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Patterns of resistance in Namibia during the South African Administration, 1948-1989

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Patterns of resistance in Namibia during the South African Administration, 1948-1989

by

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i. Foreword.

This dissertation, *Patterns of resistance in Namibia during the South African Administration, 1948-1989* and the series of seminars which preceded it, could never have been completed without the contribution of others.

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Demetri Friend
December 1994

Johannesburg
ii. List of abbreviations and acronyms.

ALC  Africa Liberation Committee
ANC  African National Congress
CCN  Council of Churches in Namibia
DEMKOP Democratic Co-operative Party
DTA  Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ELK  Evangelical Lutheran Church
ELOK  Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church
FNLA  Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
FRELIMO  Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
HCC  Herero Chief’s Council
KOEVOET Police counter insurgency unit (Operation K)
MK  Umkhonto we Sizwe
MPLA  Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NAPDO Namib African People’s Organisation
NAWU  National Union of Namibian Workers
NC  National Convention
NCN  National Convention of Namibia
NNC  Namibia National Convention
NUDO  National Unity Democratic Organisation
OAU  Organisation of African Unity
OPC  Ovamboland People’s Congress
OPO  Ovamboland People’s Organisation
PAC  Pan African Congress
PLAN  People’s Liberation Army of Namibia
SANMMH South African National Museum of Military History
SADF  South African Defence Force
SAP  South African Police
SAUF  South Africa United Front
SWANLA  South West Africa Labour Association
SWANU  South West Africa National Union
SWAPA  South West Africa Progressive Association
SWAPO South West Africa People’s Organisation of Namibia
SWASB South West Africa Student Body
SWATF  South West Africa Territorial Force
UN  United Nations
UNITA  União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UNTAG United Nations Transition Assistance Group
VELKSWA  Verenigde Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk in Namibië
WCC  World Council of Churches
ZANU  Zimbabwe Africa National Union

* The term South African Defence Force (SADF) has been used in this study as this was the name by which it was known during the period under review. The name was however changed to the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in 1994.

** The term South African Police (SAP) has been used in this study as this was the name by which it was known during the period under review. The name was however changed to the South African Police Service (SAPS) in 1994.
1. Introduction

The effect of the decisions which were taken by the representatives of the various European countries participating in the Berlin Conference of 1884, had far-reaching effects on the political and socio-economic development on the African continent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The full extent of the effects of these decisions are comparable to what happened in Africa after 1948. Although comparable, the character of the two periods differed drastically from each other. The most significant difference was that the period after 1884 was initially characterised by colonisation, while the period after 1948 was marked by de-colonisation.¹

The continued presence of the South African administration in Namibia had a significant influence on the outcome of political developments in the territory during the period 1948 to 1989. This administration continued after the Second World War because the trusteeship system which had been set up by the United Nations (UN) in 1946 was not accepted by the South African Government. They had been administering the region in terms of a C-mandate which had been handed down by the League of Nations after the First World War.² The consequence of this continued administration was that the diplomatic and political events in the territory were dominated by resistance in one form or another during the period 1948 to 1989. This resistance was offered by members of the indigenous resistance community who were opposed to the continued South African administration of Namibia which lasted until the gaining of Namibian independence in 1989.³

One of the many diplomatic and political features which characterised the period from 1948 to 1989, and which had a distinct influence on the course of
events in Namibia included the implementation of the domestic South African policy of racial segregation. This policy was commonly referred to as *apartheid*. It was implemented in Namibia by the South African administration together with other restrictive legislation, which included the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Riotous Assembly Act of 1956 as an attempt by the South African Government to control the outcome of all political developments in the region. In 1966, the UN terminated the mandate by which the South African Government was managing the territory. The unwillingness of the South African administration to divest itself from Namibia after the termination of this mandate gave impetus to the rise of popular indigenous resistance. This resistance was aimed at achieving both political recognition of the recently formed indigenous political parties and independence from South African administrative control. Although this administration recognised the rise of African nationalism, it was not willing to recognise this rise in nationalism to the extent that it could result in the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia acquiring political power. This view of the South African administration also expedited the escalation in indigenous resistance and the formation of the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO), one of the many indigenous political parties in Namibia, which would play a leading role in offering popular Namibian resistance.

A further example of growing popular Namibian resistance towards the South African administration can be highlighted in the manner in which Katjavivi (1988) refers to the South African administered elections of 1972 and 1973 as *controlled elections*. The reasoning behind Katjavivi’s interpretation is that as a member of SWAPO, he would accordingly express or support SWAPO’s diplomatic and political views. On the other hand, the South African administration saw these elections in terms of the democratic processes which
they had set in motion which would culminate in the formation of mechanisms for self-government by the indigenous Namibians.³ SWAPO and their supporters, however, interpreted these elections and their outcome as an attempt by the South African administration to deflect nationalist pressure and to postpone a possible South African withdrawal from Namibia.⁹ Rising international pressure against the South African administration, together with the inability of the UN to curtail the continued South African presence in Namibia after the findings of the UN Mission to Namibia in 1962, and the verdict of the International Court of Justice in the Hague in 1966, contributed further to a chain of conflicting events in Namibia. These events culminated in SWAPO adopting military resistance as a method of trying to achieve independence from the South African administration.¹⁰

International diplomatic interaction, together with an increase in South African legislation also contributed to the rise of popular resistance among the members of the indigenous Namibian resistance community.¹¹ Restrictive legislation in terms of organised labour, the regional education policy, the indigenous political parties and security matters also succeeded in extending the concept of resistance to large numbers of the indigenous population. Growing international attention to what was happening in Namibia also facilitated the rise in the resistance climate in Namibia. Increased exposure of indigenous Namibians to foreign influences which included education, the formation of trade unions and indigenous political parties, also contributed in raising the level of popular resistance to the South African administration.¹²

Growing international resistance to the course of political events in South Africa and Namibia, together with morale and financial support, supported the expansion of the international diplomatic power-base of the indigenous
Namibians. This increased power-base elevated popular Namibian resistance, against the continued South African administration of the territory, to the realms of an international conflict which would not, or could not, remain a purely regional dispute. An increased emphasis by the former colonial powers on the process of de-colonisation also manifested itself during the period 1948 to 1989. This shift in emphasis by the international community towards colonialism, and the formation of the Frontline States had a noted effect on the course of political events in Namibia. The Frontline States were a group of Southern African countries who formed an informal confederation of states which acted as an international pressure group within the UN and the Organisation for Africa Unity (OAU). This confederation was instrumental in acquiring much needed financial support for SWAPO from both the Africa Liberation Committee (ALC) of the OAU and the UN to finance the so-called Namibian armed struggle against South African administrative control. Resistance by the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia therefore did not take place in isolation from the international community, or from the dynamic processes of constitutional and political change in Africa. The manner, degree or frequency in which Namibian resistance was offered kept changing are highlighted by the various phases and changes which can be identified in what has been termed SWAPO’s diplomatic struggle.

The social, political and diplomatic dynamics which were present in Namibian society during the period 1948 to 1989 can best be emphasized by identifying the variables which determined the choice of a specific pattern with which the commentators and observers of diplomatic, political and military events in Namibia could report on resistance. These variables include the different phases of resistance, the periods which may be identified within the course of the Namibian resistance history and the various spheres in which the Namibian
community could offer resistance.\textsuperscript{18} It is also important to indicate how these variables impacted on each other and what the influence was that they had on the identifiable pattern or patterns of popular resistance within the Namibian context. The terms observers and commentators have been used in this study to refer to the variety of authors consulted. The list of authors include subject specialists, historians, politicians, journalists and others.

The period 1948 to 1989 was also highlighted by the political and diplomatic legitimisation of SWAPO’s aims and claims. This was a process whereby SWAPO started to negotiate for both foreign and local diplomatic and political support. The reason for seeking this support was two-fold. Firstly, SWAPO needed the diplomatic support of the international community for advancing from passive to military resistance. Secondly, the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) needed the political support of the indigenous population for its military actions. SWAPO and PLAN thus needed both the support and acceptance of the international and local communities to achieve their goals in Namibia. This support was not only acquired through both diplomatic and political actions, but also through the academic support of the local and international intelligentsia. The effect of seeking this support is highlighted by the available source material being divided into two groups; those who support the viewpoints of SWAPO and those who oppose SWAPO’s views. Literary attempts have also been made to present a neutral view of what happened in Namibia. However the perceptions which manifest themselves in the material which was available to that commentator determines which viewpoint is being presented. The work of Steenkamp, \textit{South Africa’s Border War, 1966 to 1989}, falls into this category. Steenkamp admits that despite his attempts at offering a neutral interpretation of these events, the perceptions were illustrated in the material which was available to him, has given his work a strong South African
point of view. Interestingly, no similar admission is made by the commentators who support the viewpoint of SWAPO.

The purpose of this study is two-fold. Firstly to offer a concise insight into the course and development of political, diplomatic and military events in Namibia during the South African administration of 1948 to 1989. The second purpose is to highlight the theoretical paradigms used by commentators and observers to report on the course and development of popular indigenous resistance in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989. This includes the paradigms which have been used by both subject specialists and others alike.

The aim of the study is to stimulate interest and to direct further research and discussion regarding popular resistance in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989. By identifying the existing paradigms used to report on popular indigenous resistance in Namibia, the foundation for a re-interpretation and re-classification of these paradigms for reporting on popular resistance in the region prior to 1989 can be laid.

