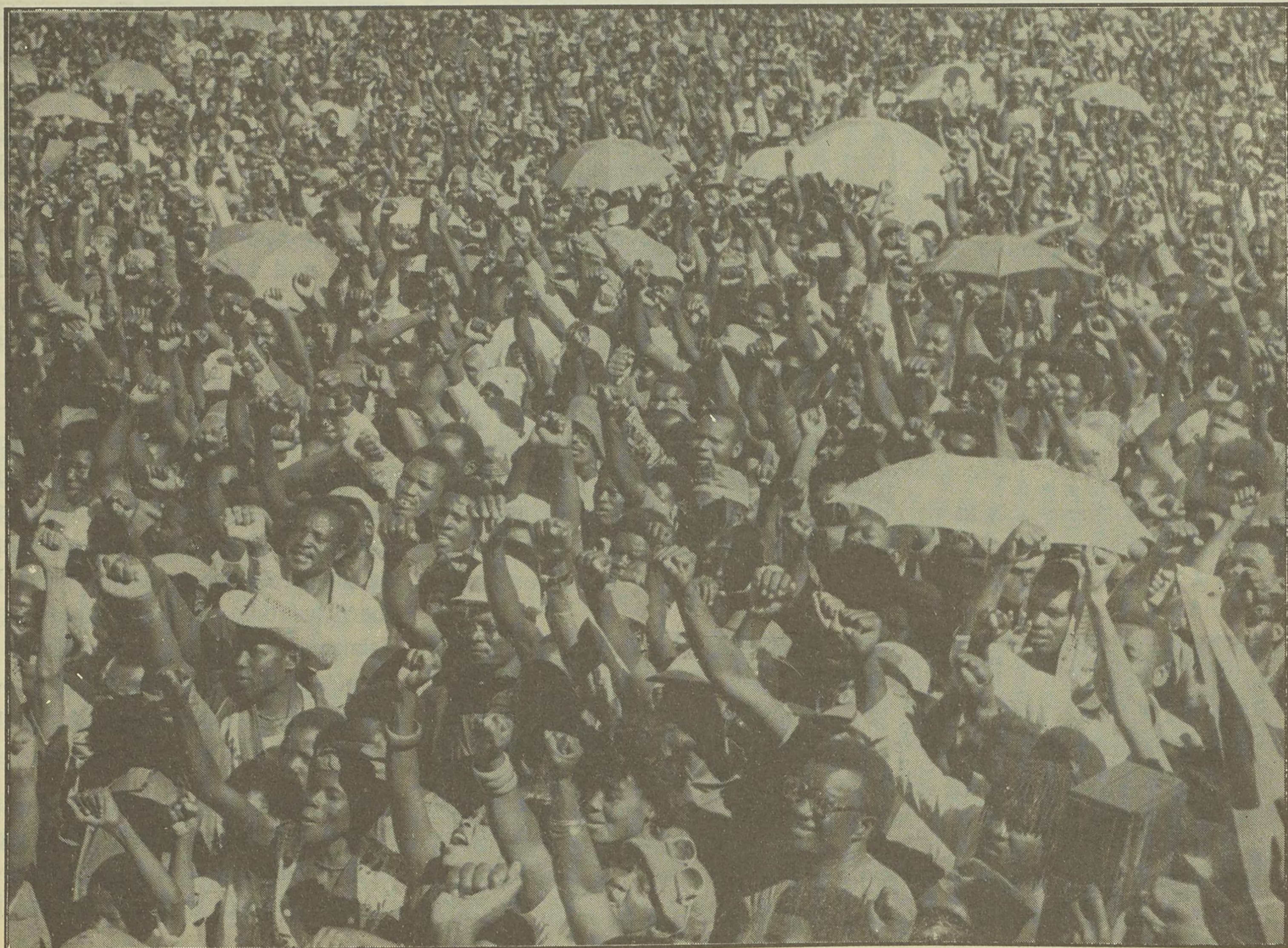
Villagers of northern Namibia say on 1 April the opening shots of the war were fired by security forces.

“The fighters (SWAPO) were relaxing under this tree when we heard the roar of vehicles in the distance. The fighters walked out to greet the vehicles, I think because they thought this was the United Nations coming to meet them. Then I saw the smoke from the bush, I heard the roar of guns, the Casspirs began to fire at them and many of the fighters died just there. The others ran into the bush and they were hunted down”.

Mr Wedeinge Josiah, a schoolteacher in Okahenga, gave this eyewitness account of the battle which started the fighting in which thirty-three

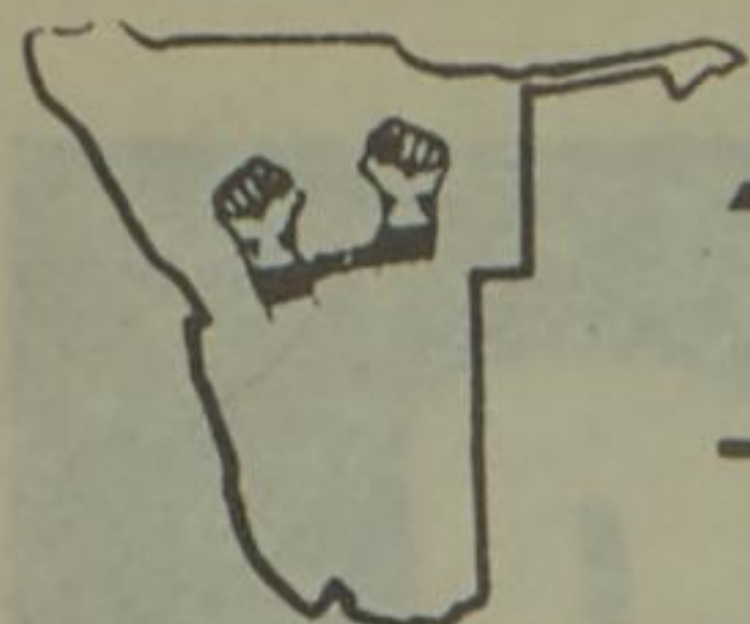


**FOCUS
ON
NAMIBIA**



20 000 Namibians show their support at a SWAPO rally in Katutura on 1 April 1989

Benny Gool



guerrillas died. Mr Josiah said that earlier in the morning he walked out of his kraal and found written in the dust "SWAPO of Namibia".

He walked a bit further into the bush and encountered a guerilla who he said was named Shimon. "I asked him what he was doing here and he said to me: 'We came here with no problems about the war. We heard on the radio that the war is over. We have not come to fight. We have come home to live in peace. Our purpose is not to fight, we have come here to meet Untag.'"

(Report from Tony Weaver in *The Cape Times*, 5 April 1989).

The people of Namibia have fought for their freedom from the illegal occupation of the South African government for 74 years. April 1 1989 was the start of the implementation of the peace plan for the independence of Namibia: Resolution 435 of the UN Security Council.

Resolution 435 provides for the independence of Namibia through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of a United Nations Transition Group; a Special Representative of the UN, (Martti Ahtissari; and the SWA Administrator-General, Louis Pienaar.

From April 1, there was to be no fighting and armed forces from South Africa and SWAPO were to

be restricted to base. However, there has been the fiercest fighting in 23 years of SWAPO's armed campaign for independence with nearly 300 people killed within a week.

South Africa has condemned SWAPO for violating the peace agreement. Untag has supported South Africa even though Pik Botha himself admits that Untag "did not have sufficient troops on the ground" to monitor the situation. Only 738 of the 4 650 were in the Namibia on April 1 and none of the 100 in the north were on the scene of the fighting when it began. Untag has been criticised not only for its absence, but also for being unhelpful or intoxicated when approached by Namibians, as well as socialising with South African troops.

When there were assaults by South African troops in Nkehemu, Ndama, Mkarambamwe and Sauyema, Untag was approached to investigate it. They responded that they were not active in the area and did not have transport. Nor did Untag report about attacks on SWAPO supporters in Tsumeb, Rundu, Onandas and Ohalushu. Many of the casualties of the fighting were civilians who supported SWAPO and not guerillas. Residents of northern Namibia have had their homes and crops destroyed in the fighting and have lost con-

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fidence in Untag to protect them.

Untag is supposed to defend the people from the SADF but instead Martii Ahtissari allowed the SADF to mobilise 1 500 troops. If the SADF had not been engaged there may have been *no fighting*. The guerillas of SWAPO are Namibians and would not kill their own people. The CCN concludes that "Helicopter gunships have been unleashed on civilians and Namibian soil now bleeds when it should be rejoicing".

The OAU, National Union of Namibian Workers and Namibian National Students' Organisation have condemned Martii Ahtissari for this decision to permit South African troops to leave their bar-

SWAPO armed troops...under 435 are not 'insurgents' but Namibians with a right to be in their own country

racks. The OAU has accused the UN of betraying the people of Namibia by allowing South African troops to maim and kill Namibians, and demands an explanation of why Untag were not in position by April 1.

The UN however defends its action by claiming that intentionally or unintentionally SWAPO misread the UN's independence plan for Namibia. "There is no provision in the independence plan for SWAPO guerrillas to be confined to bases in Namibia" said one UN official. What were the guerrillas already inside Namibia expected to do under Resolution 435?

The Namibian Communications Centre in London stated: "A group of SWAPO armed troops were inside the country as the 4am April 1

South West African Peoples' Organisation:

SWAPO

United Nations:

UN

United Nations Transition Assistance Group:

Untag

South African Defence Force:

SADF

Council of Churches in Namibia:

CCN

Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia:

PLAN

Organisation for African Unity:

OAU



CRY FREEDOM

ceasefire started. It is not known how long they had been operating in Namibia, but SWAPO has had a continuous military presence inside its own country for many years... Under 435 they are not 'insurgents' but Namibians with a right to be in their own country. With the ceasefire and 435 they are to be disarmed and confined to base, not shot at by the occupation forces."

South Africa justifies its aggressive action against SWAPO as they crossed the border into Namibia on the night of March 31/April 1. However, under Resolution 435 every exile, most of whom support SWAPO, expected to return safely to Namibia after April 1. Also SWAPO never signed the document which required that its fighters should be above Angola's 16th parallel. Britain and America claim though that SWAPO broke the peace accord and it appears they presumed SWAPO would comply with the "spirit of the agreement".

SWAPO leader, Mr Sam Nujoma said the SWAPO fighters were preparing to be confined to base under the supervision of Untag. It appears that the guerillas may have entered Namibia intending to set up base in their homeland, expecting to find Untag, hand over their weapons and be supervised at UN "assembly points. However, South Africa interpreted their actions as a "deed of war" and took the UN's decision as an opportunity to unleash its troops against SWAPO.

