

THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS IN NAMIBIA

1960 - 1990

THESIS

Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

of Rhodes University

by

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November 1996

What forms of communication and culture produce men and women who struggle against the power apparatus, who refuse the exploitation of 'man by man', certain classes by other classes, certain races by other races, certain nations by other nations, certain people by other people? How, from their historically defined situation, can classes, groups and individuals without the official 'word', fight against the dispossession of being able to define their own identity, create and imagine another form of uniting among themselves, and relating to others?

Mattelart and Siegelau, 1983

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It would be almost an impossible task to acknowledge everyone to whom I am indebted for advice, encouragement and other assistance in the preparation of this thesis. However, special thanks are due to my supervisor, Dr Guy Berger, for his valued guidance, patience and encouragement; Charles Riddle, as a friend and mentor, who sensitized me into researching the Namibian media; Zedekia Ngavirue, Gerson Vei, Andre Strauss, Gwen Lister, Philip Tjerije, Irmburga Wellerdieck, Protasius Ndauendapo, Richard Pakleppa, Auguste Eises, Theodora Nandjää, Chris Ndivanga, Estelle Coetzee, Nelao Kondombolo, Jo Rogger, Chris Shipanga, Uhuru Dempers, Steve Katjiuanjo, and other Namibian journalists who spent long hours with me sharing the insight of their involvement in the Namibian alternative press; the staff of the Erstorf Reference Library in Windhoek, the National Archive, the American Cultural Centre in Windhoek and the Library of the University of Namibia (Unam). A special word of thanks also goes to Elizabeth Mule whose advice and encouragement were both daunting and inspirational.

I owe a great deal of thanks and appreciation to my wife, Tuyeni, for her limitless patience, understanding and support during the long writing of this thesis. The thesis is dedicated to her and to the memory of Benzie, our son, who passed away at a very crucial moment during its preparation.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIS	African Improvement Society
AME	African Methodist Episcopal (Church)
ANC	African National Congress
APC	African Publishing Company
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia
DELK	Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische Kirche in Namibia (German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia)
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
DTP	Desktop Publishing
ELC	Evangelical Lutheran Church
ELCIN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
ELCIRN	Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
ELOC	Evangelical Lutheran Owambo-Kavango Church
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
KARA	Katutura Residence Action
KBV	Khomasdal Bastervereniging (Khomasdal Civic Organisation)
KCC	Katutura Community Centre
MIR	Revolutionary Left Movement (Chile)
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa

MTP	Media Training Project
NAMPA	Namibia Press Agency
NANGOF	Namibia Non-Governmental Organisations Forum
NANSO	Namibia National Students Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPP	Namibia Peace Plan
NPSWA	National Party of South West Africa
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organisation
NUNW	National Union of Namibian Workers
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SASPU	South African Student Press Union
SRCs	Students Representative Councils
SVN	Student Voice of Namibia
SWABC	South West Africa Broadcasting Corporation
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPA	South West Africa Progressive Association
SWAPO	South West Africa Peoples Organisation
SWASB	South West Africa Students Body
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
TGNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
UELCSWA	United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South West Africa
UN	United Nations
UNIN	United Nations Institute for Namibia
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VON	Voice of Namibia
WHAM	Winning Hearts and Minds
WUS	World University Services

ABSTRACT

The study seeks to document the development of the alternative press in Namibia from 1960 to 1990. It traces the reasons for its emergence and outlines the stated aims and objectives in order to illustrate its attempts to nurture a culture of colonial resistance. It is argued that structural factors such as funding, distribution, advertisements and ownership enabled the alternative press to operate outside the South African apartheid hegemony. The study explains how the intellectuals used the alternative press in their attempts to mobilise and organise colonised Namibians for social change. They did this by formulating and disseminating ideologically constructed discourses (messages) which challenged the colonial discourse. These messages were produced and directed towards a specific audience, the masses to whom the intellectuals were organically linked. Their primary news definers were also drawn from the ranks of these masses. It is further argued that the alternative press came to represent the colonised masses by voicing their needs and aspirations which were marginalised by the mainstream colonial media. Finally, a relatively detailed analysis of the content, the language used and the messages carried by the alternative press has been made to demonstrate its political agenda, which was to empower the masses to achieve their objective - the attainment of political independence. These issues are analyzed against a background of theoretical frameworks which seek to explain how subordinated groups and classes in a state of domination sought to establish alternative channels of communication in the creation of a counter hegemonic order.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts made by Namibians at the level of the superstructure to challenge the South African attempts at ideological control has enjoyed little attention in the literature on the decolonisation process. The present study attempts to lay a foundation for studies in this area.

The South African colonial rule in Namibia from 1960 to 1990 was characterised by a combination of coercion and consent. The reason was because South Africa appeared to have been less successful in its efforts at ideological control and hence its reliance on the combination of coercion and consent.¹ One of the reasons for South Africa's failure in this was the Namibian people's efforts aimed at challenging the regime's attempts at ideological control (hegemony) through a number of means at their disposal, including the alternative press.

Hegemony refers to social power. It designates a model of power that revolves around the idea of social knowledge in the production of rule by consent.² The assertion of hegemony, according to Hall, involves the power of the dominant groups to,

frame alternatives and to contain opportunities, to win and shape consent, so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant class (groups) appears not only 'spontaneous', but natural and normal.³

¹see Frederikse, 1986, p73

²see Slack and Allor, 1983, p216

³Hall et al, 1981, p59

Nevertheless, the colonial regime pursued its attempts to win and shape consent in order for the colonised Namibians to grant legitimacy to its presence in Namibia. These attempts were perpetuated through a "colonial discourse".⁴ The colonial discourse according to Charles (1995) encompassed "all the utterances written, spoken and iconographic aimed at affirming the superiority of a dominant group or class over others and justifying such a dominance so as to perpetuate it".⁵

The colonial discourse was operationalized through a racist ideology of apartheid⁶, which postulated the colonised black people as inferior to the white colonisers. The regime pursued a strategy of "divide and rule", separating language groups into ethnic homelands in order to create disunity among them.⁷ The colonised people were further forced into separate schools and townships in which they were expected to develop separately.⁸

Coercive measures against the people and their organisations were portrayed as defence against communism. The regime to this effect deployed its armed forces in the territory to "protect" Namibians against a communist onslaught.⁹ The progressive

⁴see Charles, 1995, pp135 - 152.

⁵ibid

⁶Apartheid was based on the principle of the superiority of the white race over others.

⁷see Evenson and Herbstein, 1989, pp37-40

⁸ibid

⁹see Frederikse, 1986, pp103-146

forces fighting for social change were portrayed as "communists", "terrorists" and "agitators".¹⁰

In 1976 the colonial state introduced a campaign dubbed "Winning hearts and minds" (WHAM) of the people.¹¹ Structures and strategies were created and devised through which the WHAM campaign could be exercised. This included the creation of pseudo cultural organisations linked to the army, such as *Etango* and *Ezuva* established under the motto, "We fight for true Freedom".¹² These organisations were used to motivate black Namibians to resist "communist infiltration".¹³

The deployment of army doctors and teachers at hospitals and in schools in order to win the confidence of the black masses was part of the WHAM. Counter structures in the forms of organisations and clubs were also established to oppose the Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) during the 1980s.

The WHAM campaign culminated into the so-called "new dispensation".¹⁴ This new dispensation encompassed the repeal

¹⁰ibid

¹¹ibid, pp110-116

¹²ibid

¹³ibid, p113

¹⁴see A detailed discussion on the new dispensation in Becker, 1993, pp135, 141.

of apartheid legislation, such as the pass laws, mixed marriages prohibition laws; the opening of public facilities and residential areas to all racial groups; the replacement of the Bantu Education with the Western Cape syllabus of education; the Namibianization of the army through the creation of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) and the subsequent conscription of Namibian males into this force; the creation of the black middle class through the expansion of the civil service and the betterment of salaries of teachers and nurses, accompanied by allocation of fringe benefits, such as housing allowances.¹⁵

All this happened against the background of an imminent internal settlement and the creation of a Government of National Unity (GNU)¹⁶. The regime after having accepted the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 435 in 1978¹⁷, delayed its implementation for more than ten years. It instead concentrated on internal settlements.¹⁸

¹⁵ibid

¹⁶see Tapscott, 1995, p156

¹⁷Swapo and other progressive forces accepted this peace plan the same year.

¹⁸Resolution 435 was designed by the then five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (Germany, Canada, France, United States of America and the United Kingdom) in the middle of 1978, and adopted in September the same year by the Security Council, as the only peaceful plan to bring about an internationally acceptable solution to the political question of Namibia.

Attempts at the indoctrination of the masses into accepting the status quo was exercised through the media, in the form of leaflets, pamphlets, newspapers, the electronic media (both radio and television of the South African Broadcasting Corporation - SABC - and the South West Africa Broadcasting Corporation - SWABC). The regional charter of the National Management System, the Namibian Joint Management Centre was at the forefront of the South African ideological onslaught.¹⁹ The centre sought to:

justify through lectures, the media, pamphlets and the publication of local newspapers, action against oppositional organisations; welfare work and the implementation of reforms; and 'coordination of disinformation via a variety of media forms, pamphlets and township graffiti'.²⁰

The aim of the ideological indoctrination was to subdue Namibians into perpetual colonial dominance by creating a neo-colonial dispensation. However, the Namibian people resisted these attempts at ideological control in various forms at their disposal, of which the press was one.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study traces the emergence of alternative means of communication by colonised Namibians during the three last decades of colonialism. It attempts to lay groundwork for a historical-theoretical identity and understanding of the anti-apartheid publications (the alternative press) during the said period. The study assesses the emergence and development of the

¹⁹Herbstein and Evenson, 1989, pp111, 112

²⁰Swilling and Phillips op cit Evenson and Herbstein, 1989, p112

alternative press²¹ and the context in which it emerged. It outlines its aims and objectives; assesses its content; evaluates the language and messages it carried. The study further identifies the target audience of the alternative press; highlights its ownership and operational and control structures, and analyses its journalistic practice and strategies.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are two main limitations to this study. Firstly the study does not intend to look at how the mainstream colonial press served the dominant bloc in the dissemination of the colonial discourse. Neither does it intend to assess how the colonial authorities and their proxies attempted to ideologically control (and indoctrinate) the colonised people through the use of the media, both print and electronic. Secondly, the study does not intend to look at how the messages (counter hegemonic ideologies) produced by the media activists were digested or interpreted by the targeted audience, although it looks at how the media activists attempted to influence the reception of their messages.