To successfully identify the existing paradigms which have been used to report on popular resistance in Namibia, the parameters which determine the extent of the study must first be determined. All definitions, statements of intent and methodological perspectives required for the study must be ascertained. Only then can the pattern, or patterns, as identified in the consulted sources be highlighted. It is also important to concentrate on the events as they occurred, and not to describe or force the events into purely theoretical paradigms aimed at compartmentalising events so that they are more accessible and which in some cases don’t make allowances for the dynamics of socio-political development. An attempt should be made to redefine these paradigms if it
becomes apparent that they have been formulated to achieve political goals or if they have hidden agendas. The success of the identification of the paradigms of resistance and how they can be applied in the Namibian context lies in presenting an unbiased review as historically possible of the diplomatic, political and military events in Namibia which continually evaluates both the events and the interpretation of the consulted source material.

Notes

9. Ibid.
10. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, p.176.


2. Methodological perspectives and definitions

In Namibia, the period 1948 to 1989 coincides with what Akintoye identifies in his book, *Emergent African states*, as the period of transition.\(^1\) This period in the history of Africa, which is also applicable to Namibia, refers to a state of transition during which an indigenous community finds itself between colonial domination and independence. Accordingly, this period is characterized by a sharp rise in the political awareness of the indigenous Namibian population and the internationalisation of the diplomatic, military and political events. Both these elements go hand-in-hand with an attempt by members of the Herero Chiefs Council (HCC) to maintain cultural and emotional links with the Namibian pre-colonial past. One of the aims of the HCC was to keep the spirit of resistance of the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia alive.\(^2\) The period 1948 to 1989, is also characterized by attempts of members of the indigenous population to try and take responsibility for shaping their own destiny.\(^3\) Members of the Namibian indigenous population started forming the indigenous political, intellectual and military structures with which they perceived they could change the *status quo* in Namibia.\(^4\)

The growing conflict between the South African administration and the United Nations (UN) regarding South Africa’s continued occupation, and the reluctance of this government to allow UN intervention in Namibia, is also highlighted during the period 1948 to 1989. Although this intervention was aimed at finding an equitable solution to the growing political problems in Namibia, the South African Government did not share the conviction of the UN.\(^5\) This period is also highlighted by increased international attention being given by the former colonial powers to the process of de-colonisation. This went hand-in-hand with a simultaneous growth in an international social guilt towards the
diplomatic, economic and political events of the colonial period also receiving some prominence.\textsuperscript{6}

The three main periods in African history, which are identified by Wallbank in *Contemporary Africa*, and which are also applicable in the Namibian context are the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial (also referred to as the period of independence) periods.\textsuperscript{7} The course of the diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989, tend to deviate from the traditionally accepted pattern which colonial authority followed in Africa. According to this so-called traditional sequence of events, colonial supervision preceded independence. This deviation is emphasized by the description of the continued South African administration of Namibia as a colonial or neo-colonial period of administration. This viewpoint, which was mentioned by Du Pisani in an article in *Kompas op SWA/Namibië* edited by Barnard,\textsuperscript{8} was shared by a large number of commentators and reporters on diplomatic and political events in Namibia.\textsuperscript{9} Although the South African administration of Namibia was not a typical colonial administration, with a colonial office, controlling the administration of the region on behalf of the colonial authority, and despite having more autonomy than any of the official South African provinces,\textsuperscript{10} the South African legislative and executive powers were applied in Namibia in such a manner that the territory could for all purposes be seen as a South African colony.\textsuperscript{11} This means that in terms of the periods in African history which were identified by Wallbank the final period, that of independence, would only occur in Namibia after the gaining of independence in 1989.

In Namibia the period 1948 to 1989 also saw the imposition of security legislation such as the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Riotous Assembly Act of 1956 which effected the course of both the diplomatic and
political events in Namibia. In terms of labour legislation, trade unions were banned and the power base of the mainly white controlled South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) extended in the territory. This also assisted in increasing the climate of resistance by members of the indigenous Namibian resistance community against the South African administration. Katjavivi (1988) also attributes an increase in the level and intensity of popular indigenous resistance in Namibia to changing alliances and affiliations amongst the different indigenous political groups. These changing alliances are best illustrated by the formation of the National Convention (NC) in 1971. This brought together The South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO), the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), the Democratic Co-operation Party (DEMKOP), the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) and the Namib African People’s Organisation (NAPDO) in an aligned political pressure group. Due to the growing tension between SWAPO and the HCC, the NC was dissolved and replaced with the SWAPO-aligned Namibian National Convention (NNC) and the traditionalist-aligned National Convention of Namibia (NCN). The NNC was supportive of the South African initiated Democratic Turnhalle Constitutional Conference, while the NCN were not. The NCN were focused on a UN-supported independence plan with minimal South African involvement. These various groups and alliances also attempted to mobilise members of the indigenous population within their respective fields of influence.

The period 1948 to 1989 also saw the development and growth of indigenous political structures which would be responsible for planning and implementing diplomatic, military and political resistance against the South African administration. The two most prominent structures or parties, which were formed during this period, were the South West Africa National Union
(SWANU) and South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO). After SWAPO succeeded in gaining the popular support of the indigenous population of Namibia and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), they also received the official recognition of the UN, as the sole and legal representative of the indigenous population of Namibia. The granting of this recognition by the international community received a great deal of criticism from members of the South African community who supported the continued South African administration of the territory. An important aspect which affected resistance of this period was the manner in which SWAPO aided in coordinating popular indigenous resistance by involving a large number of both local and international diplomatic and political structures, organisations and individuals in offering resistance against the South African administration.

Namibia’s population is a heterogenic one, which is made up of Herero, Ovambo, Basters, Nama, Damara, San and other population groups. To use the terms, black resistance, black nationalism and black inhabitants, which have been used in a variety of publications to report on, or interpret diplomatic and political events in Africa, in the Namibian context would be incorrect as the term black precludes the other Namibian ethnic groups. To prevent incorrect interpretations the term indigenous inhabitants, or population, will be used in this study as these terms include all ethnic groups, and not only blacks, as can be easily assumed in the use of a term like black resistance or black population.

Many of the consulted sources have tended not to emphasize the ethnicity of the different Namibian population groups. It has been the tendency of these commentators rather to place an emphasis on a greater Namibian nationalism instead of ethnicity. This approach gives impetus to what Emmet refers to as the rise of African nationalism. This term is opposed to the term black
nationalism which has become synonymous with resistance elsewhere in Africa. Denying the ethnic diversity of the Namibian population can be directly attributed to the experiences of the indigenous population during the colonial period. The so-called traditional interpretation tends to indicate that the Namibian population were made up of diverse population groups which had little or no affinity for each other. First and Segal (eds) in *A travesty of trust*, state that by rejecting ethnicity and adopting nationalism, an important step would be taken by the indigenous population towards rejecting South African colonialism.

One of the most important and dynamic processes in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989 was resistance. There were two forms of resistance which were identified by commentators and observers of political resistance and which were also applicable to the diplomatic, political and military events in Namibia. These two forms of resistance were primary and secondary resistance. Primary resistance referred to isolated and unstructured armed resistance. This form of resistance was aimed at returning the community to the political conditions which prevailed before the arrival of the colonial powers. This form of resistance manifested itself before 1948 and is therefore not applicable to this study.

Secondary resistance was diverse and well organised and aimed at ending colonial rule and bringing about a new order which does not necessarily mean a return to pre-colonial status. Although these paradigms of resistance are widely used, they tend to be based more on theory than practice. They do, however, provide students of Africa History with an ideal theoretical starting-point which facilitates the study of social mechanisms and historical events in Africa and Namibia. Freund (1984), Davidson (1981) and Killingray (1991),
amongst others, all draw attention to these starting-points and how the paradigms of resistance are applied. By applying the so-called traditional paradigm to events in Namibia it becomes clear that it has lost contact with reality, because even though it refers to forms of resistance the application actually refers to periods of resistance. This is an aspect which is also highlighted by Davidson in *The people's cause. A history of guerrillas in Africa.* This paradigm also relies on an apparent continuum between primary and secondary resistance which figures prominently in the work of some of the local Namibian authors which include Katjavivi (1988), Kerina (1981), Mbuende (1986) and Imishue (1965). The publication of the Department of Information and Publicity, SWAPO of Namibia, *To be born a nation,* also strongly supports this continuum by emphasizing that the conflict between the Namibian indigenous population and the so-called colonial powers started in 1884 and, at the time of the publication going to press, this conflict was still in progress.24 This assumption is based on the ideological link which was created between the armed resistance against the German colonial authorities and the military resistance of SWAPO against the South African administration.

During the period 1948 to 1989, resistance by the indigenous resistance community of Namibia was presented on three spheres, each with their own manifestations of resistance which influenced the others. These manifestations highlight the growing complexity of Namibian society with its changing political coalitions which were based on old and new alliances, new interpretations and expectations of the newly formed indigenous political structures.25 The first of these sphere of resistance was the political sphere. Here, members of the indigenous community tried to take responsibility for shaping their own destiny and endeavoured to achieve both political rights and recognition.26 The mechanisms they used included the formation of trade unions, the use of
churches as a safe platform to communicate the idea of resistance, the increased role of the intelligentsia and the manipulation by the HCC. It also included the formation of indigenous political parties which would take responsibility for coordinating the offering of indigenous popular resistance. Resistance in this sphere was mainly domestic and based on a substantial local power base.