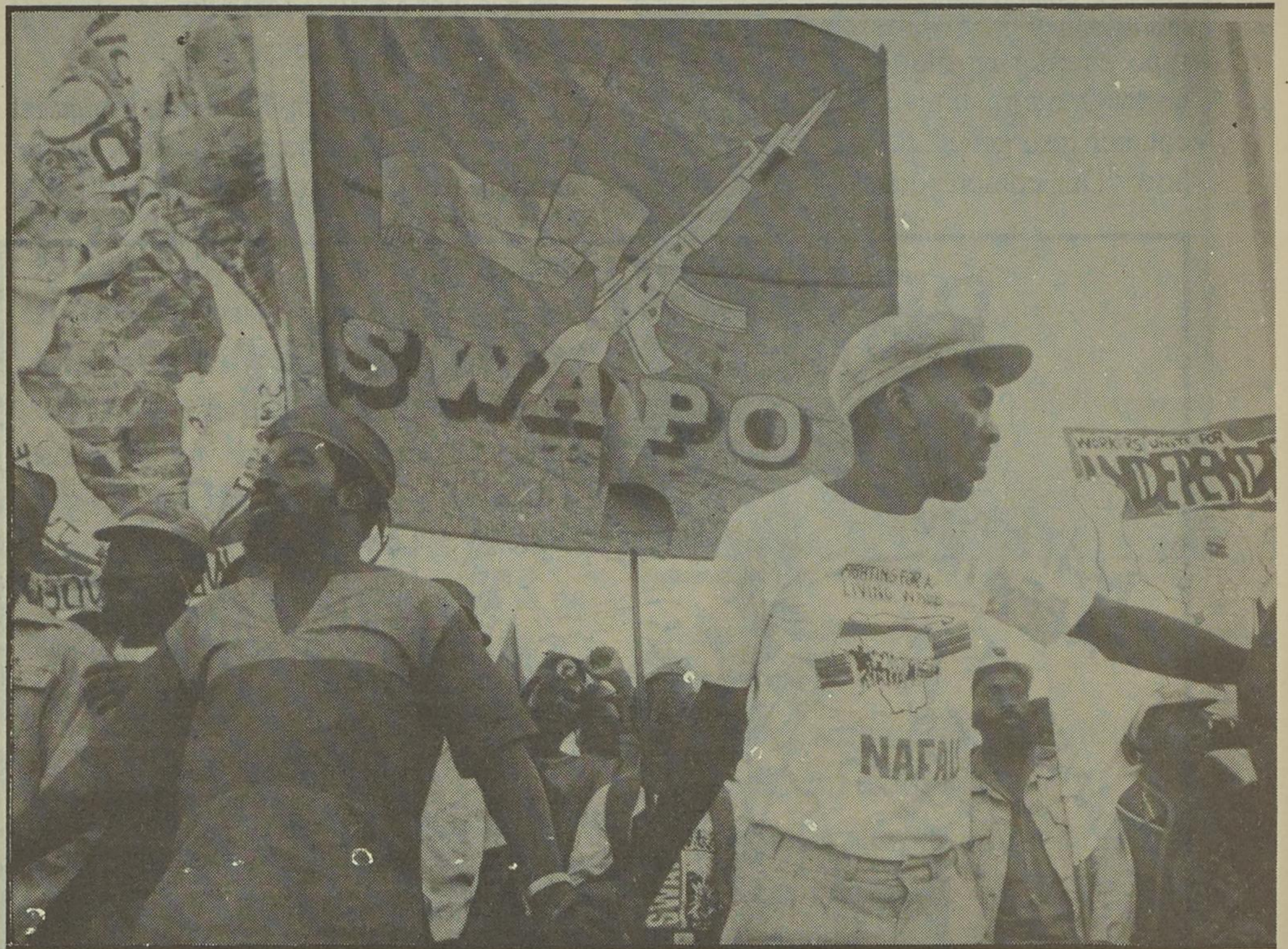
South Africa upholds itself as the peacekeeper in Namibia and SWAPO as the aggressor, but if South African troops were not fight-

ing there would probably be no bloodshed. It appears from several bodies of SWAPO members which have been dug up that they were run over by armoured vehicles and not even engaged in combat. Some bodies show the fighters were shot at close range with small weapons, not the normal machine guns, and may have been killed after they surrendered.

On 10 April after a week of war, South Africa gave ceasefire orders to its troops. As agreed with Angola and Cuba, SWAPO guerillas were to be allowed safely out of Namibia

was afraid to enter into a democratic procedure and attempted to project itself as an intimidatory organisation to win the elections. Yet a news report criticising Mr Sam Nujoma (SWAPO) of trying an "election-winning ploy" admits that "Mr Numjoma would win anyway".

The years of struggle in Namibia has won SWAPO the support of the majority. It has fought for liberation and played a crucial role in forcing South Africa to accept change in Namibia. It has survived constant attempts by South Africa in Namibia to destroy it politically and



50 000 workers in SWAPO colours march against privatisation in Namibia on 1 April

Benny Gool

within 72 hours. They were to meet at 10 "assembly points" supervised by Untag, hand over their weapons and be escorted to base beyond the 16th parallel inside Angola by April 15. South Africa is deliberately trying to undermine and discredit SWAPO through the conflict, both within Namibia and to the world. P W Botha suggests that SWAPO

militarily. It has also gained the respect of the international community. South Africa will try to eliminate support for SWAPO in the months leading up to the election in Namibia, but the people of Namibia have shown their colours when on April 1, 50 000 people marched in the streets of Namibia in the red, blue and green of SWAPO. □



PROTECT PEOPLES' PROPERTY FROM SOUTH AFRICA

A future independent government of Namibia faces serious problems with rebuilding the country after South Africa's occupation.

South Africa is likely to destabilise the country through direct aggression, economic pressure or co-opted forces. Magnus Malan has stressed that South Africa will maintain its opposition to SWAPO rule while he and the military "have any say in the matter". He added "It was always our policy to keep Marxism and 'peoples' democracy' from our front door. We will not turn from this path".

There have been regular reports in The Namibian of the SADF creating a vigilante-type counter-revolutionary force in the north. One former member of Koevoet, the counter-insurgency police unit explained how "Our commanding officer, Capt En-

gelbrecht, warned us that simply because we were no longer Koevoet did not mean that we were still not going to war. He said that should SWAPO come to power then we would fight again".

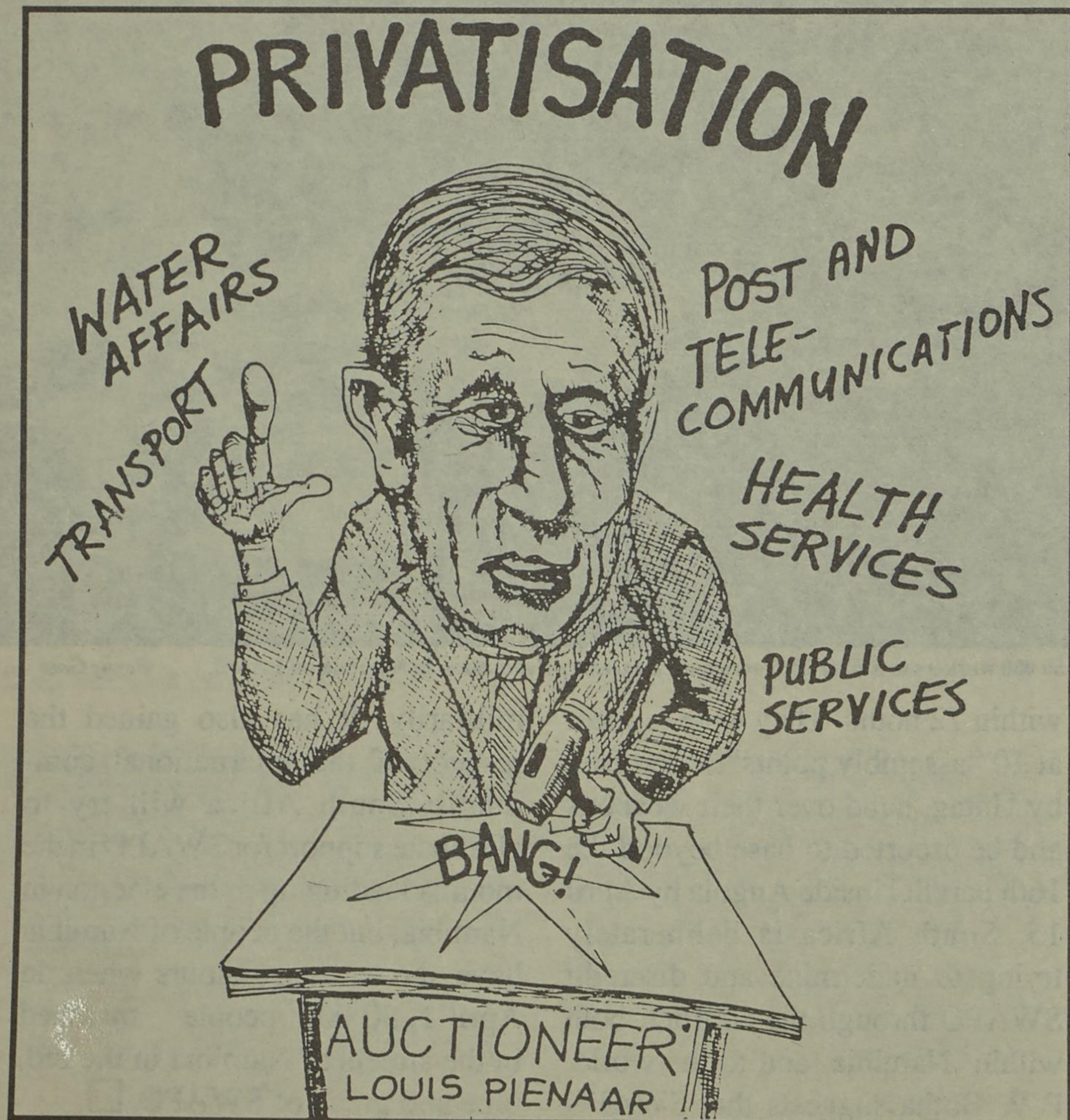
Walvis Bay will be a problem for Namibia as Resolution 435 has compromised on its status. Although the United Nations has demanded its reintegration into Namibia, 435 implicitly accepts South Africa's continued control after independence, is of great economic importance. It is the only deep-water harbour in the country and it would cost Namibia several billion to construct another harbour. If they do not have their own port, South Africa can use it as a way to force the government into submission.

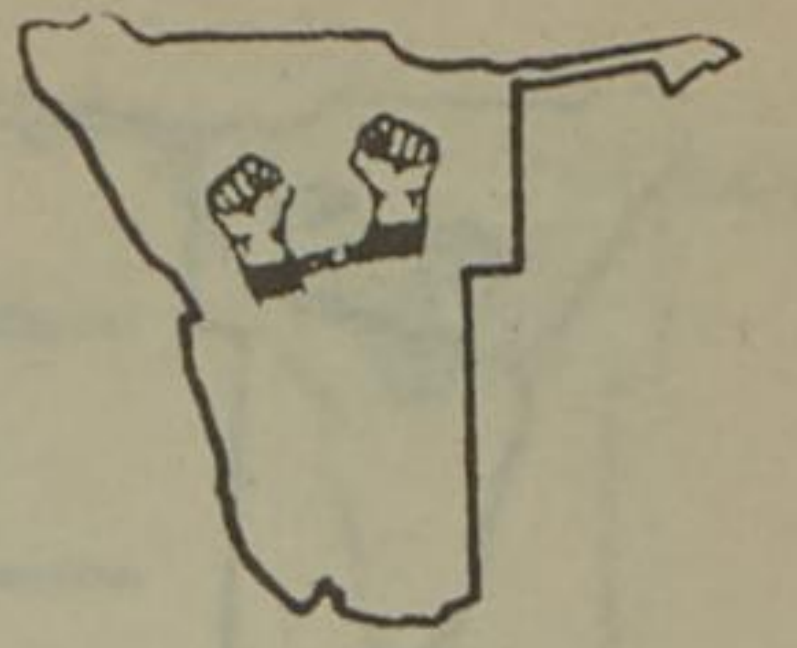
Namibia will not have the financial resources to meet the needs of its people immediately, particularly the 100 000

refugees who will return to the country from Angola and Botswana. Nor will it be able to generate wealth properly. Its economy has been unbalanced to meet the needs of South Africa and has damaged Namibia. For example, 90% of goods produced are exported, and 80% of goods consumed, including half the foodstuffs, are imported. Namibia relies on South Africa for its manufacturing needs and for its transport system. It will be forced to remain dependent on South Africa long after independence. Also South Africa has deprived Namibia of foreign capital. Although Namibia exports more than it imports, its exports have been channelled through South Africa. South Africa has received the foreign currency and paid Namibia in rands. There are no exchange controls either between South Africa and Namibia, and Namibia's capital could be drained from an autobank in South Africa without restrictions.

Louis Pienaar, the South West African Administrator-General is trying to sabotage control of public services before the new government is elected. He is selling the hospitals, health services, the post offices and telephone systems, medical schemes, water affairs and others to private companies. He claims he wants to sell these services because of the inefficiency and high costs. It is alleged that the expenses are caused by the tribal administrations which are corrupt but that he protects them. If the services are made private, they will be even more expensive as the companies will want to make money out of the people.