A third limitation is that the study does not look at all the media, including school textbooks and entertainment-oriented media. It also does not examine the role of the radio as an important context, in the ideological struggle in Namibia, for locating the significance of the press.

²¹see Appendix A for a sample of the front pages of these papers.

Moreover, the study does not focus on the effectiveness of the alternative press (audience research). It is felt that all the above-mentioned issues warrant separate studies.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

I have used the concept 'alternative press' to describe a number of Namibian anti-apartheid publications with a common objective of opposing the South African colonial rule. These papers strove to serve as communication outlets for the majority of the people who were targets of the colonial discourse. The following newspaper categories are grouped together under the title alternative press: the nationalist press, the church press, the community (grassroots) press and the progressive independent press.

Most of these publications were alternative to the mainstream colonial press in their character, operation, organisation (control and structure), institutional practices, funding, distribution and in their aims and objectives. They targeted an oppositional audience (the colonised and marginalised section of the population) and carried and addressed issues and events which were marginalised by the mainstream colonial press.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is drawing from the early work of the cultural studies (critical) paradigm²², and from a number of theoretical

²²See the writings on Cultural Studies by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham and the works of Stuart Hall.

approaches of the Latin American 'left press'²³ and the South African 'alternative press' of the 1980s²⁴.

This early work and the approaches provide a theoretical framework which addresses the creation of symbols of resistance and alternative means of communication by dominated groups in society in their struggle against the dominant bloc²⁵.

These frameworks further provide methods of analyzing the production and circulation of alternative messages which serve to counteract the dominant hegemonic order of the ruling classes. The production of these alternative messages by the subordinated groups finds expression in their alternative publications.

The general thrust of the early work of the cultural studies paradigm is that meaning is a 'site' of the struggle and that the dominant meanings produced by the powerful in society are always challenged from beneath. Fiske (1987) argues that this contestation takes the form of a struggle for meaning, in which the dominant classes attempt to "naturalise" the meanings that serve their interests into the "common sense" of the society as a whole, whereas the subordinated classes resist this process and

²³see the anthology edited by Mattelart and Siegelau, Vol. II, 1983.

²⁴ see Pinnock, 1989 and Tomaselli and Louw, 1989 and 1991.

²⁵The concept 'dominant bloc' was used by Gramsci (1971) when he refers to an alliance of the ruling classes. In this study the concept refers to the white racial groups (mainly the Afrikaner and the German) who were the ruling classes in colonial Namibia.

try to produce meanings that serve their interests as well.²⁶ This struggle over meaning, according to Louw and Tomaselli (1989), often gives rise to a "politically-focused alternative press".²⁷

Gramsci, one of the theorists to whom the cultural studies is indebted, has conceptualized the role of "organic intellectuals" and the function of publications run by these intellectuals.²⁸ According to him these intellectuals (journalists, political activists, thinkers, strategists, ideologues etc.) are produced by each social group in the process of its development. They are the people who, in a situation of subordination, forge an oppositional ideological identity and subjectivity to that of the dominant group.²⁹ They make extensive use of publications to do so.

Gramsci has therefore recognised the necessity of publications produced by intellectuals (linked to the oppressed masses) in the creation of hegemony. These publications, he noted, "provide not only an alternative means of socialisation, but a forum for the exchange of opinions and airing of mass grievances".³⁰

²⁶Fiske, 1987, "British Cultural Studies and Television", pp255 - 289.

²⁷Op cit Raboy and Bruck (eds), 1989, p203

²⁸see Hoare and Smith, 1971 and Salamini, 1981

²⁹See Hoare and Smith, 1971, p6

³⁰Op cit Femia, 1981, p41

The Gramscian concept of hegemony is crucial to the present study, for it contributes to the understanding of the reasons for the emergence of the Namibian alternative press. According to Gramsci, hegemony presupposes rule by consent.³¹ Williams understands hegemony as constituting,

... an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society, in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all tastes, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations.³²

In his major work, the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci distinguishes two ways in which groups or an alliance exercise their rule. One way is what he calls "domination", the use of coercive measures.³³ The other is "hegemony" which he notes is the "intellectual and moral leadership which is objectified in and exercised through the institutions of civil society".³⁴

The media as one of the institutions of civil society is crucial to the operation of hegemony as it is through them that "reality" and "knowledge" are disseminated throughout the whole society by the dominant groups in an effort to assert hegemony. It is also through the media, in addition to other means, that dominated

³¹ibid

³²ibid

³³ibid

³⁴ibid

groups challenge the dominant groups and endeavour to create a counter hegemonic order.

The theoretical frameworks which guide this study suggest the creation of alternative communication channels by the dominated groups in societies, due to the deprivation of access to the dominant communication system. The strength of these frameworks is that they provide perspectives for the conceptualisation of the media as vehicles for social change and not only as factors of social control. These frameworks thus, ameliorate the traditional (orthodox) Marxist proposition of the media as tools of the ruling classes, by incorporating an element of conceptualising how the ruled (and not only the rulers) use the media as tools for the enhancement social change,

The preceding discussion forms the basis of my research into the Namibian alternative press.

METHODOLOGY

The study has primarily used qualitative methodological approaches. Interviews with editors, journalists and other individuals who worked in the alternative press were conducted in order to understand the reasons for the emergence of this press as well as to elicit a 'verstehen' dimension of its perceived role. The interviews are strengthened by secondary materials, such as articles in books, periodicals and journals written on the general history and politics of the country.

An assessment of the editorials of these publications and the surviving policy documents has also been done in order to build a full picture of the aims and objectives of the alternative press.

A qualitative content analysis of the alternative publications has been attempted in order to assess the type of news articles (news genres and themes) and their underlying messages. Virtually all the editions of the different categories of the progressive press have survived. The author has studied and analyzed the content of the back copies of the alternative newspapers and identified themes and issues carried in considerable detail. He then selected a number of articles which fit into these various themes in order to provide an understanding thereof. The language used and the messages carried have also been analyzed.

The study has also made use of archival material in highlighting the funding, advertisements and distribution. The author himself was an active participant in this experience. Information drawn from this source is indicated as such where presented.

The study is organised into five sections:

SECTION I deals with the historical context, emergence, development and the aims and objectives of the alternative press, as well as the role of intellectuals (media activists) in this process. Chapter 1 in this section looks at the nationalist press; Chapter 2 at the church press; Chapter 3 at the community

press, while Chapter 4 looks at the progressive-independent press.

SECTION II deals with institutional character of the alternative press. Chapter 5 looks at ownership, control and structure; Chapter 6 at the journalistic practice and strategies, while Chapter 7 looks at the target audience and news sources.

SECTION III deals with the political economy of the alternative press. Chapter 8 deals with funding and advertisements, while Chapter 9 looks at distribution and circulation.

SECTION IV deals with discourse and ideology where Chapter 10 looks at the content, while Chapter 11 assesses the language and messages carried in the alternative press.

Chapter 12 under SECTION V provides a conclusion to the study, which highlights problems and shortcomings experienced and the achievements made.

SECTION ONE

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT, EMERGENCE,
DEVELOPMENT AND AIMS AND
OBJECTIVES**

CHAPTER ONE : THE NATIONALIST PRESS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to outline the emergence of the *South West News*. This has been done with reference to the broader context in which the African nationalist press emerged. It then narrows its focus to the specific context in which the *South West News* emerged and highlights the reasons for its establishment and its stated aims and objectives. The chapter also assesses the role of the intellectuals in the establishment of the newspaper and examines the political outlook of the mainstream press at the time of the establishment of the *South West News*. It concludes by evaluating the reasons for its demise.

THE AFRICAN NATIONALIST PRESS

The *South West News* is being referred to as a nationalist newspaper in this study, because it emerged as one of the instruments used by the intellectuals in fostering African nationalism¹ in the country during the formative years of the Namibian nationalist (liberation) movement.² Being a nationalist newspaper, the *South West News* should be assessed within the context in which other nationalist newspapers emerged.

¹African nationalism as an ideology, according to Kavanagh was directed against the hegemony of the dominant block, the entire white groups, and was concerned both with removing the barriers to the advancement of the black intermediate classes and the widespread poverty and exploitation of blacks as a whole. See Kavanagh, 1985, p36

²Ngavirue pointed out in an interview that the *South West News* was one ramification of black nationalism during the crucial years of the 1960s.

The African nationalist press emerged as a vehicle for fostering nationalism in the former African colonies especially after Second World War.³ The African nationalist press⁴ came to challenge the suppressive colonial policies, while at the same time served as an important barometer of the African feelings, hopes and aspirations.⁵ Wherever it existed, the nationalist press agitated firstly for the improvement in the lives of the African people before demanding self government from the colonial authorities.⁶ One of the early African journalists noted that the nationalist press,

... has invariably served as a rallying point and inspiration to the freedom movement. To the masses, stirring to rid themselves of the shackles of colonialism, this vigorous, militant force with a traditionally anti-government bias has been a source of much encouragement and pride.⁷

³One of the pioneers of black African journalists, Nnandi Azikiwe, described the African nationalist press as the "most potent instrument used in the propagation of nationalist ideas". Op cit, Coleman, 1964, p224

⁴The African nationalist press in this chapter refers to those newspapers established, owned, edited by the African people themselves and directed to the African audience, as opposed to 'nationalist' papers which were owned by European expatriates, edited either by whites or Africans, and directed to the African audience. The 'nationalist press' in this study further does not refer to publications established by the missionaries and directed to the African audience, either.