The second sphere of resistance was the diplomatic sphere where resistance manifested itself in two ways. Firstly, resistance was coordinated by the traditional leaders of the HCC on both the domestic and international scenes. Secondly, it manifested itself in the form of solidarity and support of foreign countries for the Namibian confrontation with the South African administration. This latter manifestation enjoyed two different, but interrelated, support bases. The first of these was the African support base where organisations like the OAU, the African National Congress (ANC), the Frontline States and the Non-aligned Nations. These political groups advocated the liberation of Namibia both locally and internationally. The second was the international support base where the so-called armed struggle of SWAPO received a great deal of foreign support. Political and diplomatic structures which figure prominently in this support base included the UN, the OAU and the Afro-Asian countries. Countries who belonged to these political groups all furnished different kinds of support for SWAPO in their so-called struggle against what they saw as the so-called illegal South African regime in Namibia. These structures were also concerned with the legality of what they perceived as the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa. This concern was precipitated by the findings of the UN in 1953 and the verdict of the International Court of Justice in the Hague in 1966. These findings determined that although the UN had inherited the supervisory powers of the
League of Nations, the South African Government had a legal claim to Namibia and no legal obligation to transfer control of Namibia to the UN trusteeship.\textsuperscript{34}

The third sphere of resistance was the military sphere. This form of resistance was seen as an extension of both the political and diplomatic spheres of resistance. This sphere was viewed by SWAPO, and their support groups, as the most important phase in the resistance history of Namibia.\textsuperscript{35} Military resistance was also seen as the most effective mechanism by which SWAPO could achieve liberation from the South African administration.\textsuperscript{36} Contemporary anti-colonial wars and sentiments expressed in the rest of Africa and the world at that time, also had a significant influence on local events in Namibia.\textsuperscript{37} This military resistance in Namibia is also reported on by Barnard in Kompas op SWA/Namibië using McCuen’s model for describing these events in terms of revolutionary warfare and not merely as a process of passive and active resistance. This indicates that there may be a different interpretation to the events in Namibia other than the traditionally accepted interpretation based on the concepts of primary and secondary resistance.\textsuperscript{38}

In selecting sources one must take into consideration that many of the publications on diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989 served as mediums for disseminating political and diplomatic resistance to legitimise the aims and goals of SWAPO. This concern is expressed by Wood in, Namibia 1884-1984. Readings on Namibia’s history and society.\textsuperscript{39} This tendency is especially noticeable in the rhetoric used to create an apparent artificial continuum between the early resistance against German colonialism and military resistance against the South African administration. This was done to create an impression that the Namibian community had been subjected to an extended period of colonial domination and
exploitation and was in desperate need of international support to achieve independence.40 These observers also fail to mention that the character, aim and methods used to offer resistance during the German colonial era differed completely from the character and aims of modern military resistance. They also do not mention that the methods used by SWAPO to offer armed resistance were totally different from earlier armed resistance. Using history in this fashion and creating this impression was important when trying to achieve an increase in support for what is referred to by Palmberg (1986) as the Namibian independence struggle.41 Wood (1988), Freund (1984), Wright (1982), Carragan (1976) and others all express their concern regarding this use of history as a political weapon. This use of history causes problems as incorrect interpretations and perspectives regarding the events of the past are perpetuated.42 This artificial continuum also aided in the growth of important socio-political forces, like the rise of African Nationalism amongst the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia during the period under review.43 It also served as a unifying force so that different ethnic groups would feel somewhat united by what they were reading and hearing regarding the events in their country.44

In the publication, Die nuwe Afrika, Van Rensburg notes that the internationalisation of the military and political events in Namibia also played an important role in the course of those events during the period 1948 to 1989. This process is accentuated by several foreign and African countries including Sweden, Denmark, Tanzania and Zambia giving financial and moral support to SWAPO. They gave support in order for SWAPO to wage their so-called armed struggle against the South African administration. This meant that conflict between the South African administration and SWAPO could not remain a regional dispute.45 By involving foreign countries, it was elevated to an
international conflict. At a brief glance the consulted sources seem to indicate that a large proportion of the Namibian community were involved in offering resistance in some form or another against the South African administration. In reality, the polarisation between the white and indigenous population of Namibia was not as pronounced as some of the sources would have us believe. There were sections of both communities who peacefully co­existed without any major conflict between each other.

By presenting a brief review of the events in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989, it will be possible to take a critical look at those events and then identify the paradigms which were used by the different observers or commentators to report on indigenous Namibian resistance. By doing so, it will be possible to determine the validity of these paradigms, and whether they have any bearing at all on what happened in Namibia, or if they are only based on theoretical guidelines, underpinned by the interpretative approach of the various commentators and reporters.

Notes

35. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, pp. 176-177.


38. W.S.Barnard(ed): *Kompas op SWA/Namibië*, p.188.


42. J.Wright: Popularizing the pre-colonial past. Politics and problems. *(Perspectives in Education, 10/2, 1988/9)*, p.47.

43. Z.Ngavirue: *Political parties and interest groups in South West Africa. A study of a plural society*, p.150.


45. P.H.Frankel: *Pretoria’s Praetorians*, p.175.

3. Diplomatic resistance in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989, a brief review

The period 1948 to 1989 on the southern African sub-continent was dominated by growing political and military conflict. Besides the military conflict in Mozambique, Angola and Rhodesia, (Zimbabwe), there was also growing political and military conflict between the South African administration and the indigenous population of Namibia. Although the outcome of the military and political events in these other countries influenced events in Namibia, it was the Namibian conflict which would draw on vast international and local support against the South African administration. According to Stiff, in *Nine days of war*, it would also be this conflict which would capture the imagination of the international community and offer an opportunity for their intervention in Namibia, and an opportunity for them to direct the course of military and political events in that country. This viewpoint is supported by several commentators and include Udogu who states in *South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia as a non-state actor in the Namibian issue*, that as he termed it, "the whole world", was being made aware of what was taking place in Namibia. A number of commentators were of the opinion that international financial and morale support for the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) would be overwhelming. However, not all the international awareness was in support of SWAPO and their aims. Kavina mentions in *The South West African dispute. A political study*, that there were a number of political pressure groups in the United Kingdom and the United States of America who felt that the events in Namibia were being instigated by the Communist Bloc. The problem with an assessment like this is that it gives the indigenous population no credit at all for aspiring to achieve political acceptance and recognition. This approach links up with what Van Rensburg refers to in *Afrikaverskeidenheid*, as the international interest of various power groups
in African events. By examining these diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia against the background of the international diplomatic establishment they could be interpreted as an African manifestation of the Cold War.

Most commentators, who have made a study of this period in Namibian history, have reported on resistance by using the so-called traditional paradigm which is based on the use of the terms, primary and secondary resistance. However, the manner in which these definitions have been applied indicates a measure of chronology between what has been defined as types of resistance. Support for the viewpoint of Davidson in *The people's cause. A history of guerrillas in Africa*, that secondary resistance is a continuation of primary resistance, can be found in *Namibia 1884-1984. Readings on Namibia's history and society*, edited by Wood. The manner in which Ngavirue applied these definitions in *Political parties and interest groups in South West Africa. A study of a plural society*, indicates that primary resistance was armed resistance, which was controlled by the tribal chiefs who were intent on serving tribal interests. Secondary resistance was well organised and diverse community based resistance which was aimed at serving African nationalism. This means that while primary resistance laid the foundation for resistance by the community, secondary resistance was a continuation which built on this foundation and extended the concept of resistance within the community.

Without an adequate interpretation of the events in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989, the conclusion can be made from these definitions that in an attempt to end the South African administration, the indigenous population started to offer passive community resistance when it became apparent that their initial attempts at armed resistance would not achieve their goals. The Namibian population came to this realisation because of the manner in which
the South African militia squashed any form of armed resistance against their administration. This can best be illustrated by the indigenous uprisings during the period before 1948. Despite the wide support enjoyed by these so-called traditional definitions of resistance, it appears that their application is only academic and aimed at creating a theoretical starting-point for the study and interpretation of the diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia.\(^{11}\)

The manner in which these definitions are applied, the nomenclature in the definitions should refer to periods and not types of resistance. Furthermore, very little attention is given in these definitions to the interdependency between the different fields of resistance and how they affected each other during what should be referred to as the periods of primary and of secondary resistance. This approach creates an impression that secondary resistance was a form of resistance which was offered by the Namibian community. However, secondary resistance consisted of different, but interrelated, forms of resistance which were offered on different fields but with a common goal. These flaws give impetus to the view of Davidson in *The people's cause. A history of guerrillas in Africa* that these models or definitions used to describe resistance are outdated, and have no bearing on reality and that a more pragmatic model should be formulated.\(^{12}\)

The purpose of this study is to give a brief insight into the course of diplomatic, political and military events in Namibia, and then to highlight the paradigms of popular resistance which have been used by different observers and commentators on diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989. During the period under review, members of the indigenous Namibian community offered diverse and wide-spread resistance on three independent, but interrelated fields, ie international diplomatic resistance was influenced by local political resistance which both had an effect on military
resistance. Although military resistance was seen by the South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia (SWAPO) as the culmination of their attempts to end the South African administration, it was becoming increasingly important for a political solution to be found. The destruction, and the change in diplomatic thinking by the international community which was brought about by the Second World War meant that a military conquest or solution alone was no longer acceptable as a solution to a political or diplomatic dispute.