50 000 Namibian workers marched against this attempt at privatisation on 1 April 1989. They oppose it as public services are the property of the people and the people pay taxes from them. They believe a future government must control these services, not private companies. SWAPO has rejected "attempts of the foreign oppressor to auction off our country" and call for "Protect Peoples' Property, Reject Privatisation!". It wants the economy to be planned in a way that benefits all Namibians. □





The Resisting Church

Dr Abisai Shejavali, the General Secretary of the Council of Churches of Namibia (CCN) offers a message of hope to the people of Namibia: *"Raise your heads because liberation is at hand"*.

The church in Namibia has taken a strong stand against South Africa's illegal occupation. Because of this the government has made the church one of its main targets of destabilisation. Clearly, the body of the church recognises the evils in the system and works to promote peace and justice.

As we have experienced in South Africa, the government does not only try to disrupt the work of the church, but adopts a strategy of Low Intensity Conflict. It has also tried to co-opt certain sectors of the church for its own use and propaganda. Whilst some churches seem to have been influenced by this strategy of the government, the people of Namibia have experienced too much hardship to be fooled. The CCN are in close contact with the experiences of the people and have actively worked to bring about liberation through Christ.

Namibians are keen churchgoers who have looked to the CCN for direction. Dan Tjongarero and Bob Kendeto, both active members of SWAPO, are also church leaders in Namibia. In this way, the struggle for independence and freedom come from within the church which has a strong relationship with SWAPO.

Reports from ministers in Namibia reflect the oppression

which has been directed towards themselves and their congregations.

Koevoet has attended services, dragged members of the congregation outside and beaten them. Several church workers have either been detained, banned or killed by the security forces.

Another account reveals how four Dutch Reformed dominees were refused salaries by their 'mother church' and one dominee was detained for two weeks for offering refuge to a group of parents and students who wanted the Army bases to be moved away from the schools. But the resistance is strong. One Lutheran minister said, "Whatever the case South Africa will not win this war".

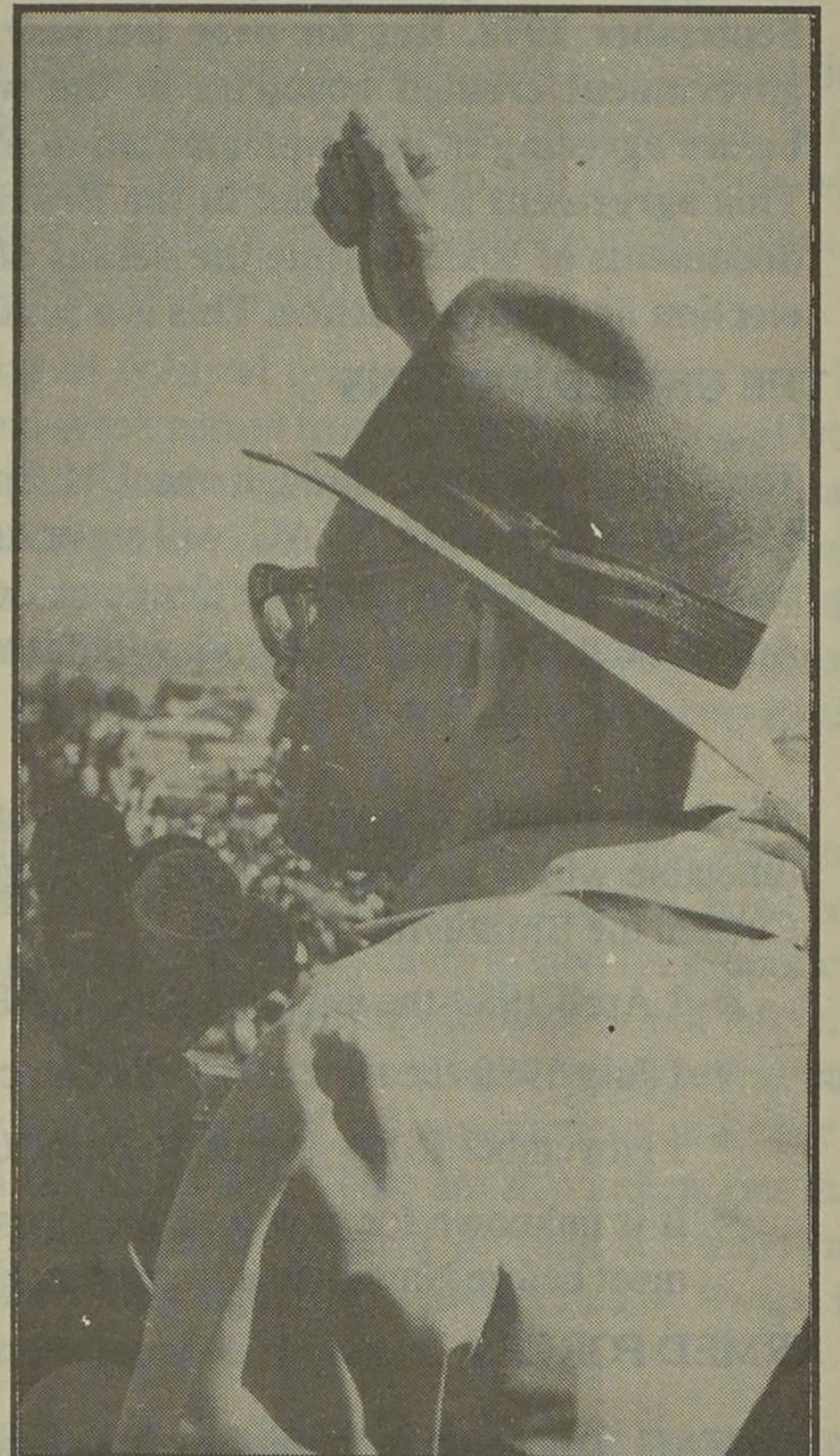
In Walvis Bay, church work is very strong and the people are deeply aware of the issues facing them. Basis Christian Communities have been formed to constructively address problems which they may encounter in the community. Bible study groups have also started in hostels and these are working very well. The church in this area is essential because of South Africa's strong presence.

Dr Shejavali (CCN) was told that SWAPO is accused of being a "communist organisation" and he was asked whether it would repress the Church if it comes to power in an Independent Namibia. He answered that he had visited exiles under the protection of SWAPO and that he was also free to bring the gospel to the members.

Dr Shejavali continued, "And I could not have prayed with Sam Nujoma and others. Because when we are travelling and meet them, they do ask us to say a prayer for

them". Clearly, the church has a central role to play in the liberation of the Namibian people. The CCN aims to preach a gospel of "reconciliation, peace and freedom".

The demands of the progressive church in Namibia, join the demands of those who have lived



Pastor Kameeta of the CCN

Benny Gool

under South African domination for too long.

- The withdrawal of all South African troops
- The implementation of R435
- The securing of a SWAPO majority
- National independence and sovereignty.

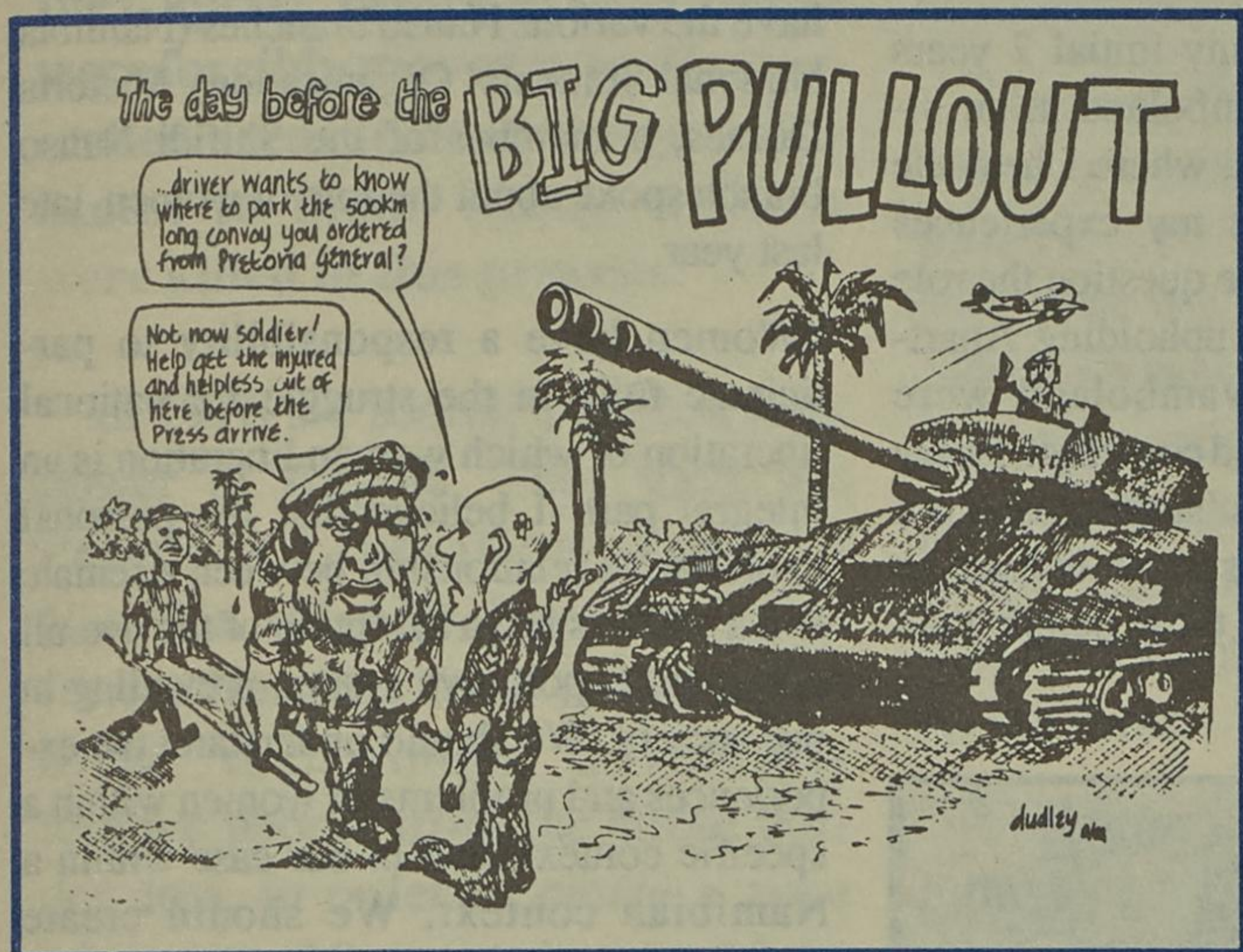
The church has been actively involved in working with all Namibians to stand as a united and resistant force against the illegal government. One Lutheran minister said, "our people decided that they would rather die than succumb to such an evil government". □



435 IS A COMPROMISE...

Mr Pik Botha, the South African minister of Foreign Affairs has said, "I do not think we did the right thing when we took over South West Africa. Its not ours". The 20 000 Swapo

enter Namibia due to the Aids scare. This could result in delaying their entry and therefore exclude them from participating in the election. Swapo claims that there are up to 100 000 people who are either refugees or in exile, whilst pro-South African parties in Windhoek say there are only 25 000.



supporters who met at a rally on April 1 agree. Now, although R435 has been accepted as the peace plan for Namibia, both Swapo and South African forces continue to battle and the future of the resolution is in question. In itself, R435 is a compromise and allows South Africa to use it to its own advantage.

Despite the provisions set out in R435, Namibians continued to be conscripted into the South West African Territory Force (SWATF) early this year and police on a two-year contract have been promised R300 extra a month. The South African troops are only expected to withdraw after the elections and the Administrator General and the police will govern Namibia during the transition period. As the northern border of Namibia turns into a graveyard contrary to the ceasefire agreement, R435 has temporarily failed to promote peace in Namibia.