⁵see Ekwelie, 1985, pp11,12

⁶ibid

⁷Mlenga, 1965, p15

Another important purpose of the nationalist press was to serve as an alternative to the colonial press. A brief reference to the colonial press is, thus, needed.

The printed word, and indeed the press, was brought to Africa by the Europeans, both colonialists and missionaries. The forerunner of the colonial press was the official or government gazette. It is widely accepted that the press in Africa started with the publication of *Royal Gazette* by the British colonial authorities in Sierra Leone in 1801.⁸ This was followed twenty-one years later with the publication of the *Royal Gold Coast Gazette* in Ghana, also by the British colonial authorities.⁹ The publication of the gazettes then spread to the east, central and southern Africa.

The first newspaper to be published in Namibia, the *Windhuker Anzeiger*, was however, a private initiative launched by a 22-year-old German attorney, George Wasserfall, on October 12, 1898.¹⁰ This newspaper mainly carried news on the movements and actions of the *Schutztruppe*¹¹, but was subsequently used by the German colonial government as an official gazette.¹²

⁸Williams, 1963, p243. It should be noted that not everybody agrees that the *Royal Gazette* was Africa's first newspaper. Louw (1991), for instance claims that the *Cape Town Gazette* was the first newspaper to be published in Africa in 1800.

⁹ibid

¹⁰see Berker, 1992, p1

¹¹German colonial troops which fought against the indigenous Namibian people for the occupation of the country.

¹²Berker, 1992, p1

The colonial press was owned, managed and edited by the colonialists and was primarily used to provide news and information to the European population (settlers) of businessmen (traders) and civil servants and to counter nationalist activities. It was Euro-centric in conception and content, and propagated the "positive aspects" of the colonial rule.¹³ Ugboajah (1972) notes that, "both the press and the radio supported colonial rule and interests and were unsympathetic or outright hostile to African aspirations".¹⁴

Jawaharlal Nehru conveys a vivid image of the colonial press when describing the British colonial press in his native India. He noted that:

I remember that when I was a boy, the British-owned newspapers in India were full of official news and utterances; of service news, transfers, and promotions; of the doings of English society, of polo, races, dances, and amateur theatricals. There was hardly a word about the people in India, about their political, cultural, social or economic life. Reading them, one would hardly suspect that they existed.¹⁵

While the government-owned (colonial) newspapers dominated the media scene during the formative years of colonialism, there were however, independent newspapers established by European expatriates, some of them directed towards the African audience.¹⁶ The colonial authorities, however, discouraged these

¹³Wilcox, 1975, p3

¹⁴ibid, p82

¹⁵op cit Wilcox, 1975, p3

¹⁶Wilcox, 1975, p4

initiatives, because they regarded the majority of Africans as "barbaric and excitable" and that a "diversity of opinion and misinformation in the press could mislead or inflame the people and threaten the whole basis of colonial power".¹⁷ The result was the enactment of the most draconian laws ever to be legislated by Europeans in Africa in order to silence the press during the colonial period.¹⁸

Some of the prominent African nationalist newspapers that emerged during the colonial period were: the *West African Herald* (1857 - Ghana)¹⁹, the *West African Pilot* (1937 - Nigeria)²⁰, the *Accra Evening News* (1947 - Ghana)²¹, *La Condition Humaine* (1950 - Senegal)²², *Muiguithania* (1920 - Kenya)²³, *African Life* (1958 - Zambia)²⁴, the *Imvo Zabantsundu* (1884 - South Africa)²⁵, the

¹⁷ibid

¹⁸It is interesting to note that after the attainment of formal independence, some of the independent African states maintained some of these draconian laws. Zambia and Zimbabwe are such countries which after independence used the same laws to silence a critical and probing press. See MISA, 1996.

¹⁹Ekwelie, 1985, p9

²⁰Wilcox, 1975, p12

²¹ibid

²²ibid

²³ibid

²⁴Kasoma, 1986, p66

²⁵Tomaselli and Louw, 1991, p34 and also Pinnock, 1992, p7

Abantu-Batho (1912 - South Africa)²⁶, the *Quinze and Congo* (both founded in 1957 - Zaire)²⁷, the *La Liberte* (1950 - Guinea),²⁸ and the *Ashanti Pioneer* (1939 - 1957- Ghana).²⁹

EMERGENCE OF THE SOUTH WEST NEWS

The *South West News* emerged in a colonial situation like other nationalist newspapers on the continent. It emerged at a time when Namibian black nationalists were in a process of establishing, and or consolidating the emerging, formal political organisations.³⁰ This period was characterised by a shift from narrow ethnic identities and parochial tribal leadership to mass political organisation transcending traditional loyalties.³¹ This development, spearheaded by the emergent intelligentsia (intellectuals), culminated in the reduction of the political role of traditional leaders (who had hitherto dominated the political scene) and the ascendance of the intellectuals to political leadership.

With regard to the dominant discourse the period was characterised by the consolidation of the South African colonial

²⁶Tomaselli and Louw, 1991, p39

²⁷Ekwelie, 1985, p12

²⁸Wilcox, 1975, p13

²⁹Israel, 1992, p412

³⁰The first political organisation in the country (Swanu) was formed in 1959. See Ngavirue, 1972, p292.

³¹Emmett, 1987, p497

administration in the territory. It was a time when the regime sought to expand its racial laws to the territory.

Namibians openly rejected the South African's occupation of the territory and more voices urged the international community, the United Nations in particular, to revoke the South African mandate over the territory.³²

The climax of this period was the shooting of black Namibians on 10 December 1959, for refusing to be removed from the Windhoek Old Location to the new apartheid township of Katutura.³³ Eleven people were killed and 59 others injured.³⁴

Amidst this situation the white-owned mainstream colonial press at the time failed to reflect the prevailing reality from the point of view of the victims of the system, or from a concerned observer's point of view. A perusal of the white-owned papers from 1955 to 1960 confirms this point. During this period the white-owned newspapers at the time (*Windhoek Advertiser*, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Suidwester* and *Die Suidwes Afrikaner*) gave no coverage of the harsh conditions faced by the colonised people as the result of the system. On the contrary, the mainstream colonial press was however, sensitive to criticism levelled against the colonial regime and in most cases, it

³²see Du Pisani, 1986 and Serfontein, 1976

³³See a detailed account of this shooting in Ya-Otto, 1982 Chapter 3, pp34 - 54.

³⁴ibid

defended the policies of the regime, as can be seen from the following editorials:

South West has a sound Native policy which is an example to the rest of Africa and even to the rest of the world where the less fortunate sections of the population are often not even taken into consideration.³⁵

South West is a country where the minority is making it possible for the majority to live at ease. The minority supplies the security which the majority enjoys.

The Scotts and Gentzens can shout their heads off in UNO meetings but South West Africa is confident that it has one of the few democratic states left in the world where all people are free and where everybody is given a chance to make a decent living.³⁶

The mainstream colonial press was also hostile towards the United Nations (UN) for allowing black Namibians and white liberals, such as the Reverend Michael Scott, to submit petitions before the world body on the conditions prevailing in the country,³⁷ and because of the UN's criticism against the South African's racial policy and the manner in which the mandate was being administered. The white-owned papers condemned the UN for being "a platform of world agitators who spit hate against the white man and his authority in the country".³⁸ It accused the

³⁵*Windhoek Advertiser*, July 30, 1957, p8

³⁶*Windhoek Advertiser*, Tuesday, December 18, 1956, p6

³⁷The white press in many instances insisted that the white South West Africans should also be given opportunities to appear before the UN and that they should provide the world body with what they felt was the true reality prevailing in the country. To the white press the black petitioners were misguided individuals who represented no one in the country. See the *Windhoek Advertiser*, Tuesday, October 22, 1957, p8

³⁸*Die Suidwester*, Saturday, December 12, 1959, p4

petitioners of being misinformed and labelled them "agitators".³⁹

When one of the petitioners, Fanuel Kozonguizi, wrote a letter to the *Windhoek Advertiser* in which he highlighted the situation in which the black people lived, the editor of the newspaper responded by claiming that Kozonguizi was "bitter because he could not find a job in South West Africa".⁴⁰ Kozonguizi could "not even be considered a politician", the paper added and warned that if he persisted in "making public his own inexperience", he would embarrass "those people he claimed to represent".⁴¹

He calls himself a politician, but in South West he will be called nothing but an agitator by many ... The letter he has written is one-sided and crammed with half-truths to create racial strife in a country which is trying to solve its racial problems in a calm, fair manner.⁴²

The mainstream colonial press also supported forced removals, pass laws, deportations of black Namibians to the so-called reserves and, the creation of segregated townships. It argued that removals were conducted at the expense of the white taxpayers, while accusing blacks who refused to be removed of preferring to "live in dirty and unpleasant surroundings".⁴³ It further brushed aside moves to relax pass laws, as it was

³⁹ibid

⁴⁰*Windhoek Advertiser*, Friday, October 25, 1957, p6

⁴¹ibid

⁴²ibid

⁴³*Windhoek Advertiser*, Friday, September 26, 1958, p8

temporarily attempted in South Africa shortly after the Sharpeville shootings. To the Namibian white-owned papers such relaxation could have "serious consequences which will lead to the flocking of the natives from the reserves to the urban centres and lead to chaos in the administration of the territory".⁴⁴

The misrepresentations and lack of proper coverage of issues crucial to the black people by the white-owned papers, coupled with the emerging quest of black nationalism brought to the fore the question of establishing an alternative communication outlet which could provide a "true reflection of the issues imminent to the black people".⁴⁵

This realisation led to the establishment of the *South West News* by the emergent intellectuals in March 1960 under the banner: "The only non-racial newspaper in the territory".⁴⁶ The *South West News*, was a fortnight tabloid, published in English, Afrikaans and Otjiherero. The first two editions were printed by the Prometheus Printers and Publishers (PTY) Limited in East London (South Africa), while the rest of the editions were printed by the Windhoek Printing Works.⁴⁷

⁴⁴*Die Suidwes Afrikaner*, March 29, 1960, p12

⁴⁵Ngavirue interview, 1992

⁴⁶See the masthead of the *South West News*.