Diplomatic resistance manifested itself in two ways. The first manifestation was the diplomatic confrontation in which SWAPO played and important role in coordinating international resistance against the South African Administration. This confrontation can be divided into three distinct phases. The first of these phases was the period before 1962, which was overshadowed by SWAPO's attempts to negotiate legal recognition by the United Nations (UN), and the right of the indigenous population of Namibia to petition their grievances about the South African administration to the UN. The involvement of the indigenous population regarding this initial diplomatic resistance was limited to charismatic traditional tribal leaders like Hosea Kutako and Clemens Kapuuo who enjoyed a strong support base in Namibia. These leaders served as a link between the period of primary resistance and SWAPO's armed resistance. These traditional leaders were later joined by members of the new generation of Namibian leaders which included Sam Nujoma. Then there were also people like the cleric, Michael Scott, who petitioned the UN on behalf of the indigenous population during the time that the South African administration was refusing to issue passports to the indigenous Namibian leaders.

This initial diplomatic resistance consisted of petitions asking for official
recognition of SWAPO, and for UN intervention in Namibia in view of South Africa's refusal to accept the stipulations of the trusteeship system which had been set up by the UN in 1946. This trusteeship system was instituted to replace the mandate by which in terms of Article 22 of the Convention of the League of Nations, South Africa had been administering Namibia since after the First World War. Diplomatic resistance at this stage was not yet aimed at terminating the South African administration of Namibia, it was directed at acquiring recognition of the right of the indigenous population to political representation. The inability of the UN to curtail the continued South African presence in Namibia after the finding of the UN Mission to Namibia in 1962 contributed to the chain of events in Namibia during the 1960's which would facilitate SWAPO's acceptance of military resistance. According to Davidson in *Let freedom come. Africa in modern history*, these petitions had little or no effect on the South African administration. The success of these petitions, however, lay in the international support that they drummed-up for SWAPO. The international support which SWAPO was receiving, was not always viewed favourably. Despite a large amount of British support for SWAPO, certain Conservative members in the British Parliament were against any financial support for SWAPO by the British Government and by the WCC as they felt that the events in Namibia were communist inspired.

The period until 1967 was characterised by increased attempts by SWAPO to receive official diplomatic recognition and acceptance by both the International community and the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU). The opinion of SWAPO's leadership was that this acceptance would ensure them the financial support of the African Liberation Committee (ALC) of the OAU which they required. There were two important resolutions which were adopted by the UN during this period and which had a bearing on future events. According to
Resolution 1805 (XVII) of 14 December 1962 the UN recognised the right of
the indigenous population of Namibia to self government. Resolution 2326
(XXII) of December 1967 determined that colonialism in all its forms was a
threat to international peace. The adoption of this resolution paved the way
for commentators who supported the aims and goals of SWAPO, to describe the
South African administration of Namibia as a colonial government, which has
since then been the accepted manner in which the international community has
referred to the South African administration of Namibia. These resolutions
were also instrumental in acquiring financial support from both the UN and the
OAU for what was seen as the Namibian’s struggle for independence. The
passing of these resolutions by the UN also coincided with a growing feeling
of anti-colonialism by the international community, and the granting of
independence by the former colonial powers to their colonies in Africa.

The official recognition of SWAPO as the sole and legal representative of the
indigenous population of Namibia by the UN was given in early 1974. One of
the consequences of this recognition was that SWAPO became the leading
indigenous political party in the domestic contest to achieve a position of
leadership in local politics. Their main opponents were the Herero Chiefs
Council (HCC) and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU). This
recognition and inevitable support by the UN was influenced by two
proclamations of the OAU. The first of these was the Lusaka Declaration of
1967 which suggested that SWAPO attempt a peaceful transition to
independence. The second was the Mogadishue Declaration of 1971. This
declaration stipulated that in the event of peaceful means of achieving
independence not succeeding, the only means by which SWAPO could then
solve the problem in Namibia was by adopting what was termed a so-called
armed struggle. In practice, these declarations had no bearing on SWAPO’s
actions in Namibia because they had in practice already been waging a low intensity war against the South African administration since February 1966 when SWAPO started low intensity incursions into northern Namibia. Peter Nanyemba of SWAPO had already stated in July 1966, that all peaceful means to achieve a solution in Namibia had been tried and that armed resistance was the only way left by which any solution could be found to what was happening in Namibia. The initial armed incursions by PLAN were contained by the South African Police (SAP) with the South African Defence Force (SADF) acting in support. It was only in April 1974 that the SADF took official control of all operations against SWAPO. There were two main reasons for this. The first was based on the intensification of the armed struggle by trained PLAN cadres who were returning to Namibia after receiving training elsewhere. They also brought about an escalation in the intensity of the conflict in northern Namibia. The second was that the counter-insurgency capabilities of the SAP were limited and that they could not cope with an intensified insurgent war. In March 1974, then South African Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha admitted that in terms of the stages of development in revolutionary warfare the time had come for the SADF to take over control of operations against SWAPO.

The second manifestation of diplomatic resistance was the UN-based resistance which dominated international relations towards South Africa in terms of what was happening in Namibia. Where responsibility for coordinating international support against the South African administration before 1974 lay with SWAPO, the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council started to play an ever increasing role in controlling diplomatic resistance after 1974. This also does not mean that there was no UN intervention before 1974; it only means that after 1974 the role of the UN regarding the coordinating and offering of
diplomatic resistance started to increase. It also did not mean that SWAPO withdrew from offering diplomatic resistance during the period after 1974. The role which the UN played appeared to control the diplomatic resistance of the time. One of the most important steps that were taken by the UN regarding Namibia before 1974 was the formation of the United Nations Council for Namibia in 1967 with eleven members assisted by a UN Commissioner.\(^{38}\)

In 1971 the International Court of Justice in the Hague ruled that the steps taken by the UN in terms of Resolution 264 of 1969, to revoke the mandate by which South Africa was administering Namibia, were legal and that any continued presence by the South African administration in Namibia would be seen as an illegal occupation of the region.\(^{39}\) Although the South African Government rejected this judgement and viewed it as non-binding, the South African prime minister at the time, John Vorster, indicated that he was willing to try to find a compromise to the Namibian question.\(^{40}\) One of these attempts by the South African Government to find a solution was the convening of the Democratic Turnhalle Constitutional Conference on 24 September 1974 to negotiate a constitutional settlement with the various ethnic groups of Namibia.\(^{41}\) This conference would inevitably be responsible for drafting a constitution for an independent Namibia. Both SWAPO and the UN saw this conference as a unilateral attempt by the South African administration to find a settlement in Namibia without recognising SWAPO. This, and all subsequent attempts by the South Africans to find a solution were all rejected by both SWAPO and the UN.\(^{42}\)

At this time a stalemate situation started to emerge in Namibia because every time the South African Government showed its willingness to accept negotiated proposals, SWAPO would call for UN action against South Africa. These steps
included calling for free elections in Namibia without any South African involvement through resolutions from both the General Assembly and the Security Council which includes Security Council Resolution 385 of 1976.\textsuperscript{43} SWAPO's political perceptions of the South African administration and the additional demands which were made to the South African Government made any progress in finding an equitable solution almost impossible.\textsuperscript{44} The South African administration also made it very difficult by not recognizing the role of the UN and SWAPO in Namibia. By doing so, the South African administration felt that they had lost control of the territory.

In 1977, Canada, France, Great Britain, the USA and West Germany, referred to as the \textit{Big Five}, made a renewed attempt to break this deadlock.\textsuperscript{45} On 25 April 1978 the South African Government accepted the proposals of this Western Contact Group and on 29 September 1978 the UN passed the infamous Resolution 435. Both these diplomatic initiatives called for free elections in Namibia, the return of SWAPO refugees, the lifting of restrictive South African legislation and the formation of UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group) under the leadership of Martti Ahtisaari of Finland. UNTAG would be responsible for monitoring and guiding the diplomatic process in Namibia to independence.\textsuperscript{46}

In 1979 the South African Government again came into conflict with the UN regarding the implementation of Resolution 435 and their installing of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) as the governing party in Namibia. The South African administration were of the opinion that the DTA had been a satisfactorily negotiated solution to the problem of an indigenous government in Namibia.\textsuperscript{47} SWAPO and the UN viewed the appointment of the DTA as an implementation of the South African policy of \textit{apartheid} by creating various
tribal homelands which had been approved by tribal leaders and local white administration personnel.  

It was the United States of America that brought pressure to bear on the South African Government in 1986 to divest itself from Namibia. This was done because of the Cuban presence in Angola and the South African involvement in the conflict. The Cubans also allowed SWAPO unrestricted use of their bases, logistic supply lines, etc.  

South Africa had also demanded the Cuban withdrawal from Angola as a prerequisite to the implementation of Resolution 435. When it became apparent that the Cubans were to be withdrawn from Angola, the South African Government announced in August 1988 that 1 November 1988 would be the date for the implementation of Resolution 435, a step which shocked SWAPO and the UN. An agreement was signed on 22 December 1988 stating that 1 April 1989 would be the date of implementation of Resolution 435. The signing of this agreement signalled the end of diplomatic resistance in Namibia which had commenced with the HCC presenting petitions to the UN during the 1950’s.