The voting age is one of the major undecided issues. The SA government is intent on raising the age to 21 knowing that this will exclude one-third of the Swapo supporters. R435 has overlooked this and therefore allows the government to intervene through Administrator-General, Louis Pienaar. The same applies to refugees and exiles who were to be welcomed back to Namibia in terms of R435. The government had said that only those who have been in the country for a minimum of two years will be eligible to vote. This will include 100 000 SA troops who have been there as long as this period. The government are also insisting that the refugees undergo a medical examination before being allowed to

R435 states that all political prisoners and detainees will be released over a nine-week period from 1 April. But, General Dolf Gouws, the Namibian commissioner of police says, "there are absolutely no political prisoners here". It is possible that because political prisoners are classified as common law criminals the government will say that they cannot be released. Gouws also said that jailed Swapo guerillas "are just people who have committed crimes".

R435 does not make provision for UNITA's possible intervention in Namibia's process of independence. Pretoria has been accused of granting Namibian identity cards to UNITA supporters enabling them to vote in the upcoming election. South Africa's close relationship with UNITA continues as reports reveal that UNITA troops to act on behalf of the government and have a strong presence in Namibia itself. There are also indications that a rebel "contra" group will be formed to fight a Swapo-run Namibia. Mr Mishake Muyongo, who was expelled by Swapo in 1980 appears to be the proposed leader.

Walvis Bay is clearly overlooked by R435 which has accepted and allowed South Africa's continued occupation of the territory. There is a chance that South African troops may only withdraw as far as Walvis Bay because it is seen by the government and R435 as belonging to them. This would mean that the 100 000 South African troops would not have left Namibia at all. Likewise the members of the SWATF are almost all Namibians who are eligible to remain in the country and also to vote. They will be in conflict with the aims of Namibian independence and could work in opposition to it.

The role of UNTAG has been weak and ineffectual. Many forces have still not arrived and the fact that UNTAG forces were decreased from 7 500 to 4 650 is proof that they will not be able to monitor the transition process efficiently. Their presence on the northern border was not evident on April 1, yet R435 says that they will "ensure the orderly transition to independence". As anti-Swapo campaigns continue and South Africa is accused of trying to form an election alliance with anti-Swapo black groups, R435 has not addressed these specific aspects of the independence process. Resolution 435 offers hope for peace and independence in Namibia provided that UNTAG take up their responsibility as set out in R435 to be an unbiased group who monitor the independence process through "free and fair elections". □



The Process of Independence

What is Resolution 435 ?

Resolution 435 was first proposed by five Western powers; the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, Canada and France to ensure the independence of Namibia. It was adopted by the United Nations Security Council as Resolution 435 and was approved in principle by SWAPO and South Africa on 29 September 1978. But for over ten years the South African government created obstacles in the way of independence before agreeing to the implementation of R435 late last year. This agreement is included in the Brazzaville Protocol. The documents of R435 outline the details of the processes of the election and independence. This is a summary:

THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations, through the UN Special Representative, Martti Ahtisaari and UNTAG, will supervise the process of independence through free and fair elections. Louis Pienaar, the SWA Administrator-General will work with them.

The road towards independence will operate according to a strict timetable which was agreed upon by Angola, South Africa and Cuba in the Brazzaville Protocol.

- * 1 April 1989-the implementation of Resolution 435.
- * 1 July 1989-the start of the election campaign.
- * 1 November 1989- elections for the Constituent Assembly.
- * It is unknown for how long the Constituent Assembly will meet before Namibian independence is ensured.

ARMED FORCES

UNTAG is meant to monitor the withdrawal and movement of all armed forces of Namibia.

- * South African and SWAPO forces will be restricted to base.
- * From 1 April 1989 to 1 July 1989, all South African troops will withdraw from Namibia except for 1 500 who will leave when the outcome of the election is known.
- * The "citizen forces, commandos and ethnic forces" will be disbanded.
- * SWAPO is not allowed any bases inside of Namibia and UNTAG will monitor bases which are outside the country.
- * SWAPO members who are now outside of Namibia will be allowed to return peacefully at specific entrances.

POLICE FORCES

- * The present police force will be expected to maintain "law and order" during the election process.
- * They will only be allowed to carry small arms in their day to day duties.
- * Their actions will be monitored by the Administrator-General to the satisfaction of the UN Special Representative.
- * If necessary UNTAG representatives accompany the police.

DETAINEES AND REFUGEES

- * Before the election campaign, detainees and political prisoners will be released.
- * Those in exile will be allowed to return.

THE ELECTION

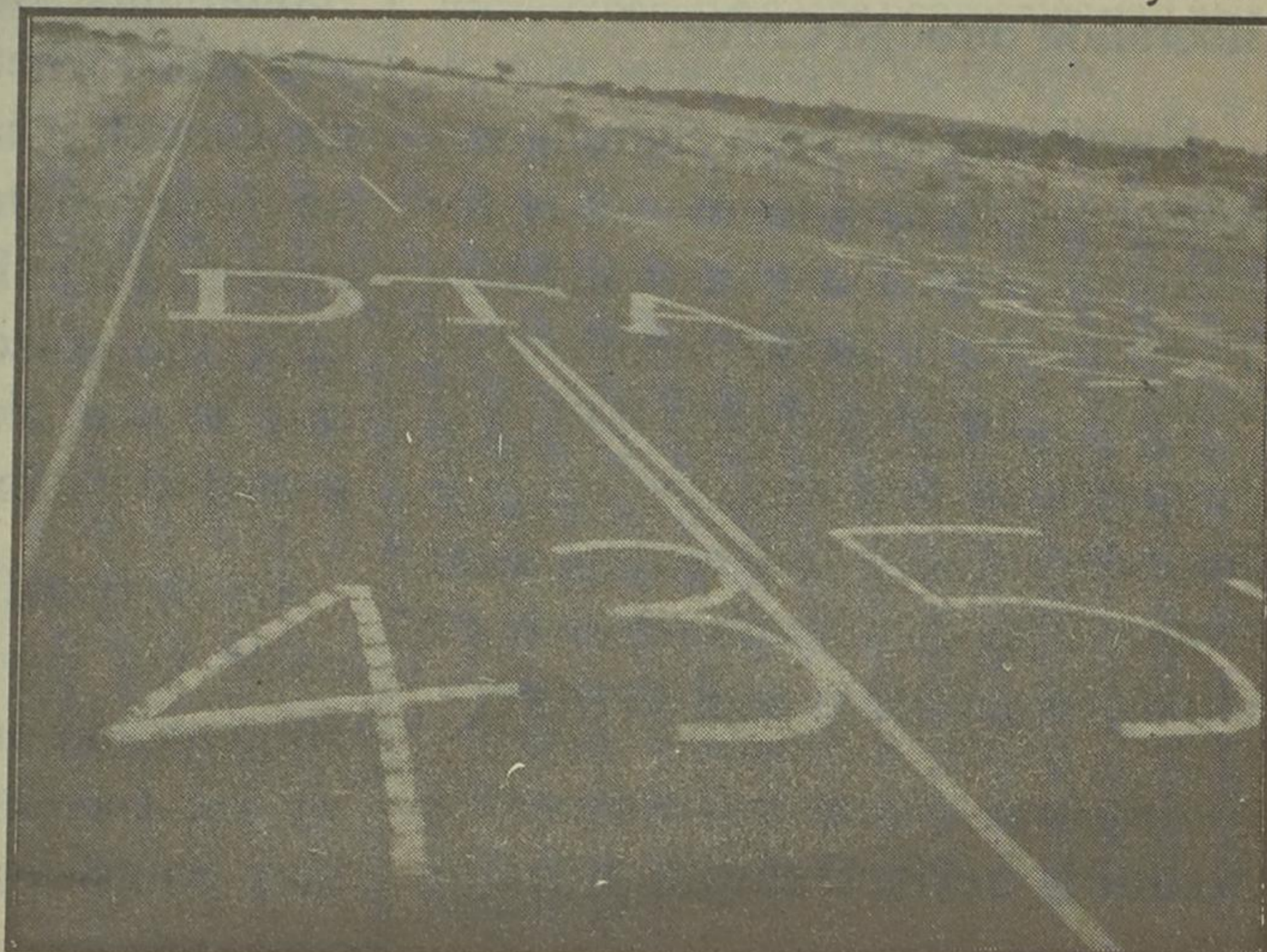
- * It is the task of the UN Special Representative to ensure that the process is "free and fair" including the results. He will also ensure that there is no intimidation or interference from any group. UNTAG will assist.
- * Before the election campaign, the Administrator-General will abolish all discriminatory laws and measures which might affect the election process.
- * Any measure which was previously decided upon by the illegal administration in opposition to UN-made resolutions will fall away.
- * It is important to note that the election will not be for a new government but for the Constituent Assembly.
- * The election will be held nation-wide and adults will be eligible to vote (The voting age is still being debated).
- * During the election freedom of speech, assembly, movement and press will be ensured.

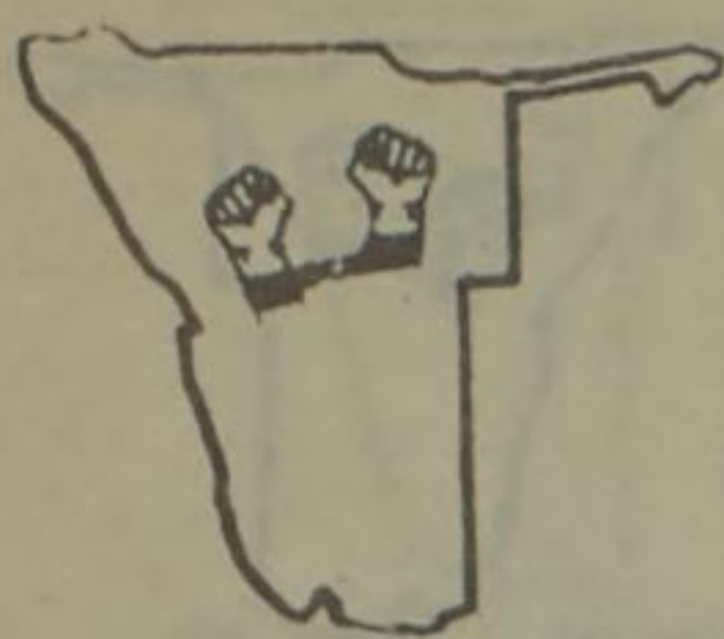
THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

- * Any decisions by the Assembly must be taken by a two-thirds majority.
- * The task of the Assembly will be to draw up a constitution for an independent Namibia.
- * Other guidelines are: to finalise a Bill of Fundamental Human Rights, to exercise regular elections for the various branches of the government and to form an independent judiciary.

Resolution 435 as it is presented here ensures that there will be no intimidation and that eventually Namibia will be free to act independent of South Africa. □

Benny Gool





Personal Perspectives On Namibia

What the People Say:

EX-RIFLEMAN SPEAKS:

In Namibia in 1980 I didn't mind taking suspects for painful rides in the tiny boot of a Buffel. We were all callous. But in April my platoon was sent our unit's first 'kill' back from Angola. When the corpse was displayed the base troops jumped on it until thick blood oozed out. Many of us were shocked. Later we didn't care about the 'kills' displayed on the parade ground. I remember one whose belly was shot away; his intestines looked horribly like sausages.

In July I guarded a captured guerilla. He was handcuffed in a pitch-dark bunker which he shared with the riddled body of his section commander, to soften him up. I felt bad to do this, but I didn't refuse. In August guard duties exempted me from having to escort the intelligence officer to interrogate a woman suspected of Swapo links. He beat her and made her dig a shallow grave and fired shots past her head as she lay in it. I was glad to miss that. But only one other member of my section agreed with me."

OBJECTOR SPEAKS:

Many young South Africans have served in Namibia as part of their compulsory 2-years military service for the SADF. Saul Batzofin, a 28 year old business economics graduate is currently on trial for refusing to continue to serve in the SADF. If convicted he will face a maximum jail sentence of 18 months. The time he spent in Namibia for the SADF resulted in his rejection of the role that it has played since occupation.