⁴⁷According to Ngavirue the white-owned printers were initially reluctant to print a black-owned newspaper. The Windhoek Printers later agreed to print the newspaper.

According to the protagonists the *South West News* was not an "elitist" newspaper dealing with abstract issues, but addressed issues of importance to the black people in a simple language.⁴⁸ It "caught the imagination of the very simple people and they immediately identified themselves with it".⁴⁹ The newspaper was arguably well received by the youth and the literate section of the black population.⁵⁰

They (blacks) welcomed it as their own newspaper for it was a black newspaper propagating black issues ... It even included white issues, such as statements by people like Japie Basson ... But mostly it was the black people who welcomed it as their newspaper.⁵¹

The *South West News* set out to strengthen the nationalist movement by calling for unity among the colonised people.⁵² It also covered debates about the future of the territory and informed its readers accordingly. One of its main contributions was the exposure of the South African government's deportation of blacks to the rural areas and detention of people for contravening the pass and other discriminatory laws during the 1960s.⁵³

⁴⁸Ngavirue interview, 1992

⁴⁹ibid

⁵⁰Veii interview, 1994

⁵¹ibid

⁵²The first edition focused on unity of the black people in its main article on the front page, quoting the veteran politician and an important traditional leader, Chief Hosea Kutako, who pioneered petitioning the United Nations.

⁵³More details on the content are provided in Chapter 10.

Commenting on the establishment of the newspaper, one of the first black Namibian petitioners at the United Nations, Mburumba Kerina, who was one of the main targets of the white-owned press, because of his fierce submission at the UN meetings criticising the South African regime, noted:

I began to really appreciate the vital role a newspaper could play in the life of a community - not only as an information source but also in bringing new ideas and fresh interpretations of important events to its readers ... for the first time now, it will be possible to begin to counteract the negative conditioning that our people have been exposed to in the European press ... I am quite sure that the service the African Publishing Company will perform for the African community will, in its objectivity and lack of bias, far surpass what the unfortunate European press is doing to the European community in our country ... ⁵⁴

THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUALS

The African intelligentsia were the main driving force behind the resurgence of nationalism and they had established newspapers (the nationalist press) as one of the instruments in realising this objective. The Namibian experience is not an exception.

Young men and women emerged from within the black Namibian society as a stratum of "organic intellectuals" and assumed a crucial mobilisation function of the masses during the formative years of nationalism. Their development was expedited by the urbanisation of the population and the expansion of black education.⁵⁵ Both these factors enabled the intellectuals to

⁵⁴South West News, August 20, 1960 : 3

⁵⁵Emmett, 1987, p42

break away from the constraints of the indigenous leadership and the ethnic organisation of politics.⁵⁶

... Western education with its egalitarian emphases challenged the existing status order of both the broad racial system and the indigenous leadership and helped to radicalise these blacks who had obtained an above average education.⁵⁷

These factors exposed the emergent intellectuals to world events through newspapers and radios and subsequently expanded their world-view beyond the confines of tribal concerns. The emergent intellectuals could thus follow world events and political development in other parts of the continent.

While education expanded to cover many parts of the country, institutions of higher learning were non-existent. This came to be a blessing in disguise as some of the young Namibians were forced to attend institutions of higher learning in South Africa, which contributed to their political consciousness-raising process.⁵⁸ In South Africa they came into contact with black nationalist movements, such as the African National Congress (ANC), and learnt new methods of political organisation.⁵⁹ For

⁵⁶ibid

⁵⁷ibid

⁵⁸Emmett, 1987, p507

It should however, be remembered that not all the Namibians who went to South Africa did so because of educational opportunities, as some went there to obtain better employment opportunities. Ya Toivo, the late Salomon Mifima, Peter Mweshihange and others, are examples of Namibians who went to South Africa for employment opportunities. Some of these men nevertheless, attended evening classes to upgrade their literacy and numeracy capabilities.

⁵⁹ibid

instance when one of the first generation of the Namibian organic intellectuals, Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, was expelled from South Africa because of his involvement in politics, he noted that:

I came here ... to study and gain more experience in political activity. I have made many friends, particularly among members of the African National Congress. It is now time to return and carry on the struggle in my own country.⁶⁰

Back in Namibia these young intellectuals set out to implement the new methods of political organisation acquired while in South Africa. This initially led to the creation of students and cultural organisations, such as the African Improvement Society (AIS)⁶¹, the South West African Student Body (SWASB)⁶² and the South West Africa Progressive Association (Swapa).⁶³ It was within the Swapa meetings that the idea of forming a national political organisation (Swanu) emerged. It was also in the same Swapa meetings that the idea of establishing a newspaper was

⁶⁰Op cit Katjavivi, 1988, p22.

⁶¹see Emmett, 1987, pp511-514 and Ngavirue, 1972, pp283-287. The AIS, founded in the 1940s, according to Emmett, applied for permission to publish a newspaper to be called *Ondjerera* (Light), to be printed in Nama, Herero and English. However, this project did not materialise because of financial constraints, according to Karuaera, one of the founders of the AIS.

⁶²ibid, pp514-516. The SWASB was formed in 1952 and its stated objectives, which were the same as those of the AIS, were "to promote the educational and cultural advancement of the African people in South West Africa". (p515).

⁶³ibid, pp517-519. The aims of Swapa according to Emmett encompassed both political and economic advancement. The formation of Swapa "represented a movement away from cultural nationalism to a more explicitly political nationalism, and the creation of a political base for the Namibian intelligentsia" (p518).

conceived. The intellectuals established a company, called the African Publishing Company (APC), which issued the newspaper.⁶⁴

The intellectuals, as a critical thinking and mobilising stratum linked organically to the masses, became aware of the important ideological role a newspaper could play in the mobilisation of the masses and in articulating their interests and aspirations. In the maiden-issue editorial the intellectuals emphasised the importance of the press as follows:

But thanks to the perseverance, planning and sacrifice from a group of men, the idea is a reality at last. Men who have deeply felt the need of the press as a teacher, a pulpit, a parent. Yes, it is fearful, yet true that thousands of us have no school, no church, no religion, no home. But now we have the press. A press which is looked upon by all freedom-loving nations the world over as a defender of justice, upholder of peace and a channel of expression. The press who at all times condemns injustice, exploitation and racial discrimination as unpardonable crimes, on the other hand endeavour to protect the rights of each individual and hails merits of each man's labours, irrespective of the colour of his skin.⁶⁵

THE DEMISE OF THE SOUTH WEST NEWS

The collapse of newspapers has fascinated media researchers, practitioners and political commentators and the folding of the *South West News* was not an exception. Namibian politicians, historians and others who commented on the collapse of the *South West News* tend to ascribe its demise to the South African government's action⁶⁶. However, this study argues that the

⁶⁴see Chapter 5 for more details on the APC.

⁶⁵*South West News*, March 5, 1960, p2

⁶⁶see Du Pisani, 1986; Katjavivi, 1988 and Moleah, 1983

cause of the demise of the *South West News* was economic rather than political pressure, the latter being indirect.

In fact the question that needs to be addressed should not be 'why' the *South West News* collapsed, but rather 'how' it survived for nine months before it finally collapsed. The *South West News* was bankrupt from the very first edition. A memorandum⁶⁷ prepared by the directors of the APC estimated the share capital of the company at 500 English Pounds. Only 85 shares were taken out, which according to directors was "very little capital".⁶⁸ The directors noted that the newspaper was running at a loss and that the debt incurred as a result could force the company to stop issuing the newspaper.⁶⁹

The reason behind this financial situation was the lack of the 'lifeline' which supported the white-owned mainstream press: advertisements. The newspaper could not attract enough advertisements to augment revenue, because there were very few black businesses to support it in this way. Whites who dominated economic life would not advertise in the newspaper because of what they saw as "negative political commentaries" of the newspaper.⁷⁰

⁶⁷See Appendix B

⁶⁸Ngavirue documents

⁶⁹ibid

⁷⁰Ngavirue interview, 1992

Political pressure on the newspaper was therefore indirect, taking the form of withholding advertisements to a black company.⁷¹ Political action further related to the apartheid legislation which for instance denied blacks the right to be members of the South African Press Union and thereby ensure their recognition under the union's constitution. Shortly after the establishment of the newspaper, the founders wrote to the South African Press Union to secure membership, but the Union in a letter refused them membership on the ground that the newspaper was owned by "non-whites".⁷²

The handicaps of the "black press" during these times were well captured by Brian Bunting in an article in the *New Age*. He identified the lack of capital as one of the most serious problems.

It costs a great deal of money to start a newspaper and keep it in being until such a time as it has established itself and is able to keep going on its own revenue. In addition to capital, the establishment of a press requires the right to own freehold property and to carry business undertakings with the maximum security - all rights which are denied to the African people, which in consequence has a very small middle class. Any paper which openly voices the policies of the liberation movement would also find it extremely hard to attract advertising in its pages.⁷³

Bunting also highlighted the problem of a lack of a stable population. Due to banishments and deportations of blacks by the government to the rural areas, many political leaders and

⁷¹ibid

⁷²see Appendix C

⁷³*New Age*, Dec. 4, 1958 : 16

activists could not support their press. Illiteracy was another problem because many people, ripe for messages of the emerging liberation movements, were unable to read.⁷⁴

The demise of the *South West News* was therefore not, as Du Pisani argues, "banned by the South West African Administration in 1960".⁷⁵ Veii and Ngavirue maintain that the most important factor which led to the collapse of the newspaper was economic. Both agree that if the newspaper could have found more money, it would have continued being published.⁷⁶

The founders of the newspaper claim that the *South West News* died at a time when it was gaining popularity among the dispossessed people.⁷⁷ Despite attempts⁷⁸ to save it the newspaper collapsed and according to Veii, it was missed by the emerging black readership.⁷⁹ Its collapse left a vacuum which would not be filled until the early and mid-eighties with the emergence of the community and the progressive independent presses.