Notes

3. P.Stiff: Nine days of war, p.137.
4. Ibid, p.175.
5. E.I.Udogu: South West Africa People’s Organisation of Namibia as a non-state actor in the Namibian issue, p.91.


20. P.Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p.166.


22. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, p.176.


35. P.Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p.139.
37. Ibid.
43. P. Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p. 167.
45. P. Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p. 168.
49. P. Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p. 178.

During the 1960's the character of indigenous popular resistance organisations like the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) in Angola, the Frente de Libertacao de Moçambique (FRELIMO) in Mozambique, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in Zimbabwe underwent a drastic change. This change came about because members of the different indigenous resistance communities now came into conflict with the colonial authorities in their respective countries using military technology and strategies which had previously only been available to those authorities. The result of the use of this new technology was that the indigenous population now had to be seen as a new military and political force in Africa which had to be reckoned with. Prior to this change, popular indigenous resistance had mostly been based on civil disobedience, strikes and protest action. This transformation influenced both the diplomatic and political events on the whole of the Southern African sub-continent which included Namibia.

Features which facilitated the change in character of Namibian resistance, also included the South African diplomatic, military and political support for the Portuguese administration in Angola and Mozambique, and for what were termed the white settlers in Zimbabwe. An increase in the militancy of the methods of offering resistance within South Africa during the 1950's and 1960's by both Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) of the African National Congress (ANC) and Poqo of the Pan African Congress (PAC) also hastened the change in the character of Namibian resistance. These influences were conveyed to the indigenous population of Namibia via the Namibian migrant labourers, and members of the Namibian intelligentsia, who were in Cape Town at the time. The most noteworthy of these were Herman Toivo ja Toivo and Sam Nujoma.
who were both instrumental in the formation of the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO).⁵ In 1960 the ANC, the PAC, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU) formed the South Africa United Front (SAUF) in Cape Town. This was the first of the local indigenous political confederations which were aimed at coordinating resistance against the South African administration on the southern African sub-continent.⁶ This sort of support together with the change in character in resistance on the sub-continent which was brought about by the introduction of military resistance by the indigenous population, was further intensified by the inability of the United Nations (UN) to persuade South Africa to divest itself from Namibia in terms of General Assembly Resolution 2145 of 27 October 1966.⁷

On 10 May 1966, SWAPO publicly announced in Dar-es-Salaam that they indented adopting military resistance as a method of offering resistance to the continued South African administration of Namibia. This form of resistance was also referred to as a so-called armed struggle.⁸ This declaration of intent was not the first step which had been taken by SWAPO to offer military resistance against the South African administration. In practice, SWAPO had already been training and preparing their armed wing, the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), since 1961.⁹ Their first official training camp had been formed by Sam Nujoma in Tanzania in 1961 and their first local training camp was set up at Omgulombashe in Ovamboland in August 1965 by John Otto Nankuthu.¹⁰ Military resistance was seen by SWAPO and several observers of Namibian history as the most important method of offering resistance during the course of Namibian history. It was also seen by SWAPO and their supporters as the most effective instrument with which the indigenous population could achieve freedom from what they termed colonial
domination.\textsuperscript{11}

During the 1960's, resistance in Namibia was aimed at what Akintoye (1976) and Wood (1988) referred to as the restoration and reconstruction phase of political development in Namibia.\textsuperscript{12} This meant restructuring the country's political administration, taking into consideration the demands of the newly-formed indigenous political parties.\textsuperscript{13} During this phase the diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia could no longer be defined as a regional political demonstration. It had become a full scale international diplomatic, military and political dispute.\textsuperscript{14} Indigenous resistance was also offered by what had become a multi-ethnic political party with its own militia which was well planned and structured on Eastern Bloc military doctrines. Participants in this conflict could also draw on a much broader support base than had been the case during the period of primary resistance. Large numbers of Namibians, South Africans and foreigners were involved in this military conflict between 1966 and 1989.\textsuperscript{15}

After 1966, an artificial ideological and historical link was created between the armed resistance which was offered during the period of German colonial control and the military resistance which was offered by SWAPO against the South African administration.\textsuperscript{16} This apparent continuum which was claimed by SWAPO and their supporters, was based on a quasi-ideological link which was aimed at legitimising international acceptance of SWAPO's so-called armed struggle. It was also aimed at extending SWAPO's power base by drumming up considerable diplomatic and financial support for Namibian resistance amongst the member states of the UN. This was done because after the official adoption of military resistance in Namibia became an extension of both the political and diplomatic fields of resistance.\textsuperscript{17} For the first time, it appeared
that military resistance in Namibia was aimed at pursuing national interests and not only serving tribal interests. 18

In terms of twentieth century warfare, the military conflict which was conducted in Namibia from 1966 to 1989 can be described as an unconventional war. This form of warfare is characterised by the weaker military force splitting into smaller mobile groups. Not confined to specific battlefields as in a conventional war, these smaller mobile groups attack the stronger military force at any vulnerable point and at any time when it is convenient for the weaker military force. The object of this exercise is to force the stronger military force to negotiate for peace on the terms of the weaker military force. 19 This form of warfare can also be defined as guerrilla warfare which is derived from the Spanish word which means "little war". 20

Barnard (1985) goes a step further, and describes the military events in Namibia in Kompas op SWA/Namibië, in terms of a revolutionary war. 21 This interpretation of his, is based on McCuen’s model which was also used by McColl (1969) to interpret these events as a revolutionary war. This form of warfare is characterised by an alternative political party, usually an indigenous political party, standing outside the existing political structures of the country, confronting those structures. The modus operandi is for the armed wing of this alternative political party to use guerrilla tactics in an attempt to defeat the existing political structures and replace those structures with a new political and social order. 22 These guerrilla soldiers would in many cases include a large number of civilians. This corresponds with the phase of penetration, which is the third phase in a revolutionary war. During this phase the guerrilla soldiers infiltrate the civilian population and consolidate, core areas, within the community which had been infiltrated. In these core areas the guerrilla soldiers
would enjoy sufficient support from the local population so that they be given a safe place to hide so as to escape detection from the authorities. An alternative method of hiding would be for these soldiers to place their equipment in a cache, and merge into the indigenous community, thereby escaping detection.  

The military conflict in Namibia between 1966 and 1989 can be divided into two distinct phases. Although the first phase officially only started in 1966 with the adoption of military resistance by SWAPO, in practice this phase had already started in 1961 with the formation of the first training camp in Tanzania. This first phase ended in 1974 and was characterised by political resistance by SWAPO with limited low intensity armed incursions into northern Namibia by PLAN. The limited intensity of these initial incursions can be attributed to SWAPO's limited power base, insufficient military equipment, lack of training and limited financial resources. These initial incursions were isolated and exploratory in nature and could easily be contained by the South African Police (SAP) with the South African Defence Force (SADF) acting only in a supporting role. The SADF was only to be used as a last resort to repel any armed incursions. This phase was also marked by a series of boycotts and strike-action in Namibia which were aimed at achieving political rights for the indigenous population and political recognition for SWAPO. The churches in Namibia, which had always been apparent passive observers in terms of military and political events, now became actively involved in both military and political resistance, giving SWAPO a safe platform from which to coordinate resistance against the South African administration.

During this first phase of SWAPO's military resistance, PLAN would only rely on locally recruited people. This practice would change drastically during the
second phase of military resistance when the so-called foreign observers and training personnel became involved in military operations in support of SWAPO. Various countries including East Germany and several Middle East and North African countries made training facilities available to SWAPO during this initial phase. Additional financing from the Africa Liberation Committee (ALC) of the OAU was also forthcoming to assist SWAPO in any possible way. One of the many operational problems which SWAPO experienced during this phase, included their commanders who were stationed at the training centres elsewhere in Africa and were therefore far removed from the Namibian battlefield. In many cases this delayed instructions reaching the soldiers on the ground. The level of South African military technology and the capabilities of their militia, also limited SWAPO's mobility and ability to penetrate successfully into the Namibian heartland. According to Palmberg (1983), SWAPO had succeeded in penetrating deep into the Namibian interior. There were isolated incidents of sabotage in some of the urban areas which include Windhoek and Swakopmund and a few SWAPO raids on white-owned farms. The success or intensity of these incidents could however not validate any claims by SWAPO that they had successfully expanded their theatre of operations to the whole of the territory. This phase was also marked by attacks on the local indigenous population. The reason behind these attacks was to create an atmosphere of instability which could apparently not be controlled by the South African administration. This created an atmosphere whereby the indigenous population were made to believed that immediate and undivided obedience to SWAPO would bring immediate relief from this uncertain situation.

The second phase of SWAPO's military resistance which started in 1974 was characterised by an intensification of military operations by SWAPO. This can
directly be attributed to an increase in financial support for SWAPO. A wider range of more sophisticated military hardware which became available to PLAN and the return of better trained members of PLAN to Namibia, after having received basic training in Tanzania and specialised training in the Middle East and the Communist Bloc countries, made it possible for PLAN to directly confront the better equipped SADF. This phase was also characterised by the SADF taking over control of operations against SWAPO. Shortly after taking control of these operations in April 1974, the SADF adopted a policy of launching so-called pre-emptive strikes against identified SWAPO training camps and assembly points. The attacks were launched against these bases even though some of them were located in neighbouring countries. This policy was adopted by the SADF because during this phase PLAN had acquired several secure bases in Angola and Zambia from where they could launch an intensified guerrilla campaign against the SADF, the SAP and the South African administration. SWAPO had also succeeded in establishing a sound logistic line of supply with the assistance of the Cuban and MPLA forces.