"I spent 18 months of my initial 2 years military service in Ovamboland in an infantry battalion HQ unit, where I held the rank of corporal. It was my experiences there which first made me question the role that the SADF plays in upholding Apartheid. Residents of Ovamboland were treated with disrespect and contempt. Every single black civilian was 'suspect' and not to be trusted. There was more interest in intimidating and scaring these people than in helping them."



Saul Batzofin

Eric Miller

WOMAN SPEAKS:

The role of women in Namibia has been highlighted as central to the overall fight against South African occupation and the part which it has played in separating people in terms of class, race and sex. Hard work has been done to make Namibian women aware of the constructive role which they can play towards and indeed, in a new Namibia. The Swapo Women's Council has been active in this regard, as have the various Nanso branches (Namibia National Students' Organisation). Victoria Doeses, a member of the Shifidi Nanso branch spoke about the role of women late last year.

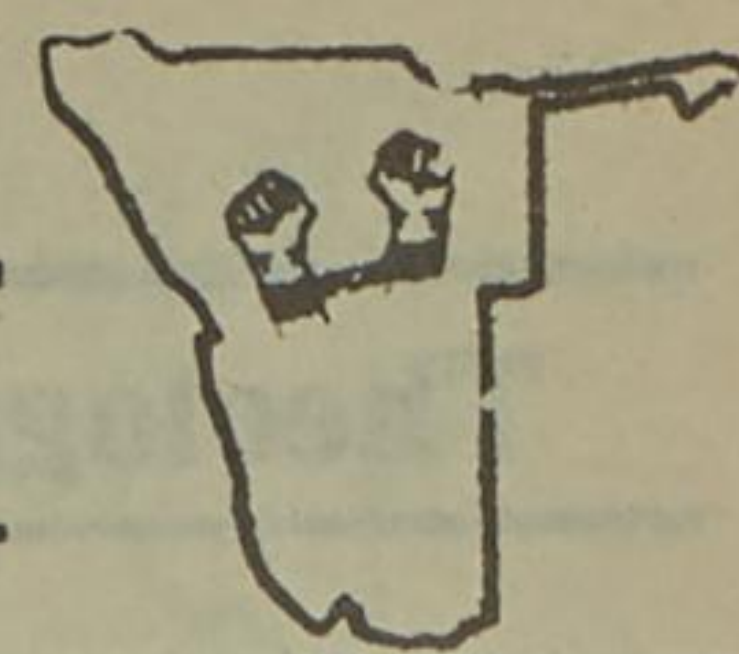
"Women have a responsibility to participate fully in the struggle for national liberation of which women liberation is an integral part. I believe that the personal exploitative relationship between a female and a male, is just a symptom of the overall dominant exploitative system prevailing in our society. We should understand the experiences and problems of women within a specific context, and in our case within a Namibian context. We should create awareness among the people about the dangers of sexism. I strongly believe that only when we establish a non-exploitative order, that the women question will be fundamentally resolved."

BRIEF ON THE NAMIBIA INFORMATION GROUP

The Namibia Information Group (NIG) was formed at the end of 1988 as a sub-committee of Cape Democrats. NIG's role is to collect and interpret information about developments in Namibia, and to disseminate this information to progressive organisations and the public. NIG provided resource material for this issue of *Crisis News*.

The group's research and information centres mainly around the following areas: the independence process; the history and policy of Swapo; short and long term issues of transformation and reconstruction; South Africa's interference in the election process; the political history and economy of Namibia; and the history and future of the security forces.

NIG is currently compiling a series of factsheets and collecting informative press articles on these areas. It is keen to make its resources available to organisations and individuals, and to work with other groups that are interested in Namibia. NIG can be contacted c/o Cape Democrats, P O Box 21, Salt River, 7925. ☐



NAMIBIA: SA's VIETNAM

The SADF went to northern Namibia in strength in 1972. In 1973 they took over control of the combat zone from the SAP, who had run the war since 1966. The SADF tried to contain the Ovamboland and keep guerillas out of the Caprivi. People in the Caprivi were forcibly moved to easily-controlled areas to deny the guerillas access to them. Many civilians were killed in this process.

In 1976 the socialist MPLA took power in Angola. They gave the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) freedom to infiltrate Namibia from Angola. The SADF then sought to forcibly remove people from the entire border area, in order to create a zone where anything moving could be killed. However, many Ovamboes

had traditionally ignored the border, since many communities straddled it, and thus the area could not be cleared of civilians. The SADF therefore introduced a dawn-to-dusk curfew, during which anyone in the open could be killed. Many civilians died as a result.

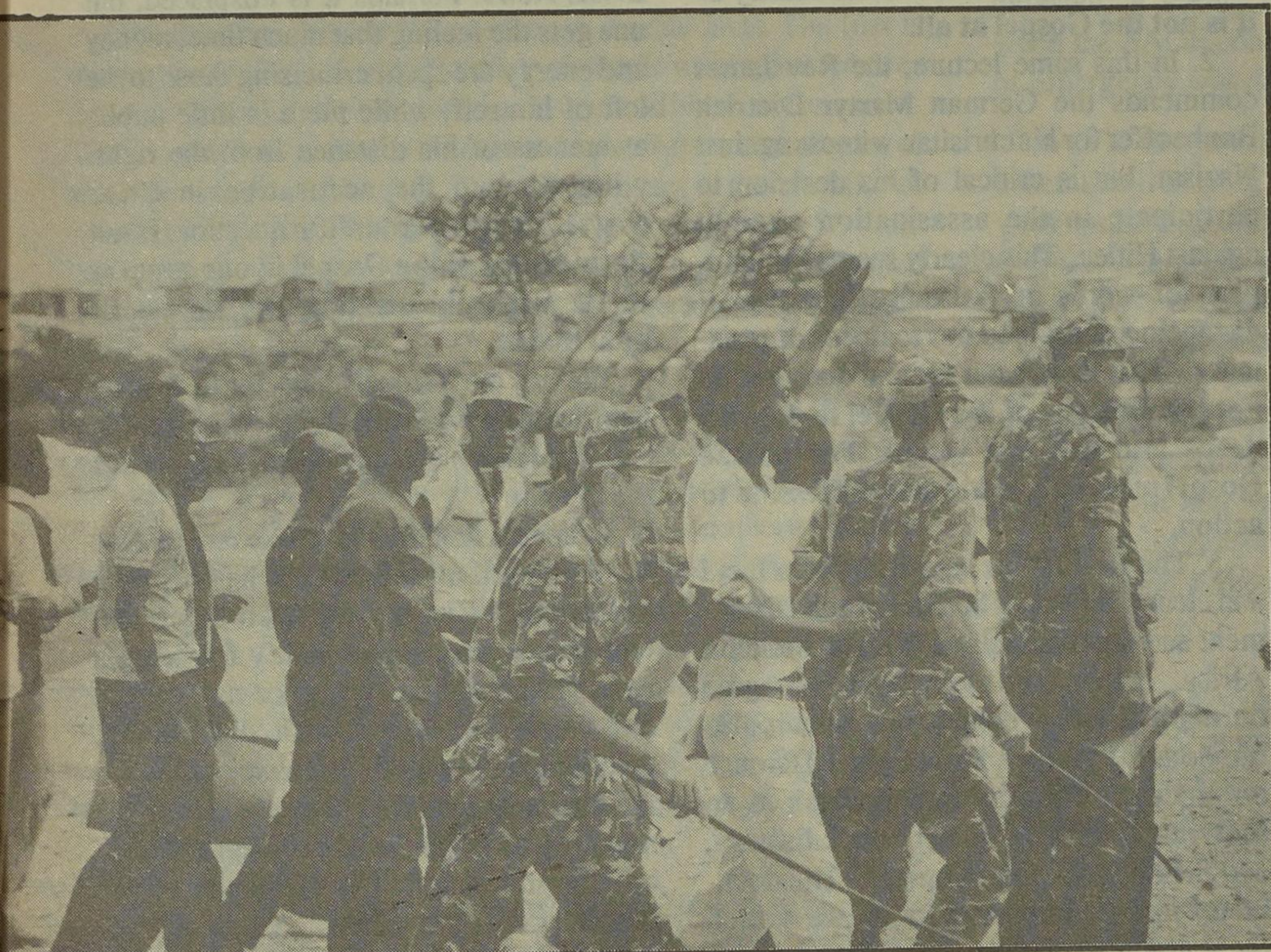
The SADF first attacked PLAN bases in Angola in 1978. An armoured unit first raided a PLAN base near the border - an operation overshadowed by the simultaneous massacres of refugees at the Kassinga camp deeper in Angola. It is likely that the SADF command knew that the victims of this attack would be civilians.

Invasions into Angola grew commonplace in the 1980s. There were two in 1980 (Sceptic and Klipklop), one in 1981 (Protea, the occupation

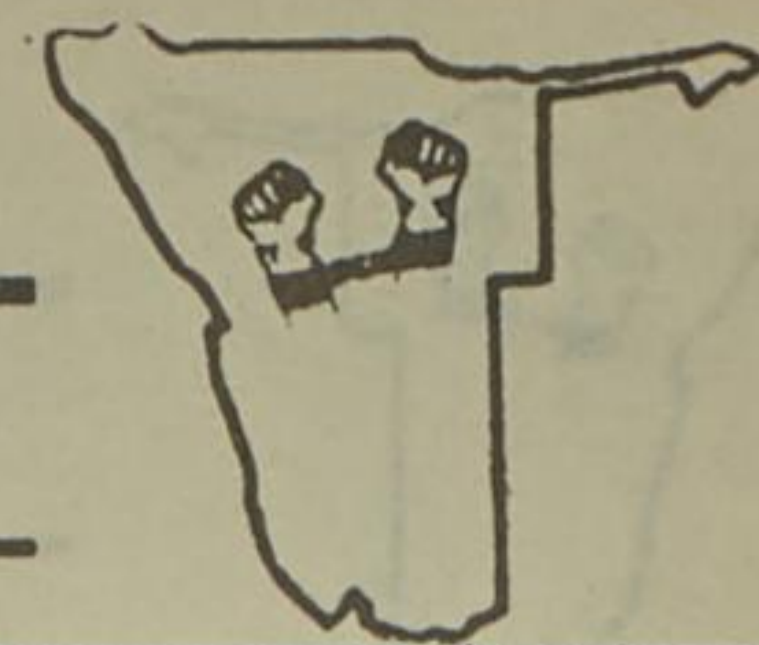
of southern Angola), one in 1982 (Daisy), a very large one in 1983-4 (Askari), two in 1985, one in 1986 and in 1987, and a bombing raid in March 1988. (These were operations allegedly aimed against SWAPO.) Smaller operations went on continuously.

The SADF built up a huge force in Namibia, increasingly using Namibian-manned South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) for combat. By 1989 SWATF numbered 35 000. The most active force though, was Koevoet (later called the Counter Insurgency Unit - COIN), a 4000-strong police unit set up in 1979. It used mobility, firepower and ruthlessness, killing civilians and torturing captives in pursuit of information. Koevoet troops were ill-disciplined and often killed civilians for personal reasons.