⁷⁴ibid. The situation sketched by Bunting was applicable to Namibia. The *South West News* faced the same problems as its South African counterparts. This is because that Namibia was a fully-fledged South African colony.

⁷⁵Du Pisani, 1986, p146

⁷⁶Ngavirue interview, 1992 and Veii interview, 1994

⁷⁷Veii interview, 1994

⁷⁸See Fuding in Chapter 8.

⁷⁹Veii interview, 1994

SUMMARY

The *South West News* was established by intellectuals as an important instrument for fostering the emerging black nationalism in Namibia. The setting in which the newspaper's emerged, the aims and objectives fell within the context of the African nationalist press that appeared and disappeared on the continent during the colonial period. Behind the emergence of the *South West News* was a stratum of intellectuals who saw the need for a newspaper to address the concerns of the colonised people for the first time in the history of the country.

The intellectuals sought to challenge racism and tribalism propounded by the apartheid ideology by subscribing to the discourse of non-racialism. At the same time they had to confront the traditional leadership, breaking through its tribal and parochial traditional concerns, in order to focus on black national aspirations. The intellectuals further sought to popularise the ideals of the emerging black nationalist movement (Swanu in particular) and thereby work towards the political awakening of the black masses. They utilised the *South West News* in this undertaking.

However, the newspaper collapsed after a few months' appearance. The reason was not direct political, but economic pressure (financial difficulties). The collapse of the *South West News* left the black masses without a voice addressing their aspirations again.

CHAPTER TWO : THE CHURCH PRESS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to provide a brief account of the emergence, character and objectives of the church press. It assesses the reasons for change in the content from the coverage of parochial religious matters to include broader social, political and economic concerns of the country. It highlights the role of the church intellectuals in this change. The term "church press" refers to ecumenical publications produced by the Lutheran and Catholic Churches in Namibia during the period under study: 1960 - 1990. The church newsletters discussed are *Angelus*, *Immanuel*, *Omukwetu*, *Omukuni* and the *CCN Information*.

Namibian churches have had a long tradition of publishing newsletters devoted to religious matters.¹ The common objective of these newsletters was the dissemination of the gospel in written form.² The early missionaries brought the printing press to Namibia. The first printing work done at these early printing workshops centred around the publication of religious literature for the inhabitants. This included the production of hymn books, baptism documents and church membership cards, and the translations of the Bible into indigenous languages. This was soon followed by the fortnightly and monthly publication of

¹The first church publication to focus on the religious issues of the black Christians was established by the Finnish missionaries, operating in northern Namibia in 1901 and was called *Osondaha* (meaning Sunday).

²Tjerije interview, 1994

the church newsletters carrying religious information to the christian indigenous population.

However, from the early 1970s onwards the newsletters broadened their scope of coverage to include socio-economic and political issues. The reason for this shift is central to the discussion of the ideological role the church came to play during the struggle for the liberation of Namibia.

EMERGENCE AND CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH PRESS

What follows is a brief profile of each of the church newsletters dealt with in this study. Chapters 5 to 11 will provide more details on their organisational structures, funding and advertisements, distribution, content and the messages carried. It is also important to note that all these publications continued to exist until today (1996) with the exception of the *CCN Information*.

OMUKWETU

The Finnish Missionary Society ran a printing press as early as 1901 at its mission station at Oniipa in northern Namibia. This printing press was destroyed by lightning in 1942, but it was soon replaced.³ On 13 September 1901 the mission started issuing an A-4 newsletter initially called *Osondaha* (Sunday). The name changed to *Omukwetu* (My Friend)⁴ in 1941.

³Buys and Kritzinger, 1989, p203

⁴ibid

Since its inception *Omukwetu* was written in Oshiwambo, the language spoken by an overwhelming majority of the members of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN). From 1956 the Finnish Mission Society started training indigenous staff who subsequently took over the production of the newsletter.

The newsletter was twice targeted by bombs believed to be of South African origin in 1973 and 1980 respectively, because of what was seen as political commentaries.⁵ The 1973 bomb reduced the printing press to ashes and ELCIN had to start afresh setting up another one.⁶

IMMANUEL

The Rhenish Printing Press was set up on 16 May 1955 at Karibib and in October 1961 it started publishing the *Immanuel*.⁷ Before *Immanuel* was launched, a German language newsletter called *Berichte Reinische Mission* was circulated for the benefit of the German Lutheran Church members in the country.⁸

Immanuel was published under the banner, "Monthly magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) in South West Africa" (Rhenish Mission) and was written in Afrikaans, Nama/Damara and Otjiherero languages. The first English article appeared in November 1975,

⁵see Moleah, 1983, p108

⁶ibid

⁷Buys and Kritzingler, 1989, p204

⁸ibid, p.221

following the appointment of the first black editor.⁹ English was introduced to accommodate international subscribers.¹⁰

Immanuel started as a 12-page, A-4 newsletter. The first editor was a German pastor Gunter Reeh assisted by Rev. Eliakim Hoebeb and Andreas Kukuri with local languages. The printing (production) of the newsletter was done by Erich and Gertrude Pieper, until 1973, helped by Kefas Goa-eiseb and Heinrich Naruseb.¹¹ Pastor Reeh was succeeded by Pastor Julius Baumann and the latter by Sister Ursula Ponninghaus. The first black editor was Daniel Tjongarero who took over the reins from Ponninghaus in 1972. Tjongarero was succeeded by Phillip Tjerije from 1977 to 1985 before the present (1996) editor Auguste Eises took over from 1986 to independence and beyond.¹²

From 1973 *Immanuel* was printed by the Roman Catholic Angelus Printing at Dobra, near Windhoek. The ELC printing press eventually folded in December 1978 because of lack of funds.¹³

ANGELUS

The *Angelus* newsletter was first established in 1963 and the early editions were printed by the John Meinert Company in

⁹Tjerije interview, 1994

¹⁰ibid

¹¹Eises interview, 1994

¹²Eises is the first black woman to edit a church publication.

¹³Eises interview, 1993

Windhoek. Like *Immanuel*, *Angelus* was written in Afrikaans, Nama/Damara and Otjiherero. It was produced in A-4 format. Before the establishment of *Angelus*, the Catholic Church issued a small congregation newsletter, a mimeograph in indigenous languages called the *Bonifatius Bode*.¹⁴ The *Angelus* Printing Press at Dobra was revamped in 1965 and became fully operational in 1967.

The first editor of *Angelus* was Father Ueberall, while Brother Pietsch took care of the printing (production) of the newsletter. Brother Pietsch trained black church workers in printing technology.

OMUKUNI

This newsletter, also in A-4 format, is the Oshiwambo sister publication of *Angelus* and was launched in 1977.¹⁵ It is published for the benefit of the Oshiwambo-speaking Roman Catholics and is printed at the *Angelus* printing shop.

CCN-INFORMATION

The first edition of this newsletter appeared on 28 November 1980. It started as a four-page, A-4 newsletter and was printed by the *Angelus* printing shop. The first few editions of *CCN Information* were produced under the auspices of the executive committee of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN). The newsletter was edited and produced by the General Secretariat of

¹⁴*Angelus*, May/June, 1977 : 12

¹⁵Buys and Kritzing, 1989, p201

the CCN¹⁶. However, within a few months a Communication Unit was established within the Council which took over the production of the newsletter.¹⁷

The establishment of the unit came as a recommendation made by church journalists and pastors who met in Windhoek from 15 to 19 June 1980 at a media consultation organised by the CCN itself.¹⁸

Participants agreed that the unit should:

render active consultative services in assisting member churches in the training of communicators, in the effective utilization of cassettes (video), tape slides and other form of group media.¹⁹

Former editor of *Immanuel*, Daniel Tjongarero, was appointed Director of the Communication Unit and automatically became the editor of *CCN Information*. In 1985 Protasius Ndauendapo was appointed co-editor of the newsletter on a part-time basis.²⁰

CCN Information was written in English and, by the time the UNSCR 435 was implemented, the character of this newsletter had changed completely. The newsletter became a tabloid and a weekly supplement to *The Namibian* newspaper²¹. It then came under the jurisdiction of a new cluster of staff established within the CCN to help repatriate and resettle Namibian exiles. It was then

¹⁶*CCN Information*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1980, p.2

¹⁷Ndauendapo interview, 1995

¹⁸ibid

¹⁹ibid

²⁰Nandjaa interview, 1994

²¹ibid

called the *CCN/RRR News*.²² On the completion of the repatriation process in 1990, the newsletter changed into a monthly church magazine, called *The Messenger*,²³ however, this did not last long. It folded up in 1993 because of financial difficulties.²⁴

REASONS FOR BROADENING OF COVERAGE

The change in focus of the church press to include broader political issues was the result of transformations that took place within the church itself from 1960 onwards. The reason for this needs closer attention. Over 80 per cent of the Namibian population belongs to the Christian faith.²⁵ The main denominations by 1986 were: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)²⁶ and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCIRN)²⁷, representing 72 per cent of the Christian population; the Catholic Church 18 per cent, and the Anglican Church 10 per cent.²⁸

²²ibid

²³ibid

²⁴ibid

²⁵see Steenkamp, 1995, p94

²⁶ELCIN, formerly known as ELOC, is an independent black church consisting of the Oshiwambo and Okavango-speaking Namibians, from the densely populated northern parts of the country. It emerged out of the Finnish Missionary Society in 1954. It elected its first black bishop in 1960.

²⁷ELCIRN formerly known as ELC, is also an independent black church created out of the Evangelical Rhenish Mission in 1957. The bulk of its membership consists of black people in the so-called 'police zone', Otjiherero-, Nama/Damara- and Oshiwambo-speaking Namibians. Its first black bishop was elected in 1972.