It was also during this phase that both the SADF and PLAN started to expand their operations and respective support bases. The South African administration did this by recruiting Namibians to serve in the SADF and SAP structures. This step also saw the introduction of units like the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF), KOEVOET, 32 Battalion and other indigenous units which include 101 Infantry Battalion. One of the reasons behind the formation of these units was that they would lay the foundation of an indigenous militia in an independent Namibia. The use of these indigenous units was also a method of legitimising South African military presence in northern Namibia. These units were regularly used in operations against SWAPO thereby creating an impression that it was members of the indigenous population
who were protecting their country against SWAPO domination. A political reason for the formation of these units was that the South African Government and the Ministry of Defence were well aware of the effect that high South African casualties would have on the South African public which in turn would have political ramifications. By using these indigenous military units the possibility of high casualty figures for members of the SADF were reduced. This would in turn have a positive effect on the South African public.

It was also during this phase that the SADF became actively involved in the Angolan civil war. This was done for two reasons. Firstly to give support to the United States of America (USA)-supported UNITA forces, and secondly to aid the whole of the southern African sub-continent by repelling the Soviet-supported Cubans from Angola. By doing so the South African Government perceived that they would relieved the sub-continent of a looming communist threat. A result of the destruction of the camps and bases which the Cuban and Soviet-supported MPLA forces made available to SWAPO, was that the SADF also came into direct conflict with the MPLA and Cuban soldiers. This conflict, and the withdrawal of the Cubans from Angola, became an integral part of the negotiations aimed at reaching a settlement in Namibia.

It was also during this phase that PLAN developed from an apparent semi-isolated armed group to a fully-fledged military organisation. SWAPO’s initial aim with their so-called armed struggle also underwent a drastic change during this second phase. Initially, when adopting military resistance against the South African administration, their aim had been to defeat the South African administration and militia and in so doing pressure the South African Government to negotiating for peace on SWAPO’s terms. This change in SWAPO’s aim was effected by SWAPO prolonging the war to such an extent
that it placed an ever increasing strain on the South African soldier's morale and that of the South African community at large. The reasoning was that by prolonging the war, SWAPO and her allies would force the South African administration to voluntarily give up the fight and negotiate for peace.\textsuperscript{50} This view was supported by the Cuban-supported MPLA who perceived that they could easily defeat the South Africa militia.\textsuperscript{51} Davidson (1988) attributes the South African decision to negotiate a settlement in Namibia to the defeat of the SADF at Cuito Cuanavale.\textsuperscript{52} This indicates how, in terms of revolutionary warfare, SWAPO was starting to use military means to negotiate a political and diplomatic settlement.\textsuperscript{53}

Due to the doctrinal training which the returning PLAN members had received while undergoing specialised training elsewhere, military resistance in Namibia now started to show the characteristics of a revolutionary war.\textsuperscript{54} It also highlighted how Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tung's theories of using military means to achieve a political solution had been applied to the political and military events in Namibia. This development indicates a very important difference between the military resistance offered by SWAPO and the armed resistance offered during the period of primary resistance. At no stage, during the period of primary resistance did the armed resistance show any characteristics of a revolutionary war, while these characteristics were becoming increasingly noticeable during the military resistance in Namibia which had become known as SWAPO's \textit{armed struggle}.\textsuperscript{55}

Notes

3. SWAPO: \textit{To be born a nation}, pp.176-177.


8. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, p.176.


13. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, pp.176-177.


21. W.S. Barnard: *Kompas op SWA/Namibië*, p.188.


27. R. Green, M. Kiljunen and K. Kiljunen (eds): *Namibia. The last colony*, p.149.


37. P. Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p.141.
40. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, p.290.
48. P. Stiff: *Nine days of war*, p.139.
5. A brief review of political resistance in Namibia, 1948 to 1989

In *SWA/Namibia. The politics of continuity and change*, Du Pisani identifies two phases of secondary resistance. The first of these phases was characterised by low intensity passive resistance, which was primarily based on vested tribal interests. This phase lasted until 1948, and falls outside the parameters of this study. The second of these phases, lasted from 1948 to 1989 and was dominated by the growing political awareness of the indigenous population. It was also during this second phase that the indigenous political structures in Namibia were formed which would direct indigenous popular resistance until the gaining of independence. This second phase also highlights the diversity of popular resistance. It also indicates how both local and international events influenced each other with regards to events in Namibia. It also highlights how the legality of the South African administration of Namibia was questioned in the United Nations (UN) and elsewhere during the period under review. The value of the categories which have been identified by Du Pisani is that it makes it possible for the changing character, aims and intensity of secondary resistance in Namibia to be identified and highlighted. It also makes it possible to indicate the development of secondary resistance during the period 1948 to 1989.

The so-called traditional interpretation of resistance in Namibia, which is based on primary and secondary resistance, does not differentiate between political and diplomatic resistance, although political resistance was a local manifestation and diplomatic resistance a more international manifestation of popular resistance. The major difference between diplomatic and political resistance was that diplomatic resistance was offered by members of the indigenous political leaders, while political resistance was offered by the Namibian community. The so-called traditional interpretation of resistance does not
indicate how political and diplomatic resistance influenced each other, or how together they influenced military resistance. Political resistance was also a manifestation of the exposure some members of the indigenous population received from foreign education and other diverse socio-political forces. These influences all affected the concerted manner in which the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia were trying to take responsibility for shaping their own destiny and to offer popular indigenous resistance against the South African administration.6

During this period of secondary resistance a variety of organisations, or mechanisms were used by SWAPO to extend the idea of resistance to the Namibian community at large. One of the mechanisms used to propagate the idea of resistance against the South African administration were the churches.7 After the formation of the locally-controlled Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango church (ELOK) and the Evangelical Lutheran church (ELK) it became possible for church-based resistance to be viewed as a manifestation of political resistance with specific political goals.8 The main body which was responsible for coordinating church-based resistance within Namibia was the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN).9 A smaller organisation which also followed the guidelines of the CCN was the Verenigde Evangelies Lutherse Kerk in Suidwes-Afrika (VELKSWA).10

Church-based resistance had two main characteristics. Firstly, the attempts of the indigenous church officials to achieve parity with their white counterparts.11 Secondly, the church tried to become an integral part of indigenous political resistance which was aimed at achieving political empowerment for the indigenous population, and bringing an end to the South African administration of Namibia.12 Although officially the churches
appeared at all times to remain unattached to any political party, the indigenous churches and the different foreign missionary societies kept close contact with SWAPO through the help of the CCN and VELKSWA. In practice, this meant that the churches had changed their approach towards resistance during the period 1948 to 1989. They had changed their position from one of a relative passive spectator to that of an active participant. The value of the church-based resistance during this period was that it presented the indigenous population with a platform where they could air their views and anxieties about the political developments in their country without the fear of much intervention by the authorities. It also served as medium for boosting the morale of the indigenous population during what has been referred to as "difficult times". The CCN were also instrumental in involving the World Council of Churches (WCC) in increasing international pressure on the South African administration to end what was termed South Africa’s illegal administration of Namibia.

Labour-based resistance was another successful mechanism for offering political resistance, and extending the support base of popular resistance against the South African administration. This form of resistance brought the Namibian labourers into direct conflict with the farmers, the industrialists and the South African administration. It was also instrumental in drawing the previously uninvolved Ovambo tribes into the resistance process. The labourers felt that they were being excluded from the economic development of the region which was being controlled mainly by whites. There are three phases to this form of resistance. The first two phases were the period between 1915 and 1924 and the period from 1924 to 1945. During both these phases, labour-based resistance was focused on the recognition of the right of the indigenous population of Namibia to own land, the improvement of working conditions and the recognition of the industrial rights of the indigenous labourers. These
phases were also marked by the limited formation of trade unions.\textsuperscript{20}

The character of labour-based resistance during the third phase which started after the Second World War, differed in character from the previous two phases.\textsuperscript{21} During this third phase, labour-based resistance would be characterised by the politicisation of labour disputes and the recognition of the political rights of the indigenous people of Namibia. This recognition was also extended to the political recognition of trade unions and the rights of their members in the workplace.\textsuperscript{22} During this third phase, labour-based resistance had entered what Davidson (1984) and Akintoye (1976) identifies as the phase of political reconstruction.\textsuperscript{23} This form of resistance culminated in the formation of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NAWU) which was the main mechanism through which labour-based resistance was coordinated.\textsuperscript{24} The result of extending the influence of the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) into Ovamboland and the rest of Namibia, was that the system of contract labour, which was detested by most members of the indigenous population, now affected almost everyone in Namibia. SWANLA was also instrumental in affecting the up to now relatively uninvolved Ovambo. This in turn aided the expansion of popular resistance in Namibia.\textsuperscript{25}

Although the Herero Chiefs Council (HCC) was responsible for offering and coordinating diplomatic resistance, this indigenous organisation was also instrumental in offering local political resistance within Namibia.\textsuperscript{26} The formation of a western-type indigenous middle class caused some concern for the members of the HCC and other traditional leaders. They felt that the modern generation should have some contact with the traditions of their ancestors and their heritage.\textsuperscript{27} The strongest indigenous cultural movement was the \textit{Otjiserandu} movement. This organisation was an extension of the HCC
which was aimed at educating the de-tribalised and urbanised Herero in their heritage. It was through organisations like this that the traditional leaders succeeded in keeping the idea of resistance alive during the so-called years of transition. This period was characterised by the preparation of a power base for a more active form of resistance. These traditional leaders did not offer high-profile resistance, their form of resistance was focused on making the modern generation aware of the principles of resistance and their heritage.