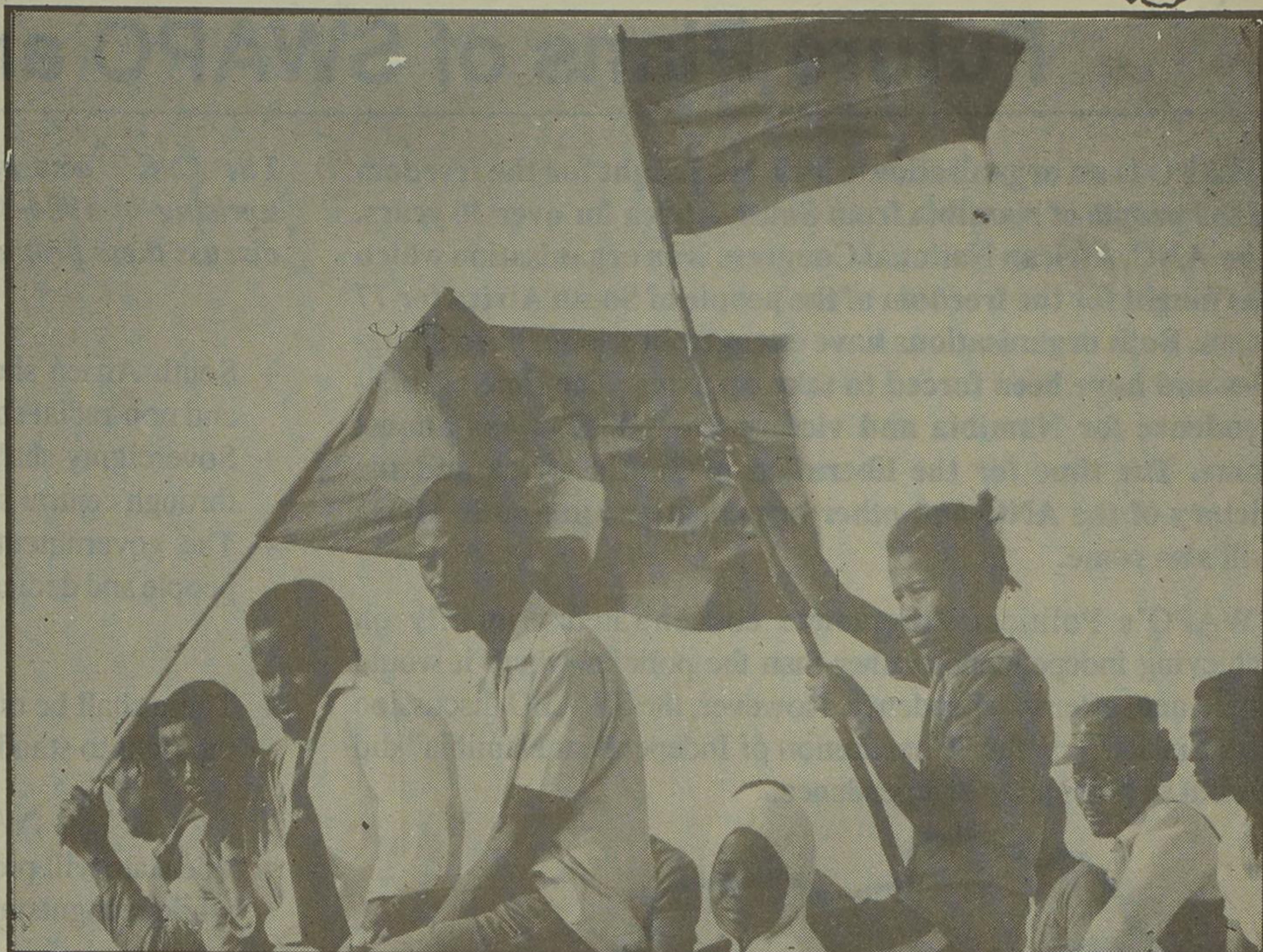
Later in the 1980s atrocities became common even among regular SWATF troops. The SADF encouraged this process of the collapse of discipline by using SWATF to disrupt SWAPO rallies. In 1986 a SWAPO leader, Emmanuel Shifidi, was killed by SWATF troops in one of these operations in Windhoek (leading to the 'Windhoek 6' trial). These operations proved as useless as any others had in destroying resistance. By late 1988, military violence was winding down as the beginning of the independence process drew nearer. In 22 years of war, South Africa has killed some 13 000 Namibians, according to official figures. Pretoria has yet to show a sign of regret. □



Police breaking up a meeting for UN International Year of Peace in 26 January 1989 John Liebenberg



THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM



One Namibia, One Nation: SWAPO Rally in Windhoek 1987

John Liebenberg

In the past, the history of Namibia and its people was presented as a victory for the colonists and served to justify settler rule. Only in the last twenty years have people begun to write about Namibia from the perspective of those who are victims of colonisation. The Namibians have therefore moved towards a new history, a history which is intensely linked to Swapo and the resistance fought against both German and South African colonisation.

It is clear that this history covers two crucial facts. The first is the question of land. A small number of people were scattered over the vast Namibian territory with its strange and harsh environment. The struggle against the environment must form a central part of any new history of Namibia. The second factor is the brutality of colonial rule. It was not only brutal in that it spread over 95 years (Germany, 21 years; South Africa, 74 years) but that it deprived the Namibians of their independence and forced them to live under an illegal government.

Much of the twentieth century history of Namibia is the story of the way people have been stripped of their land and livelihood and been forced to be the lowest class of the society. In the early part of the century, the people of central and southern Namibia suffered the most as 75% of all Hereros were killed during the 1904-7 uprising. This was as a result of the 'extermination order' of General von Trotha. Resistance against South African rule after 1915 took many forms but was seen to later manifest itself in the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) when it was founded by Ovambo contract labourers in 1957 in Cape Town. SWAPO was founded as the Ovamboland People's Congress but in 1960 changed its name for the second time.

Swapo gathered great support throughout Namibia as brutality by the occupational forces strengthened. In 1960, the South African Police shot 11 people following demonstrations against

forced removals to the new black township Katutura outside Windhoek. Heavy repression followed by the SAP causing many Swapo leaders including Sam Nujoma to flee the country to seek outside support. Soon after this Swapo guerillas began to return to Namibia. In 1966, Swapo applied to the World Court in an attempt to have South African control of Namibia declared illegal. This failed and in August of the same year, the first battle between Swapo and the SAP took place in Ovamboland where Swapo was defeated. A strong reinforcement of SAP followed until 1972 when the SADF continued the role of the SAP. This year a State of Emergency was declared.

In 1973 the guerilla force of Swapo was renamed the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). The grassroots political work embarked on by Swapo led to heavy repression and this resulted in thousands of Namibians leaving the country in 1973 to join PLAN. Because of this, the internal organisation suffered. PLAN set up bases in Angola in 1975 which were attacked by the SADF in 1978. It was also at this time that the SADF killed refugees at the Kassinga camp. SADF attacked PLAN bases again in 1980 and after this all Swapo gatherings were once more banned. This ban was only lifted with the formation of the SA-sponsored 'Interim Government' in 1985. In 1984, 100 SA spies were detected within Swapo, some were leaders who are still being held.

The role of the SADF in Namibia for all these years has resulted in the death of many Namibians and South Africans particularly in the late 1980's. This bitter legacy must make way for the new history as it forms itself within an independent Namibia. The past history as described by colonial historians must not hinder, but serve to promote the building of a new, more peaceful and more just country in the future. □

RWCG's: AN OPEN RESPONSE FROM CRISIS NEWS

Crisis News received many responses to its November Issue dealing with Right Wing Christian Groups (RWCG's). It was quoted in a horrendously slanderous article about Liberation Theology in the television magazine, *Personality*. It has given new eyes to many who were uninformed about this undercover coalition of darkness stealthily creeping through the churches of our land. It upset some people who felt unjustly accused of being 'right-wing'.

The person who was most upset was the Rev James of The Protestant Association of South Africa. He has been in contact with *Crisis News* on a number of occasions, demanding an apology - and has approached The Media Council of South Africa to mediate the dispute. The thrust of his argument has been that *Crisis News* has unfairly grouped him together with right-wing groups, whose theology he himself is critical of. He feels that our mention of him in this manner could lead to some violent act against his person or property, or that of The Protestant Association of South Africa.

It seems clear to us, upon reviewing some of Mr James' own writings that he does distance himself from the rabid right-wingers like the Gospel Defence League and others. The mere fact that he was upset at our placing him in this camp is an indication that he is very disturbed by the un-Christian activities and propaganda of these extreme groups.

We have reasons and sources to back up the broad thrust of the criticisms we made about RWCGs, but to them, the Rev James, and all others who feel that they have been unfairly prejudiced through our November 1988 edition, we tender our apology. At the same time as tending an apology we would like, however, to issue an evangelical challenge to these groups of Christians: it is all very well being anti-apartheid or recognising the need to speak on social issues, but what have you done for the liberation of this country, that it might be a free and democratic country under God?

The Kairos Document recognised that there is both State Theology and Church Theology. Whilst we incorrectly located you within the ambit of State Theology, it is clear to us from your submissions that you stand clearly within the category of Church Theology. With the Kairos Document we are equally critical of both forms of theology, and while it may be rather un-nuanced to call you RWCG's, the im-

plication is clear that from our perspective you are not for the liberation of this country and thus bed-fellows - unhappy bed-fellows, yes, but bedfellows nonetheless - of the whole Right-wing Christian ethos in this country.

Our challenge to you is thus really to ask you to take up the challenge of the Kairos Document if you would prefer not to be grouped amongst the RWCG's. It is a challenge from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to stand with those who are afflicted and oppressed, and to participate in God's redemptive and liberating acts in history.

It is a challenge that can best be shaped in the following rhetorical questions to the Rev James. We have chosen to respond to him simply because he has entered into the most sustained and substantial debate with us. In this sense he is representative of those who feel unjustly accused in our issue on RWCG's.

1. In a clear and scholarly lecture on 'Baptists and Social Action' to the Baptist Theological College, the Rev James puts forward an excellent argument for Christian social involvement. The article is full of references to Elijah, Puritans, English history, the Reformation, and Nazism, yet there is not a single mention of South Africa. This then is our first question: **Is not the message of the Gospel to do with this situation at this time? For us, the Gospel must relate to concrete reality or it is not the Gospel at all.**

2. In this same lecture, the Rev James commends the German Martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer for his Christian witness against Nazism, but is critical of his decision to participate in the assassination attempt against Hitler. This clearly seems like support for words of resistance, but critical distancing when it comes to deeds of resistance. This then is our second question: **Is not the message of the Gospel to do with deeds and not just words. For us the Gospel must call us beyond confession to action.**

3. The Rev James has produced a lucid and clear criticism of both the Kairos Document and the Evangelical Witness in South Africa. It should be clear that we disagree on many points of content, but what is also important is that we have a big difference on process. The Rev James works as an individual, reflecting his socialisation, convictions and commitments. The documents that are important for us are written by a group of people, i.e. arise out of a community of faith. This then is our third

question: **Is not the message of the Gospel to do with a community of faith, a people called and set aside? For us the Gospel calls us into community out of which we reflect theologically.**

4. The Rev James is the Executive Secretary of the Protestant Association of South Africa, and editor of *Protestant Reveille*. He engages in his work in a clear and disciplined manner, yet his theological agenda reflects far more the issues and debates of the ecclesiastical scene in Europe in the 16th century. It seems that everything to do with Roman Catholicism is inherently wrong, and there is little openness to theological currents arising from the theological reflections of the Third World, poor communities, women, and black people. This then is our fourth question: **Is not the message of the gospel to do with seeing the world from the perspective of the oppressed and marginalised, the perspective of the cross? For us the Gospel calls believers to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering.**

5. Much of the Rev James' time is spent criticising people of our theological persuasion. He has produced a long criticism of the Kairos Document, and devoted much space in his *Protestant Reveille* to criticising the Evangelical Witness to South Africa and people like Archbishop Tutu. He has also spent much time recently arguing with *Crisis News*. Perhaps it is misplaced, but one gets the feeling that much time, money and energy are spent criticising those to the left of himself, while there is little public awareness of his distance from the right-wing, (hence the accusation in *Crisis News*). This then is our fifth question: **Is not the message of the Gospel in our country to do with challenging the heresy of apartheid?**

For us the Gospel calls us to a clear confrontation with all who by what they do and what they leave undone are supporting the system.