²⁸*Angelus* Supplement, October 1986, p1

While the majority of the membership of the Namibian church was (and still is) the black population, who suffered grinding poverty and brutal suppression at the hands of the colonialists²⁹, the white missionaries generally were silent in the face of the oppression suffered by the black membership. They connived with colonial authorities and benefited from the racist legislations by expropriating land owned by blacks and by benefiting from cheap labour through the migrant labour system.³⁰ They applied apartheid policies in their schools and hospitals, implemented Bantu Education in schools and complied with the mixed Marriage Act, which prohibited marriages across colour bar.³¹

In this way, the church gradually became an important institution through which the colonial authorities, both German and Afrikaner, disseminated their racist ideologies. Blacks were taught to obey their masters and that "any rebellion against the ruler was rebellion against God, morals and laws".³²

However, by 1960 a process aimed at changing this conservative and reactionary approach of the church and to transform it in a more progressive one was set in motion. Two related factors had contributed to this change: (a) the Africanisation of the church, and, (b) the development of an alternative consciousness which

²⁹see Steenkamp, 1995, p95

³⁰Hunke op cit *CCN Information*, July 1985, p8

³¹ibid

³²Hunke, 1984, p7

matured into a black liberation theology, characterised by an identification with the struggle for national independence.³³

The collaboration of the church with the colonial authorities resulted in increasing demand of autonomy among the black population.³⁴ The subsequent granting of autonomy led to the establishment of indigenous church denominations with black leadership, which did not only understand and associate itself with the black masses, but who was also a victim of colonial repression. This was an important turning point in the focus of the church from the life hereafter to the prevailing situation and had a tremendous impact on the content of the church publications.

Another development, in addition to the Africanisation of the church, was the formation of an umbrella body governing ELCIN and ELCIRN, the United Evangelical Church in South West Africa (UELCSWA). This body became influential in political matters of the country. In 1962 the UELVSWA established a local theological seminary (Paulineum Theological College) which became a crucial training institution for young church intellectuals who expedited

³³Katjavivi et al (eds) 1989, p3

³⁴This process was led by the establishment of the first indigenous church in the country, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) in 1946. Then the Finnish Missionary Society granted autonomy to its congregations in 1954. In 1955 a section of Otjiherero-speaking Namibians broke away from the Rheinisch Missionaries and established the Oruano church. Two years later, in 1957, the Rheinisch Mission granted autonomy to its congregations. The Catholic and the Anglican denominations did not grant autonomy to their black congregations, but elected black leadership in 1979 and 1981 respectively.

the process of the church's identification with the broader struggle. The Paulineum College became the ideological centre where the church intellectuals debated and formulated the liberation theology.

By 1978 the Namibian church, with the exception of the white conservative denominations (German and Afrikaner) and a number of small religious sects, established an umbrella body called the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN).³⁵ The CCN came to occupy a very central position in the struggle for peace, justice and self determination of the Namibian people. It sided with the oppressed masses and openly supported the liberation movement.

However, the watershed in the church's involvement with the broader struggle came shortly after the 1971 confirmation of the illegality of the South African presence in Namibia by the International World Court of Justice. ELCIN and ELCIRN denominations, now under black leadership, followed with the famous "Open Letter" to the then South African Prime Minister, B.J.Vorster, on 30 July 1971, in which they called for an immediate withdrawal of the South African administration from Namibia and the granting of independence.³⁶

³⁵The pro-Apartheid Dutch Reformed Church and the ultra-rightist German Evangelical Church (DELK). DELK sent 'observers' to the CCN, but withdrew these in 1987. See Herbstein and Evenson, 1989, p53

³⁶see Hunke, 1984, p10

The letter listed a number of injustices suffered by the Namibian people, including the restrictions on movement and settlement; the lack of freedom of expression, and the denial of basic human rights. It condemned the policies of job reservation and the contract (migrant) labour system, which according to the church paid low wages and resulted in the destruction of family lives.³⁷ The letter in conclusion noted:

Our urgent wish is that in terms of the declarations of the World Court in co-operation with the United Nations, of which South African is a member, your government will seek a peaceful solution to the problems of the land, and will see to it that human rights are put into operation and that South West Africa may become a self-sufficient and independent State.³⁸

While the letter was initiated and written by the black leadership of UELCSWA and publicised widely in the newsletters of member congregations, the Catholics and the Anglicans released statements supporting the content of the letter and the position taken by the black Lutheran denominations.

Anglican Bishop Colin Winter, a fierce opponent of the South African government's policies in Namibia, noted almost a month after the publication of the Open Letter that, "the Christian Church, as the conscience of this nation, must speak out with clarity and without fear. Apartheid must be denounced as unacceptable before God".³⁹

³⁷see Steenkamp, 1995, p95

³⁸op cit Steenkamp, 1995, p95

³⁹Katjavivi et al, 1989, p14

Since publishing the Open Letter, the black-led church assumed the role of a "binding and a stable force" in the country which "cut across all tribal lines and group loyalties".⁴⁰ It came to provide "an extra dimension" to the liberation struggle in Namibia, by providing the religious and philosophical basis for the national liberation movement.⁴¹ Arguably being the most powerful and well organised organisation in which black people could experience a sense of belonging, the church also came to provide a "means of social mobility"⁴² to black people who had been excluded from the socio-economic and political activities of the country:

No doubt the churches provided some sense of security and patronage for those whose traditional social structures had been partially destroyed and the Christian message of salvation has always offered hope to those in a seemingly hopeless situation. Moreover, excluded from real participation in the new political institutions of the country, Namibians found in the church an institution in which they could participate and which they began to claim as their own.⁴³

THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS WITHIN THE CHURCH

Behind the change of the role of the church from a purely religious to a more people-oriented one was an emerging force which has generally attracted little attention from historians and politicians commenting on the role of the church in the

⁴⁰Serfontein, 1976, p199

⁴¹ibid

⁴²Katjavivi et al, 1989, p7

⁴³Katjavivi, 1988, p31

liberation struggle in Namibia.⁴⁴ This force was represented by a young stratum of church intellectuals who were graduates of the Paulineum Theological College during the early 1970s.⁴⁵ They not only influenced the political outlook of the church, but the content, direction and the role of the church press as well.

Armed with philosophies of "Black Theology" and "Black Consciousness" acquired at Paulineum, these young intellectuals provided the church with a new perspective of a political theology, which enabled the church to question South Africa's legitimacy as legal administrator in Namibia and to define a Christian society and Christian values.⁴⁶ All these crucial messages were disseminated in the newsletters to the church membership and to the broader audience. The emergent intellectuals saw the role of the church as the vanguard of the oppressed masses:

The church in Namibia is the voice of the voiceless and the voiceless happen to be the church's suffering congregants. In its utterances and service to the whole of God's creation, the church constantly mirrors that suffering.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Authors such as Katjavivi et al, 1989; Katjavivi, 1988, Herbstein and Evenson, 1989 and others who have commented on the role of the Namibian church in the liberation struggle, have paid little attention to the role of the "church intellectuals" in this process.

⁴⁵This Seminary now being relocated from Otjimbingwe to Windhoek belongs to both ELCIN and ELCIRN and it is where their pastors and church workers are trained.

⁴⁶Hunke, 1984, p11

⁴⁷Editorial comment of the *CCN Information*, Vol.5, No.5 March 1985, p1

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHURCH NEWSLETTERS

The transformation of the church resulted in the expansion of the original objective of the church newsletters, from a parochial dissemination of the religious news items and sermons, to the "revelation and dissemination of the political dimension of the Gospel".⁴⁸ The newsletters became ideological tools of the church leadership, church workers and congregants, in their struggle for justice and independence.

The new role of the newsletters, and indeed of the church, was however, not uncontested, as some conservative church members questioned the new approach and this led to intense struggle within the church itself.⁴⁹ On the other hand the colonial authorities, because of what they saw as meddling by the church in political matters, embarked upon ostracising, intimidating and victimising the church leaders and workers (church media activists) and the destruction of the church printing press, as mentioned earlier in the chapter. Some editions of church newsletters were banned by the authorities, due to political commentaries.⁵⁰

The intellectuals were however, determined in their resolve to cover and address what were seen as political issues by the colonial regime. They supported their stand by arguing that:

⁴⁸De Vries, op cit Moleah, 1983, p107

⁴⁹see Steenkamp, 1995, p94

⁵⁰The *CCN Information* is one example. See Riddle, 1989, p52 and the *Weekly Mail*, 19-25 August 1988, p4

If the church and her servants cannot say anything about politics, then politics should not be practised in the God created world. The people who suffer and die, at the hands of these destructive politics which is being imposed upon this country have been created by God through his love.⁵¹

In yet another example the intellectuals were unambiguous about the reasons for political commentaries:

There is no part of human life that is not affected by the Gospel. The church must be free to say something about political affairs. It must be the mouth-piece of those who are forbidden to speak. It is clear the churches have accepted this task in order to supply true information.⁵²

SUMMARY

The initial objective of the church newsletters was to disseminate the Gospel in written form to members of the congregations. Different denominations established newsletters for this purpose. However, while the majority of the church membership continued to suffer colonial repression, nothing was mentioned in these newsletters, not even from the altars, about the harsh realities experienced by the black people. This 'chrysalis of ecclesiastical silence'⁵³ was broken when the black people established independent church denominations and assumed church leadership. The process of breaking the silence of the church was expedited by the emergence of the church intellectuals linked organically to masses, who not only understood the plight of their followers, but were also victims

⁵¹CCN *Information*, June 1983, p2

⁵²*Omukwetu*, No.6, 1972, op cit Moleah, 1983, p107

⁵³Soggot, 1986, p36

of the repressive colonial system. The intellectuals developed a political theology to help understand their situation and mobilise their followers for the attainment of justice and independence from the colonial authority. The intellectuals used church newsletters in this process and this again impacted upon the content of the church press as it came to increasingly focus on the socio-economic and political reality faced by the black people.

The intellectuals formulated counter-hegemonic ideas in the form of the political theology of liberation (liberation theology) that challenged the apartheid hegemony. The liberation theology promised a different weltanschauung and the church press became the vehicle through which this new ideology was disseminated.

CHAPTER THREE : COMMUNITY PRESS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly looks at the context in which the community press emerged. It outlines its objectives and assesses the aims of the intellectuals (media activists) in establishing these newsletters. The chapter also examines the character of the community press.