The HCC was also instrumental in doing much of the groundwork for the formation of nationalist political organisations which would be responsible for offering more active forms of resistance against the South African administration. The HCC was the most prominent of these traditional leadership organisations. Their prominence can also be attributed to the fact that resistance was centred in the hands of the Herero and the Ovambo during the period 1948 to 1989, with the other ethnic groups playing minor roles.

As had been the case in the rest of Africa, the intelligentsia also played an important role in offering secondary resistance in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989. It was this group of people who were responsible for the formation of the first indigenous political organisation with definite political goals. The initial body which they formed was the South West Africa Student Body (SWASB) which was formed in 1952. The name was subsequently changed to the South West Africa Progressive Association (SWAPA) which, in turn, was redesignated the South West Africa National Union (SWANU) in August 1959. The intelligentsia took the lead in the formation of indigenous political parties because of their exposure to foreign influences while studying elsewhere. Despite having been the first indigenous political structure in Namibia, SWANU could never count on a broad support base. This can be attributed to the fact that, despite all the promises which they made to the
indigenous population regarding an indigenous government, they could not succeed in bringing such a government to power. This inability can be attributed to the scope of their guidelines and goals which were much too wide.\textsuperscript{37} A second problem which affected the membership of SWANU, was the attitude of the intelligentsia towards the HCC. Their approach towards the HCC was based on neutralizing the power of the HCC.\textsuperscript{38} Their de-tribalised status, and their changed attitude towards tribalism also limited their membership. The fact that their support base was centred with fellow intellectuals, who were viewed as an elite minority by the majority of Namibians also limited support for SWANU.\textsuperscript{39}

The formation of the Ovamboland People’s Congress (OPC) under the leadership of Andimba Toiva Ja Toiva in 1958 in Cape Town heralded the introduction of a political party which would enjoy a wide support base. This support can be attributed to the fact that members of the OPC were recruited from the large labour corps of the Ovambo in Namibia.\textsuperscript{40} The OPC was renamed the Ovamboland People’s Organisation (OPO) in April 1959 and structured on the lines of the African National Congress (ANC).\textsuperscript{41} The OPO was again renamed the South West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) in June 1960.\textsuperscript{42} Although SWAPO, SWANU and the HCC were the main parties in terms of indigenous Namibian resistance politics, there were a variety of other smaller parties. It would, however, be SWAPO who would receive both local and international recognition as the representative of the Namibian people, and dominate the indigenous political scene until 1989.

Indigenous political alliances in Namibia underwent a series of changes during the 1970’s which also affected resistance by the indigenous population of Namibia. These changes in political alliances are best illustrated by the
formation of the National Convention (NC) in 1971 which brought together SWAPO, SWANU, the Democratic Co-operation Party (DEMKOP), the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) and the Namib African People’s Organisation (NAPDO) in an aligned political pressure group. Due to the growing conflict between SWAPO and the HCC, the NC was dissolved and replaced by the SWAPO-aligned Namibian National Convention (NNC) and traditionalist-aligned National Convention of Namibia (NCN) in 1973.

While the NNC was supportive of the South African-initiated Democratic Turnhalle Constitutional Conference, the NCN was not. The NCN was more focused on a UN-supported independence plan with minimal South African involvement. The result was that after the UN recognition of SWAPO as the sole and legal representative of the Namibian population, members of the NNC alliance left this alliance and joined the more popular SWAPO-aligned NCN. These mechanisms and organisations which were instrumental in coordinating and offering community-based political resistance in Namibia are an indication of the complexity of the Namibian resistance society during the period 1948-1989. Ngavirue (1972) also points out that the earlier ethnic differences were now embodied in political differences as manifested in the formation of these various political parties and alliances during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, and not in ethnic conflict.

Notes
2. Ibid.


9. SWAPO: To be born a nation, p.169.


14. SWAPO: To be born a nation, p.282.


17. World Council of Churches: The struggle for liberation, p.5.


34. J.H.P.Serfontein: *Namibia?,* p.143.

35. K.Mbuende: *Namibia. The broken shield*, p.150.


40. O.Levinson: *South West Africa*, p.90.


42. Anon: *Namibia. In the balance. (Africa Confidential 20/8, 1979)*, p.3.


6. Identifiable patterns with which to report on Namibian resistance, 1948 to 1989

There are two distinct patterns, or methods of interpretation, which can be identified in the consulted sources and which have been used by observers and commentators to report on the diplomatic, political and military events in Namibia. These patterns, or methods of interpretation, have also been used to report on the resistance which was offered by members of the indigenous Namibian resistance community during the period 1948 to 1989.

The first of the patterns to have been used, and which can be termed the traditional pattern of interpretation, is based on the use of the terms primary and secondary resistance as they have been defined by both Du Pisani in *SWA/Namibia. The politics of continuity and change*,¹ and Davidson in *The people's cause. A history of guerrillas in Africa*.² Although this traditional model of interpretation enjoys the support of a large number of commentators and observers, certain methodological and interpretational problems regarding the application of this pattern need to be avoided.

By not interpreting or reporting on the events of the past in terms of modern experiences and interpretations, prejudiced statements and interpretations, which include methodological inconsistencies regarding the diplomatic, military and political events of the period 1948 to 1989 in Namibia can be prevented.³ Many of the methodological or interpretational problems manifest themselves in the work of Katjavivi (1988), Mbuende (1986) and Palmberg (1983) and includes the claim that SWAPO's military resistance, or so-called armed struggle, had its roots in the period of German colonial administration. This claim illustrates the error of interpreting, or reporting on the past, in terms of the present. Together with this interpretation, Wood (1988) and Freund (1984)
highlight the incorrect use of history as a political weapon, thereby creating erroneous reflections of military and political events in the past. This apparent artificial continuum, was created by SWAPO to legitimise their diplomatic, political and military actions and claims, illustrates this point. The use of this so-called traditional pattern also coincides with a rising social guilt by the international community towards the colonial period. The result is that during the period under review any form of colonial, or perceived colonial administration, came under fire from all quarters which included the United Nations (UN) and the non-aligned states. Nomenclature which has been used as an alternative for this first pattern is passive and active resistance, where active resistance refers to armed primary resistance and passive resistance refers to community based secondary resistance. Although this change in nomenclature indicates that there have been attempts at a subtle shift in emphasis, the basic format of this alternative paradigm is still based on the so-called traditional interpretation of resistance in terms of primary and secondary resistance.

Most of the observers and commentators who have used this so-called traditional pattern to report on the resistance offered by the Namibian resistance community, have tended to indicate that the course of Namibian resistance followed a strict chronological sequence, with primary resistance preceding secondary resistance. Some of these observers, which include Palmberg (1983) and Katjavivi (1988) tend to emphasize that the indigenous resistance community turned to secondary resistance when it became apparent that primary resistance would have little, if any, effect on the South African administration of that country. These forms, or types of resistance, according to the so-called traditional pattern for reporting on resistance, are not rigid. These patterns, or methods of interpretation, should rather refer to periods of
resistance during which, one form or the other is dominant over the others.\textsuperscript{9} The manner in which these forms, or types, of resistance have overlapped each other during the course of Namibian history can best be illustrated by events such as the Bondelswart uprising of 1922, the Rehobother uprising of 1925 and the subjugation of Ipumbu of the Ovakwambi in 1932.\textsuperscript{10} Although these three events all fall outside the parameters of this study they serve to illustrate the tendency for primary and secondary resistance, which occur during the course of Namibian resistance history, to overlap each other. They also illustrate the failure of the indigenous population of Namibia to successfully offer military resistance against the South African administration during the early years of their administration of Namibia.

According to what has been termed the so-called traditional pattern of resistance, the military resistance which was offered by the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) should be defined in terms of primary resistance. The reasoning being that in terms of the initial definitions, military resistance was defined as primary resistance.\textsuperscript{11} This supports the viewpoint of Davidson (1988), who feels that the definitions which have been used to underpin this pattern are too academic and that both the definitions and the pattern have to a certain extent lost contact with reality.\textsuperscript{12}

The second pattern which can be identified, and which has been used to report on the military and political events in Namibia, is the model of McCuen which was used by McColl to report on events in Namibia in terms of a revolutionary war. According to this definition there are four distinct phases which can be identified.

The first of these phases was the preparatory phase which lasted from 1957 to
1966. This phase was dominated by the formation of the Ovamboland People’s Organisation (OPO) which led to the formation of SWAPO in 1959. During this phase SWAPO became the leading indigenous political party within Namibia. They also received diplomatic recognition from the UN as the sole and legal representatives of the indigenous inhabitants of Namibia. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) also recognised SWAPO as the leading indigenous political party in Namibia. This phase ended with the adoption of military resistance by SWAPO, which has also been referred to as a so-called armed struggle against the South African administration. This military conflict led to the formation of the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) which was the military wing of SWAPO.