In conclusion then, to the extent that we have judged unfairly and harshly, we apologise. But we are also clear that whether or not people qualify for being a right-wing religious group or not, we are not at all impressed with the kind of theological orientation we have outlined in the challenge above. For in the end it has nothing to do with the label: "Right-Wing", but far more with the challenge of the Gospel! □

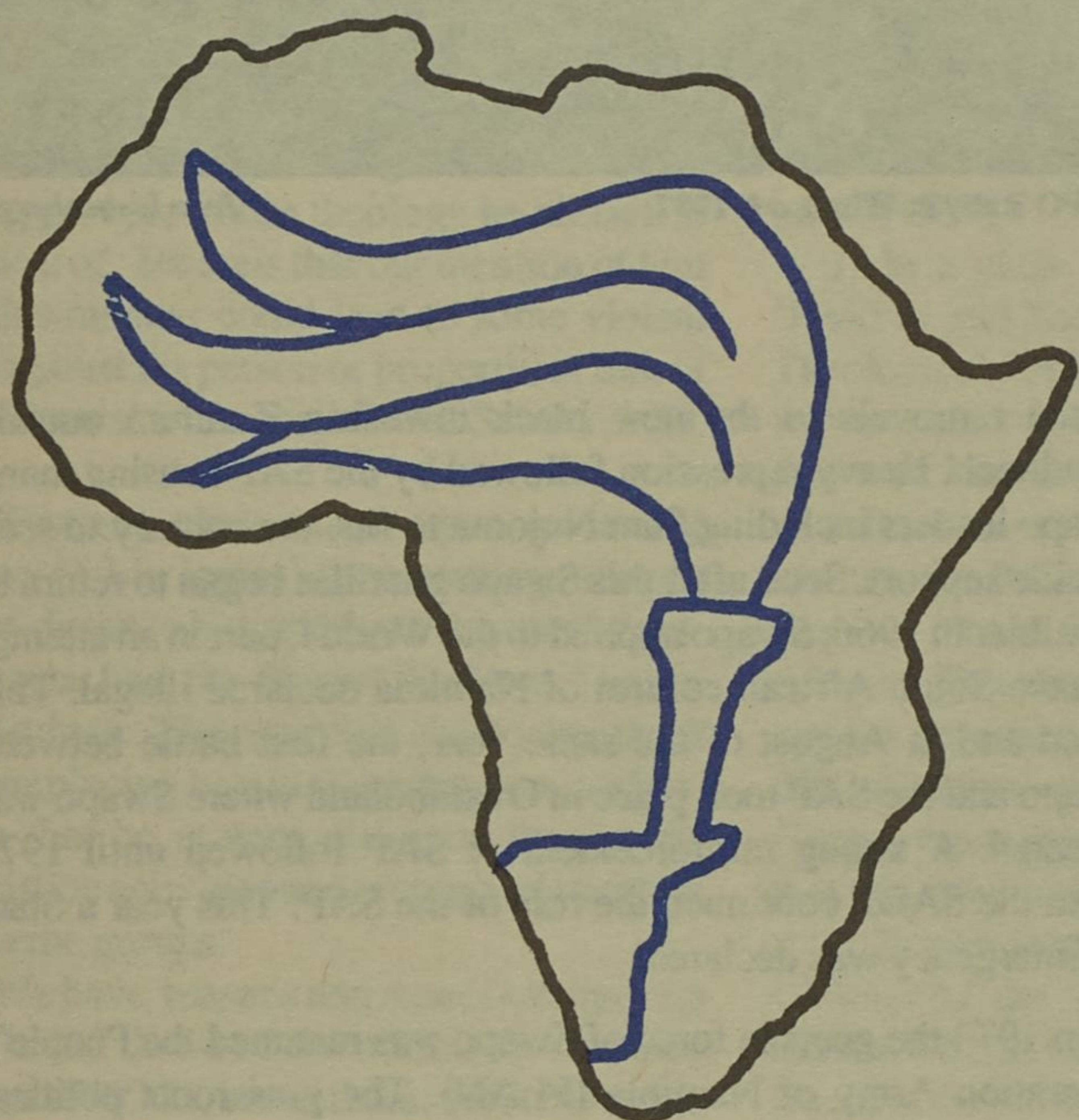


Constitutional Policy of SWAPO and the ANC

Future Plans of SWAPO and the ANC

SWAPO is an organisation which has fought for the freedom of the people of Namibia from South Africa for over 30 years. The ANC, African National Congress is an organisation which has fought for the freedom of the people of South Africa for 77 years. Both organisations have engaged in a long, hard struggle and have been forced to take up arms. The time of independence for Namibia and victory for SWAPO has almost come. The time for the liberation of South Africa and the victory of the ANC and other organisations in South Africa will also come.

SWAPO's Political Programme concentrated primarily on achieving independence rather than the policies which it would implement after independence. However, the SWAPO discussion paper in 1975 on the "Constitution of Independent Namibia" did look at policies after independence.



SWAPO has committed itself to a parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, human rights (including a bill of rights) and anti-racialism. It proposed a unitary state and rejected the homelands policy although it did accept a devolution of power. It advocated a non-aligned state which would be an active member of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and United Nations (UN).

The economic policy of SWAPO is socialist in direction and aims to achieve "a classless society" where "social justice and progress for all" would be the governing principle. Its political programme declared that "all the major means of production and exchange of the country would be owned by the people".

Its proposals indicate a determination towards implementing democratic ideals and human freedom, which clearly contradicts South Africa's account that SWAPO is undemocratic and intimidating. SWAPO itself is committed to assisting the liberation movements in South Africa and have promised their support to the people of South Africa.

The ANC also produced constitutional guidelines after the uprising in 1984-86. It would like people in South Africa to discuss these proposals and suggest changes:

THE STATE

- + South Africa should be an independent, unitary, democratic and non-racial state.
- + Sovereignty shall belong to the people and shall be exercised through central structures.
- + The government shall be democratic, representative of the people and dedicated to defending the constitution's principles.

FRANCHISE

- + There shall be one person one vote and every voter shall have the right to stand for election

NATIONAL IDENTITY

- + The state will promote the growth of a single national identity, while recognising linguistic and cultural diversity.

BILL OF RIGHTS AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- + The Constitution shall include a Bill of Rights based on the Freedom Charter.
- + Racial discrimination and economic and social inequalities produced by such discrimination will be eradicated.
- + Fascism, Nazism or ethnic or regional exclusiveness or hatred shall be outlawed
- + Women shall have equal rights and the state shall take affirmative action to eliminate inequalities and discrimination between the sexes.
- + The family, parenthood and children's rights shall be protected.

ECONOMY

- + The state shall ensure that the entire economy serves the interest of all the people.
- + The economy shall be mixed, with a public sector, a private sector, a co-operative sector and a small-scale family sector
- + The private sector shall be obliged to co-operate with the state in realising the objective of the Freedom Charter.
- + The state shall promote the acquisition of management, technical and scientific skills.

LAND

- + An affirmative land reform programme will be introduced, abolishing all racial restrictions on land use and ownership, and taking into account the victims of forced removals.

WORKERS

- + A charter protecting workers' trade union rights shall be incorporated into the constitution.

INTERNATIONAL

- + South Africa shall be a non-aligned state, committed to the OAU and UN charters, national liberation, world peace and disarmament. ☐

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Potsdam's final exodus?



On Tuesday April 11 the third exodus of the Potsdam community from the Ciskei began. They moved into SA onto an empty piece of land between Mdantsdane in the Ciskei and the black scheduled area of Newlands (Nxarhuni).

On Thursday April 20 the East London office of the Department of Development Aid (DDA) informed the press that "The minister has approved that the Potsdam squatters be settled on a portion of farm 303" [the farm onto which they moved].

The community has finally forced SA to acknowledge their claim to a place to stay in SA. This is a very significant victory for the community. But it is by no means a final victory. The government is trying to limit the number of people to whom the victory applies to about 2000. The community demands that the settlement applies to the whole "squatter" community, nearer 11 000 people. Furthermore the government has not withdrawn the appeal against the January court decision which affirmed the right of the community to permanent residence in SA.

Grahamstown Rural Committee

Potsdam - taking their rightful place

Beginning in the afternoon of Tuesday April 11 the Potsdam community began their 3rd exodus from the Ciskei. By the morning of the following day some 300 people had settled on an apparently unoccupied and unused farm in SA and on the Ciskei-SA border. They settled down with blankets and cooking pots.

The farm is owned by the SA Development Trust which is administered by DDA. Earlier this year the farm was identified when representations were made to the authorities for a place to settle. It was one of two areas that the community suggested they be given in the light of the January court decision which affirmed their right to permanent residence in SA.

Forcing negotiations

The community's attorney telefaxed Minister of Development Aid, Viljoen, and the local DDA office asking for an appointment for himself and community representatives to meet with the Minister, and asking that no attempts be made to force people back into the Ciskei, at least until such a meeting could take place.

An appeal was made to western governments to urge the SA government to accede to the communities demand for a place to stay. A representative of the West German Embassy visited the community the next week.

Milwaukee USA City Councillors and Church groups contacted the Ministers of Development Aid and Home Affairs and the Administrator of the Cape to ask that the appeal against the January judgement be withdrawn and that the community be provided with a place to settle in SA. Milwaukee is Potsdam's sister community.

DDA response

The Residents' Association Committee spent most of Thursday meeting officials from DDA and the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA).

DDA claimed that the "owner" of the farm, a Mr Butler, was worried about the chopping down of thorn bushes on the farm to make clearings for settlement. In fact DDA owns the farm, and farmers in the area pay people to chop down thorn bushes to clear the land for grazing.

DDA said that it was there to help and that they wanted to meet an elected committee of the community. DDA tried to distance themselves from the government, saying that it would push the government for land.

DDA asked if more people were coming. The community answered yes. DDA said that enough people had come to the farm, that it would provide land, and that the people still in Potsdam should wait there.

DDA also said that it would only do its best to get land if those on the farm stopped the other from coming there. It threatened to allow the police to remove them back to Potsdam if they did not stop the others.

In the afternoon the DDA team returned and began by announcing that the community had agreed in the morning to stop more people from leaving Potsdam for the farm! The community pointed out that this was not so and that they could not agree to such a thing.

CPA officials returned on Friday morning for further discussions. They indicated that it was not a problem for more people to settle on the farm. No threats of eviction back to Potsdam were made. The officials said that they wanted a list of names of all people, whether on the farm or still in Potsdam, claiming land in SA. To the community this indicated a softening of attitude.

The effect of this more reasonable attitude diffused the situation. As a result fewer people than anticipated moved onto the farm over the weekend. However on Sunday the Residents' Association Committee counted up to 760 people who had moved themselves to the farm.

Heavy rains fell over the weekend. Shelters were erected, using thorn bushes as frames for plastic covering. Priority for shelter went to the old and the young. The SAP offered to help by providing more plastic. The community declined the offer, not wanting to be weakened by the slightest dependence on the government while they demanded land.

The second week

DDA offered to provide water and toilet facilities. The residents rejected this offer, preferring to make their own arrangements.

DDA had been complaining repeatedly about having to meet "in the grass". An official threatened that unless the community made life easier for DDA the government might get the community land in Komani (Queenstown), some 200km away.

At 2am on Tuesday residents at the camp came upon someone carrying a pile of pamphlets. When confronted the person dropped the pamphlets and sped off in a red car. The pamphlets were handwritten in understandable but bad Xhosa. They said that all poor people should go to the home of the East London chairperson of the Black Sash to get food, shelter and blankets. No-one from the farm fell for the ruse.