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The community press¹ emerged during the 1980s to give expression to the activities of the emerging community organisations and to highlight the needs and interests of ordinary men and women.² The label of community press in this thesis and in the Namibian context refers to publications such as *Bricks*, *Sister Namibia*, *Student Voice of Namibia*, *Speak Out* and the *Namibian Worker* which emerged during the turbulent decade of 1980 to 1990.³

These publications did not subscribe to the conventional journalistic practices as we shall see in Chapter 6. They sought to entrench themselves in the community struggles and to become voices of the grassroots. The community press further embraced the philosophy of participation by providing access to the

¹It is also referred to as the grassroots press in this study.

²This is the general view expressed by activists interviewed, including Strauss, Kondombolo, Pakleppa and Coetzee.

³ibid

community organisations and practised a collective approach to newspaper production.⁴

The South African colonial regime experienced a crisis during the 1980s with regard to its authority in the territory. This crisis was manifested by a contradiction in the maintenance of its authority over the territory. While trying to win the hearts and minds of the people through its "new dispensation"⁵, the regime at the same time relied heavily on coercion through the use of the army (and Koevoet), the police and the courts.

The delay in the implementation of the United Nations' peace plan coupled with the prohibition of political activities of the liberation movement led to a change of focus among the activists, as Becker (1993) notes:

These social and political developments prepared for the emergence of social movements in the 1980s because they caused growing disillusionment of many activists in Namibia that independence could not be brought about by solely applying the political strategies of international diplomacy, armed struggle and political mobilisation.⁶

⁴see Chapter 6

⁵This was a neo-colonial approach based on an internal settlement, involving local tribal organisations and government stooges, while excluding Swapo and other progressive organisations. The regime also set out to co-opt the black middle class into the system by abolishing petty apartheid legislation and by improving conditions of service for the black civil servants. See Becker, 1993, pp135 - 141. See also the introduction to this study.

⁶Becker, 1993, p141

The contradiction was also experienced at the educational level. While trying to reform the system, the regime failed to integrate schools and to uplift the deplorable conditions experienced in the disadvantaged black schools. Students disrupted normal schooling through class boycotts and mass stay-aways. They demanded the removal of the South African army bases placed in the proximity of schools in northern Namibia and the removal of army teachers deployed at schools in the territory.⁷ Other demands included the introduction of English as medium of instruction and the creation of student representative councils (SRCs) at schools.⁸

The community activists at *Bricks* argued that the cost of living was skyrocketing and that this was felt more by the grassroots people.⁹ Prices of basic commodities went up.¹⁰ Municipality services such as house rents, water and electricity rates increased while salaries of the ordinary person were not raised accordingly.¹¹ The exploitation of workers at the hands of capitalists continued unabated and this led to concerted efforts

⁷Dempers interview, 1994

⁸ibid

⁹See *Bricks Year Report*, 1985, p3. This was partly the result of international sanctions imposed on the state because of its refusal to withdraw from the territory. The International Court of Justice declared the presence of South Africa in the territory as illegal, far way back in 1970s.

¹⁰*Bricks*, Year Report 1985, p3

¹¹ibid

by worker activists in uniting the workforce through the revival of the defunct labour movement.¹²

Students, workers, parents and ordinary people came together to co-ordinate their struggles against what they regarded as their common enemy - the state and its surrogates. This marked the mobilisation of the civil society and the beginning of the grassroots struggles in Namibia during the 1980s, the last decade of South African colonialism.

Scattered groups of activists in the black community initiated a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to "tackle practical problems directly, campaign for people's rights, and empower the people".¹³ The emphasis of the emerging NGOs and CBOs was self-reliance - that the community should take charge of its own activities.¹⁴

The prime movers of the community press and the community organisations were intellectuals who came to co-ordinate the people's struggles and thus, became the main organisers and the driving force behind community resistance. One of the prominent activist at the time remembers,

Coincidentally, during the time, we as young radical politicians were mainly grappling with the complex political realities confronting our people - most of the time with brutal results with the poorest

¹²ibid

¹³Cleaver and Wallace, 1990, p89

¹⁴Bricks Year Report, 1987 : 3

people at the receiving end ... So when the call of the people reached a crescendo, some of us had no other choice but to intervene in the reality which became almost intolerable.¹⁵

Frustrated and disillusioned by rhetoric of the political organisations and the regime's reluctance to implement the Resolution 435, the young activists directed their energies to the people's immediate concerns. The "endless speeches about Resolution 435 were losing appeal in the face of hunger experienced by the ordinary men and women".¹⁶ Strauss noted:

You can explain to us what scientific socialism is in relation to Swapo's constitution: nice, fine. I mean, we understand. There were even people who could recite the constitution, or part of it. But we were hungry. In the south people were actually dying. People came to Windhoek in their thousands, and it was just exploding.¹⁷

If the emerging community organisations were a thorn in the flesh of the regime and the transitional authorities¹⁸, to the Swapo leadership they were "counter revolutionary", even though many of these organisations enunciated a pro-435 political stance.¹⁹ Swapo's argument was based on its official policy of "no development before liberation".²⁰ The leadership felt that struggles

¹⁵Strauss op cit *Bricks Year Report*, 1987, p1

¹⁶Strauss op cit Leys and Saul, 1995, p82

¹⁷ibid

¹⁸see *The Namibian*, 24 July 1987, p11 and *CCN Information*, July/August/Sept. 1987, p11

¹⁹see Becker, 1993, p172, Cleaver and Wallace, 1990, p89 and Leys and Saul, 1995, p82

²⁰Cleaver and Wallace, 1990, p89

for the "bread and butter issues" would divert scarce energy and resources away from the main goal: independence.²¹

This attitude of Swapo had an adverse affect on the work of some of the NGOs and CBOs in general. Two of these organisations, the Bricks Community Project and the Namibia Women Voice, however, felt the wrath more than others.²² Bricks activists, formerly members of the Swapo Youth League, were suspended from the organisation for "betraying the struggle"²³, while the Namibia Women Voice was forced into oblivion, because of "misunderstanding and accusation of being a counter revolutionary group" by the Swapo Women Council.²⁴ The Namibia Women Voice was dissolved in March 1989,²⁵ while Bricks Community Project, on the other hand, matured into a broad-based service organisation in the post independence era.²⁶

Many of these emergent organisations were housed in the Katutura Community Centre (KCC). The centre was an old migrant workers' hostel which was obtained from the Windhoek Municipality with donor funds and then converted into an office complex.²⁷

²¹ibid

²²Kondombolo interview, 1994

²³Strauss interview, 1995

²⁴Becker, 1993, p177

²⁵ibid

²⁶Strauss interview, 1995

²⁷Ouseb paper, 1994

Despite the flurry of activities emanating from the community organisations the mainstream colonial media chose to ignore them.

Strauss notes that:

While a number of organisations emerged and resulted in heightened activities, the mainstream media at the time just cut us off completely. The only coverage we received was when we were in activities where teargas was involved; when police came to search our offices; or when some of us were confined under the AG legislations and that type of thing, but otherwise our activities as such were not covered.²⁸

What follows is a brief profile on the emergence, character and objectives of each of these community newsletters. Chapters 5 to 11 will provide more details on their operational structure, economic situation, distribution, content and the messages they carried.

BRICKS

Bricks was the first community newspaper to be launched during the 1980s.²⁹ It initially served as an important communication outlet for two civic organisations, the Katutura Residence Action (KARA) and the Khomasdal Burgervereniging (KBV - Khomasdal Civic Organisation).³⁰ *Bricks* covered the people's struggles with regard to housing, unemployment and increases in rent and charges for water and electricity.³¹

²⁸Strauss interview, 1995. AG refers to the Administrator General.

²⁹The first edition was launched in December 1984.

³⁰Kondombolo interview, 1994

³¹ibid

While the activists first launched the newspaper, this was soon expanded into a community development project, the Bricks Community Project.³² Apart from the newspaper, the project also ran a community theatre and a training division which imparted to activists a variety of skills, including media production skills.³³

The stated aims and objectives of *Bricks* were:

- (a) To mobilise/popularise community-based initiatives aimed at social justice and democracy.
- (b) To highlight issues not normally touched upon by the commercial press.
- (c) To foster unity among all regional groups irrespective of age and language.
- (d) To educate Namibians of all age and language groups (dialectically).
- (e) To combat social evils and damage in the community.
- (f) To provide training for Namibians involved in community organisations.³⁴

The reasons for the emergence of the newspaper are vividly captured in the editorial of the first edition.

At this stage in our history there exists no newspaper reflecting the hopes, aspirations and feelings of the common person. Nothing materialises in the indigenous languages concerning everyday life. We are alienated from everything that is our own. People become more and more dejected and disorientated, which in turn leads to apathy!

³²ibid

³³ibid

³⁴Bricks Year Report, 1987, p30

Things are happening daily which affect our lives very intimately and are allowed to just disappear in thin air. Most of the newspapers in our country concentrate on sensation, basically to increase profits all the time.

Some do not care a damn about our increasingly disintegrating social fabric. When our frustrations increase the easy answer is: 'They are used to their conditions'. This is absolutely nonsense.

Our opinions are never asked, however, much is said about our own life and existence. Other people write and talk about us, as if they know us better than ourselves. We are very much aware of all the problems mentioned above. Concerned people have noticed these and come together.

We have decided to wait no longer, our voices must be heard. *Bricks* has been born, and the name speaks for itself.

One stone in isolation is almost useless. With many stones something of worth can be built - a house. Without shelter, homo sapiens become vulnerable and helpless.

So come let us build together to become a strong and proud nation.³⁵

The preparation for the launch of the newspaper started in October 1984, two months before the first edition saw light. It was an on-the-job learning process as none of the founders had newspaper production skills. Two activists travelled to Cape Town with rough stories, cartoons and photographs, to be helped by the staff of *Grassroots*. They returned a few weeks later with the first copy of *Bricks* which was printed in Cape Town by the Esquire Press at Athlone.³⁶ The subsequent editions were

³⁵*Bricks*, Vol.1, No.1, December 1984, p4

³⁶Kondombolo interview, 1994. These activists learnt the basic skills of newspaper production at *Grassroots* in Cape Town, which they came to share with their colleagues at home.

printed at the Akasia Printing Works in Rehoboth before printing was entrusted to the John Meinert group in Windhoek.