The second of these phases which lasted from 1966 to 1974, was the phase of contact. During this phase, PLAN and the armed South African militia clashed with each other. Initially PLAN’s operations were limited both in scope and intensity and were relatively easily contained by the South African Police (SAP). It would only be during the following phase that the South African Defence Force (SADF) would take over control of operations against SWAPO.

The third phase was the phase of penetration which lasted from 1974 to 1980. During this phase the SADF took over control of operations against SWAPO. By containing the contacts, or armed encounters between the South African militia and PLAN to the border area of northern Namibia, a guerrilla war-zone, or operational area, was created. There were isolated incidents of sabotage in the Namibia midlands, these incidents were however not frequent enough to validate any serious claim to an extension of a guerrilla war zone in terms of Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tung’s theories on guerrilla warfare. It was
also during this phase that the SADF launched a series of pre-emptive strikes against PLAN bases in Angola, Cassinga being the most important base which was came under attack from the SADF in May 1978. This attack was extensively used by SWAPO and their supporters in their propaganda war against the South African administration and interpreted as an attack by the racist forces of the South African Government which was launched against unarmed refugees.

The fourth phase and final phase which lasted from 1980 onwards, was the phase of interpenetration. During this phase the South African Government extended their internal policy of militarising the South African society to the Namibian community. This was done by creating the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) as well as a variety of home guard units in an attempt to neutralise the incursions by members of SWAPO and PLAN. While concentrating all their efforts on a military defeat of SWAPO and, their opponents, which included the smaller indigenous parties and the South African administration, lost all opportunities of gaining the initiative in the political and diplomatic struggle.

According to the definition of revolutionary warfare this fourth phase should have been characterised by the formation of what are termed core areas. These are areas where the local population comes under the direct control of the revolutionary party. A series of adjacent core areas would inevitably lead to the formation of a revolutionary state. Although PLAN succeeded in extending the war zone to the whole length of the northern border by 1979, the Kaokoveld in 1980 and the western Kavango in 1982, their attempts at extending the war zone to the border with Botswana in 1984 proved to be unsuccessful. In the event of sufficient of these core areas being created, a
revolutionary state could be formed. This was not the case in Namibia as a diplomatically negotiated solution to the military and political deadlock in Namibia resulted because of successful negotiations between the South African Government and the UN. SWAPO could thus not lay claim to any liberated areas within Namibia during the negotiations.

The personal perspectives or viewpoints of the various commentators or observers determined which of these two patterns, or methods of interpretation, they would use to report on the popular resistance in Namibia. There appears to have been a tendency for commentators who equated the military and political events in Namibia to similar events in Vietnam to use the pattern which describes these events in terms of a revolutionary war.26 Because of the apparent total onslaught against the South African Government during the 1970’s and 1980’s many South African commentators and observers have also used this pattern and not the so-called traditional pattern based on primary and secondary resistance.

Notes

4. Ibid.
5. SWAPO: To be born a nation, p.176.
14. SWAPO: *To be born a nation*, p.176.
7. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been two-fold. Firstly to offer a concise insight into the course of diplomatic, political and military events in Namibia during the South African administration of 1948 to 1989, and secondly to identify the different theoretical paradigms which have been used by various commentators and observers to report on popular indigenous resistance in Namibia during the same period.

At a cursory glance a large number of the commentators on these events appear to support the political viewpoints of the South West Africa People's organisation (SWAPO), with very few coming out in support of the South African administration. It also appears that historical accuracy was secondary to the political interests and preferences of the commentators with many of these publications serving as mediums to voice their political inclination.¹ A large number of the publications which support the viewpoints of SWAPO, do so in a biased manner without taking any methodological or historiographical means into consideration. These publications are also laced with political rhetoric and terminology which was used to legitimise, and drum up both international and local support for what was also termed SWAPO’s so-called armed struggle, or war of liberation. The work of First (1963), Katjavivi (1988), Palmberg (1983) and Soggot (1986) all fall into this category.

Findings which are based on the work of Barnard (1985), Du Pisani (1986), Emmet (1987), Hartmann (1989) and Ngavirue (1972) seem to indicate that a growing number of commentators were becoming aware of the tendency which was becoming prevalent in terms of reporting on the history of resistance. According to this tendency the past was interpreted and reported on in terms of
what the present required of the past.² There also seems to have been an attempt by these, and other, commentators to substitute this method of interpretation with one which is academically more sound and based on proven methodological principles. A large number of more recent publications, on what happened in Africa and Namibia, also appear to be based on more reliable academic principles. There also seems to be a concerted attempt by these commentators to interpret and report on the diplomatic, political and military events in relation to related characteristics and to give more precise details concerning those events without supporting any specific political doctrine. Social processes, which include resistance, are reported on in detail, thereby indicating their complexity without attempting to force the details into all encompassing categories, which in some cases have been proven to be inadequate.³ The most significant of these inadequacies which has been highlighted, is the manner in which SWAPO’s military resistance has been categorised as secondary resistance.

The so-called traditional manner of reporting on the diplomatic, military and political events in Namibia in terms of primary and secondary resistance also illustrates how certain commentators have made assumptions about the past in terms of the present. This is a methodological problem which has been highlighted by amongst others Freund (1984), Tosh (1992) and Wood (1988) and is also prevalent in various other publications on themes in African history. This tendency can be ascribed to the colonial past of the territory and how some members of the indigenous intelligentsia tried to justify a complete break with the colonial past and the traditional Namibian leadership corps.⁴ Even if it meant creating or projecting a false image of that period.

The incorrect use of the so-called traditional paradigm to report on resistance
which is based on the use of the terms, primary and secondary resistance, has led to the establishment of an apparent artificial continuum between the armed resistance which was offered during the period of German colonialism and the military resistance of SWAPO and the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). This continuum has also indicated how this paradigm was used to legitimise SWAPO’s military resistance and how it supported their political and diplomatic claims. The validity of such a link, depends on the point of view, or interpretation, of the relevant commentator. It must however be remembered that both the political and social structures of the indigenous Namibians during the 1960’s differed totally from those which were present in Namibia at the turn of the century. The requirements of Namibian society in terms of interpreting the past would also have been different during the period of initial resistance to what is presently required.

The value of the so-called traditional pattern of resistance lies in the apparent unifying force of this interpretation. This apparent feeling of unity was not a tangible political or diplomatic reality, but more of a feeling of awareness which was created amongst members of the indigenous population. This awareness gave impetus to the rise of African nationalism in Namibia as emphasized by Emmet (1987) and Ngavirue (1972). The credibility of some of the users of this pattern diminishes when they start assuming that a united political front existed in Namibia at the time of the Herero war. This so-called united front is interpreted by Lau (1990) as a simultaneous offering of resistance by different ethnic groups against German colonial control. It was not a united front in terms of modern political concepts as Palmberg (1983) and others would have us believe.

From the concise review of the diplomatic, military and political events in
Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989, it was possible to identify a second paradigm which was used to report on the events during this period. This second paradigm was based on the model of McCuen which was formulated to report on diplomatic, military and political events in terms of a revolutionary war. McColl used this paradigm, and is quoted by Barnard, in *Kompas op SWA/Namibia*, to report on the diplomatic, military resistance by the indigenous Namibian resistance community in terms of a revolutionary war. The South African defence community also used this paradigm to report on the events in Namibia, and within the borders of South Africa, in terms of an interrelated revolutionary war. This interpretation has been emphasized by commentators or observers who are students of guerrilla and revolutionary warfare and who have successfully applied the doctrines of Che Guevara, Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tung to these events. There have also been tendencies to equate the events in Namibia to those in Vietnam. The value of this paradigm is that it indicates a shift in emphases, thereby giving a different perspective to the events of the past. Due to an apparent total onslaught against South Africa during the 1970’s and 1980’s a number of journalists who supported the South African administration of Namibia made use of this paradigm in their reporting. This is especially true of reporters who were working for publications like *Uniform, Paratus* and *Armed Forces* which were official publications of the South African Defence Force. A problem with this paradigm is that it denies the presence of any national aspirations within Namibia and implies that Namibia was an ethnically divided and underdeveloped country.

An important issue which is highlighted in both these paradigms is that a large proportion of the indigenous population were involved in offering popular resistance in Namibia. Whether the commentators viewed these events from a
viewpoint of secondary resistance, a revolutionary war or the legitimisation of an armed struggle they all express, despite the different viewpoints, full-scale and wide-ranging commitment and support by a large number of members of the indigenous community. Both these paradigms tend to ignore the number of people who were living in harmony with each other. They do not indicate that the polarisation between the whites and indigenous population of Namibia was not as definite as it appears from the different publications.

By successfully identifying these two paradigms which have been used to report on events in Namibia, the second purpose of this study, which was to identify the different theoretical paradigms which have been used by various commentators and observers to report on popular resistance in Namibia during the period 1948 to 1989, has also successfully been achieved. The foundation has also been laid to re-evaluate these two paradigms and to promulgate an alternative which is based not on theoretical paradigms but on the political and diplomatic processes and events of the period.

Notes

11. S. Sarkesian: *Revolutionary guerrilla warfare*, p.3
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