JMC decides

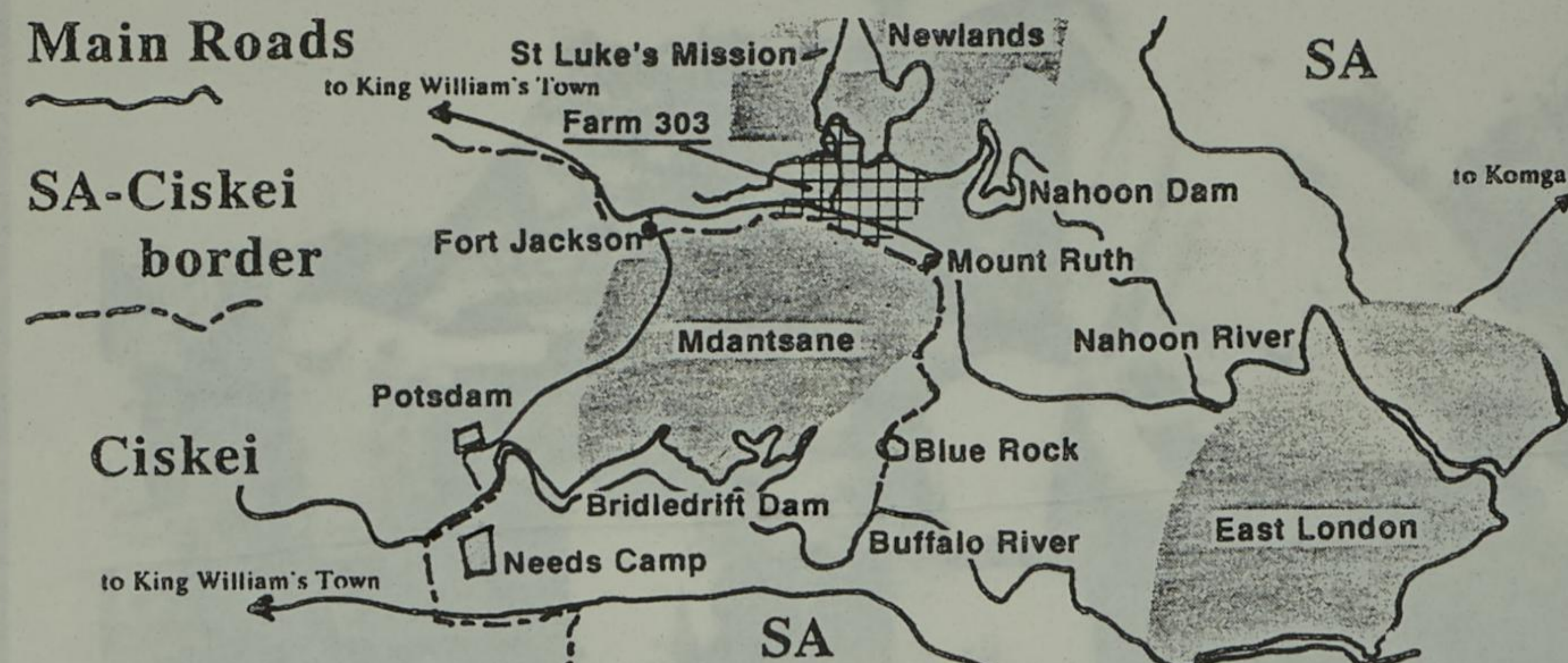
The community's attorney indicated to DDA that he wanted to be present at the community meeting with DDA and CPA which he understood to be scheduled for Wednesday morning. The DDA official to whom he was speaking said that that would not be possible as it was a meeting arranged by Brigadier Griebenouw of the security police and involving DDA, CPA and Foreign Affairs. It seems that official thought that the attorney was wanting to attend what was clearly a secret local Joint Management Committee meeting which was going to decide the fate of the community! The official said that he could attend the afternoon report-back meeting to the community.

Main Roads

SA-Ciskei border

Ciskei

to King William's Town



When contacted by the press the official first denied any meeting, then conceded that there was a meeting of "various authorities" the following morning, but denied that the security police were involved! He said that the meeting would decide on the question of land for the community and report back in the afternoon.

That afternoon the regional director of DDA and some of his staff arrived on the farm. They would only report that they had put a proposal to Minister Viljoen and expected a decision from him within a day or two. They announced that in future they would communicate with the community through the attorney.

SA accedes

On Thursday at 6am SABC's Radio Xhosa broadcast that the refugees from Potsdam were to be given land. 4 hours later DDA released a statement to the press.

The statement said that only the ex-Blue Rock people would be settled in this area. It threatened action against any people not from Blue Rock. DDA claimed that it had its own records of those moved from Blue Rock and said its estimate was 2000 people.

The government is insisting that a community that has been living and struggling together for 6 years should single out and exclude those members who were not previously living in Blue Rock but who like them were dumped in Potsdam from SA after 1981. This is violently divisive and unacceptable to the community.

The future

The community set up a "border post" at the entrance to the settlement. This was to prevent persons not from Potsdam from joining the community now that victory was in sight. A committee was set up to draw up the list of families demanding land in SA. A list of 1650 families (10 823 people) was drawn up. This list has been given to DDA together with a letter indicating the urgency of the situation since vigilante activity in Potsdam is increasing again. Many people and possessions, including some livestock, remain in Potsdam.

The community decided that each family should to be settled on 2000 square metres of land. The community

has been severely impoverished by 6 years in Potsdam. They have to break out of this cycle of poverty. Formal employment is unlikely. Therefore they have to try to develop self-sufficiency. Scientific studies conducted in the Ciskei have shown that a family can subsist and produce a small surplus off 2000 square metres of land.

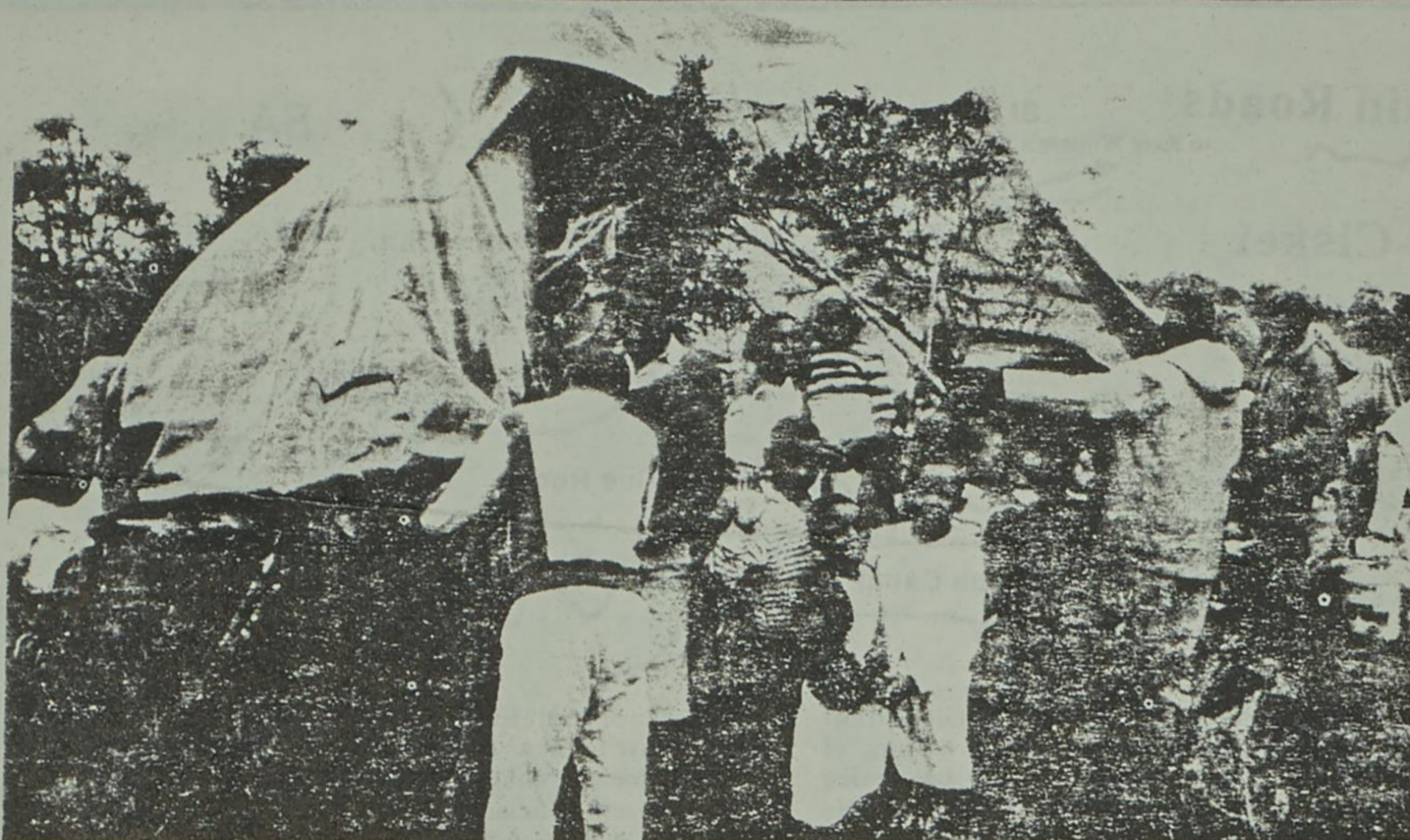
Farm 303 is at least 400 hectares in extent. This would allow each family 2000 square metres of land and leave sufficient over for roads and communal areas.

Background

The move was a desperate act. The community had waited from November 1987 until 1989 for the outcome of their application to court to declare their removal to the Ciskei in 1983 by the Ciskei unlawful and to affirm their right to permanent residence in SA. In the years from 1983 to 1989 the community was harassed and attacked by the Ciskei (some residents even having been murdered), had taxes and levies extorted from them, lost their jobs and died of tuberculosis in Potsdam.

In January this year the court finally granted them permanent residence in SA. The community rejoiced and prepared to walk out of Potsdam and the Ciskei immediately. But the court had not given them a place to stay in SA. The Residents' Association urged the community not to take the law into their own hands by leaving the Ciskei to squat somewhere in SA. Instead they began a process of deputations and petitions to various SA authorities, both local and national, pressing that they be allocated land in SA to which they could remove themselves as soon as possible. In their representations they warned of the urgency of the situation, stating that they feared that they would not be able to hold the community back for long.

Initial responses to their representations were positive. Then the state announced its intention to appeal against the court decision. From that day nothing further has been heard in response to their representations. The Residents' Association was unable to prevent the inevitable. Having exhausted all the official channels open to them, and having been exhausted by the struggle to survive in the Ciskei, the community took the only option that was left - they marched out.



Community organisation

Since settling on farm 303 the community has had to face many challenges. In particular it has had to negotiate with government officials. This has been the biggest challenge to the community as their future depends on their success in these negotiations.

As big and important a task has been simply to ensure that peoples' daily needs are catered for on the farm which was only intended to be a brief place of refuge and protest. This alone required much organisation and also discipline on the part of each person.

Many church and other relief agencies in the East London area immediately rallied to the support of the community. The community saw the importance of ensuring that all resources coming into the community were allocated democratically.

Supplies of plastic for shelter were donated to the community. Operation Hunger assisted with emergency food supplies. Local doctors in NAMDA advised the community on sanitation and tested their sources of water. Donations of clothing came in.

Under the guidance of the Residents' Association Committee, all residents received a share of the food plastic, clothing etc in proportion to their needs. The children all received a daily ration of fortified soup; all residents received a daily ration of soup and mealie meal; the old and the very young took priority in receiving clothing; plastic was distributed according to the size of each family. When the rain came down priority for shelter went to the young and old.

After the announcement by DDA that they would be given land on which to settle the community set up a "border post" to ensure that only people from Potsdam could settle on the farm, and have their names put forward to DDA as members of the community requesting a place to stay in SA. This was an important step because after the announcement people from all over the Ciskei near East London came clamouring to be included with the community to get land in SA.

Above: Residents made use of a break in the rain during the first weekend out of Potsdam to hastily erect more shelters. The method of construction is clear from the photograph: plastic sheeting draped over rooted thornbush frames and then tied down. Packing cases were later purchased and used to make surfaces to sleep on above the wet and cold earth. The wood was also used to construct toilets. Having been forcibly removed and having fled the Ciskei so many times before, the community are experts at making quick but effective shelters.

Below: The Residents' Association supervises the distribution of fortified soup to the children in the settlement. Cooking of the emergency rations is done collectively.