The newspaper was predominantly written in Afrikaans but English was introduced gradually. By the time Namibia became independent in 1990 and English was adopted as the country's official language, this became the only language of the newspaper. The first few editions also carried articles in the vernaculars. It was printed in a tabloid format with four to 12 pages. Three years after independence the format was changed into a magazine³⁷. It is still being produced today (1996). The magazine was to be published monthly but remains infrequent because of financial constraints and lack of manpower.³⁸

³⁷The focus of *Bricks* has changed slightly as the emphasis is now on economic development. However, Kondombolo maintained that "the target group, the people are still there who want to read the original *Bricks* with the present issues. The issues are also still there". Kondombolo interview, 1994.

³⁸These are two problems experienced by many NGOs and CBOs after independence. Many donors after independence changed their priorities and many now channel their funds directly to the government's development projects, leaving many community organisations cash-strapped. The other problem is that after independence many community activists joined the civil service. A number of media activists have abandoned the community papers and joined the mainstream or the government media. A Media Training Project established by the NGOs in 1991 to train community journalists produces 15 to 20 journalists on an annual basis, but on completion of their training many of these journalists have been joining the mainstream or other news organisations which provide them with better salaries and career opportunities.

SISTER NAMIBIA

Women were perhaps the most marginalised group in colonial Namibia as far as access to communication outlets was concerned.³⁹ While the 1980s saw the emergence of women's organisations in the country, such as the Namibian Women Voice and the Young Christian Women Association, there was still not a single publication which was solely devoted to women issues.

The launch of the *Sister Namibia* in July 1989 marked the birth of a feminist publication which focused on both gender and broader political issues of women in Namibia. *Sister* was launched by a group of white and "coloured" women activists, comprising artists, teachers, researchers, journalists and community workers.⁴⁰ They initially established a community-based organisation, called Sister Collective⁴¹ in April 1989 and in July the same year the collective launched the newsletter.

³⁹Becker (1993) notes that prior to 1989 women's issues were not of interest to the Namibian media. She goes on to say that the pro-DTA newspapers such as *Die Republikein*, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Windhoek Advertiser*, and the right-wing papers such as *Die Suidwester* covered women's topics in the "very conventional sense of fashion and cooking". The state-owned SWABC totally ignored women issues, while the somewhat liberal paper, the *Windhoek Observer*, included, "albeit very occasionally, other points, but these reach no constituency". The only newspaper sector that carried women's issues was the community press, especially *Bricks*, which according to her reported regularly on women's concerns and activities since its inception. *The Namibian* started to address women's issues as from 1989. See Becker, 1993, pp181, 182.

⁴⁰Rogger interview, 1994

⁴¹The collective was an independent feminist organisation, which was never linked to any group, association or political party, according to two of the founding activists, Coetzee and Rogger.

The aim of the publication, according to the activists was to "address issues that affect us as women in our immediate political, economic, social, cultural and legal situation" and to serve as a voice of women and a "forum for debate on women's issues".⁴² The activists also felt that women had been "completely written out of history and their voices were silenced for too long, at home, in the workplace, in churches and in the courts of law",⁴³ and thought that *Sister* would:

give women an opportunity to write and give them a voice to their problems, their work their life and their struggles. Not only to the broader political struggles, but also those that are pertaining specifically to them as women and relevant to their oppression.⁴⁴

In what was seen as an opportunistic move⁴⁵ the activists felt that the year 1989⁴⁶, which was the watershed of the independence of Namibia, represented a unique opportunity for them in their struggle for feminism.

We feel that now is an ideal time for attention to be paid to women's issues, to ensure that, as

⁴²*Sister*, July 1989, Vol. 1, No.1, p2

⁴³ibid

⁴⁴Coetzee interview, 1995

⁴⁵According to Coetzee criticism was levelled against the collective, because people regarded them as bored white and coloured middle class women who had nothing else to do. Some people felt these activists climbed on the bandwagon of the struggle. Becker emphasised that the collective experienced problem with acceptance, not because of politics, but because of its racial and class composition. Black women only joined the collective in 1990. See also chapter 8 on funding.

⁴⁶The resolution 435 was implemented in 1989, setting in motion the international supervised elections in November the same year.

the nation becomes liberated, women are not left once more firmly in an inferior position ... a prey to both violence from the state in the form of neglect and exploitation and violence from men in the form of domestic repression.⁴⁷

Three editions were produced by the time of independence. These first issues were not printed but were typed and photo-copied.⁴⁸ They were sold on the streets and at women's meetings by the activists themselves. The newsletter was in A-4 format and was published in both Afrikaans and English. After independence *Sister* became a magazine produced on a monthly basis. The magazine is still in existence today (1996).

The focus of the first three editions was a combination of feminist issues infused in the politics of the national liberation. The post-colonial editions depicted a shift towards purely feminist issues, such as the question of abortion, the Aids/HIV epidemic and the women's reproductive health. The magazine has also taken a strong stand on homophobia since independence.⁴⁹

SPEAK OUT

⁴⁷Sister Collective, Project Proposal, 1989 : 1

⁴⁸The Desktop Publishing was introduced later.

⁴⁹Sister Collective has been the only organisation in Namibia which has openly accommodated lesbians and campaigned for their rights.

This newsletter was launched by the management of the Katutura Community Centre (KCC) in December 1985,⁵⁰ as a tool to inform the broader Katutura community about its activities and to "expose and address issues in general which come up because of the fluid political situation".⁵¹ Activists stated that:

The kind of climate we are in today calls for the re-examination of the people in order to take a firm stand, vis-a-vis the direction to be taken by themselves, especially at a time when authentic expression of the people's aspirations in the political, economic and social spheres are at such a confusing state.⁵²

Like other community newspapers *Speak Out* rejected the idea of "other people" speaking on behalf of the community and insisted that the grassroots were competent enough to "interpret our own experience of suffering because only we can feel and act in our own best interest"⁵³.

The following are the stated objectives of the newsletter.

Speak Out will act as a mouthpiece for the voiceless people in Katutura who are denied the right to speak for themselves.

Speak Out will help to expose the various problems which confront the people of Katutura.

⁵⁰Ouseb paper, 1994. The centre ran a sport complex, which was utilised by the schools and amateur sport clubs in the Katutura township. There was also a library which was very popular to the black communities. In addition, the centre rented out a hall for a variety of activities, including meetings, dances, conferences, wedding receptions and the like.

⁵¹*Speak Out*, April 1986: 6. See also the stated objectives below.

⁵²ibid

⁵³ibid

Speak Out will focus on certain issues which may affect the people of Katutura directly.

Speak Out will encourage the establishment of cultural societies as well as strengthening existing societies for the cultural advancement and development of the people.

Speak Out will act as an educational medium.

Speak Out will inform the people about the Community Centre and how they can become involved in the programmes offered there.⁵⁴

The newsletter was in A-4 format and was supposed to be a monthly, but because of a lack of funds it appeared infrequently.⁵⁵ It ceased to exist in 1989, a year before the independence of the country.⁵⁶

STUDENT VOICE OF NAMIBIA

The *Student Voice* was formally launched as the official mouthpiece of the Namibia National Students Organisation (Nanso) in 1985. It was preceded by a number of pamphlets and leaflets⁵⁷ produced under the same name by student activists in the country and at the South African universities, especially those in the Western Cape.⁵⁸ The purpose of these pamphlets and

⁵⁴*Speak Out*, December 1985: 7

⁵⁵Ouseb paper, 1994

⁵⁶ibid

⁵⁷These leaflets and pamphlets were produced during the course of 1983, while Nanso was established on 2 July 1984, and the *Student Voice* was formally launched almost a year later, according to Dempers and Katjiuanjo.

⁵⁸Dempers interview, 1994 and Katjiuanjo interview, 1995.

leaflets was to mobilise and organise the student body and to revive the students' movement.⁵⁹

After its official launch Nanso decided to launch a newspaper to cater for its communication needs. The *Student Voice of Namibia* was re-launched in 1985 as the official mouthpiece of Nanso. The students organisation resolved to maintain the name "Student Voice", and to expand the scope, character and focus of the new publication.⁶⁰ However, the student activists were to maintain the campaign journalism approach established during the years of leafleting and pamphleting. The student activists also occasionally produced supplements (or extra editions), focusing on specific issues, which could not wait for the production of the newspaper at the end of the month.

For instance if we wanted to mobilise students around a crisis, or to inform them about an urgent matter or calling for a mass action, then we would have a separate edition, just focusing on that specific aspect ... I remember in 1988 with the massive student boycotts, we usually had, even on a weekly basis, supplements to students with focus on various

⁵⁹The student movement in Namibia has a long history. The first student organisation, the South West Africa Student Body (SWASB), was established in 1952. After its demise, another student movement, the South West Africa Progressive Association (Swapa) was established in 1958. Then followed a long period of dormancy before the Black Consciousness-allied Namibia Black Students Organisation (Nabso) and the multi-racial student body, the Namibia Student Organisation (Namso) were established in 1975 and 1976 respectively. (See Maseko, 1995, pp115-132). Nabso disappeared from the scene in the late 1970s because of severe state repression (See Becker, 1993, p147), while Namso disbanded in 1984 "because its role in Namibian politics became more and more irrelevant" (See Maseko, 1985, p118).

⁶⁰Dempers interview, 1994

issues.⁶¹

Dempers, who was a student activist during the late 1980s and who became Nanso's president in 1994 stressed the reasons for the launch of the formal *Student Voice* as follows:

During those formative years there was no platform from where to raise the students' issues. The major media of the time were controlled by the establishment and students felt they must have an alternative media through which they could cover their issues.⁶²

The aims and objectives of the newsletter were vividly summed up by one student activist as follows:

Nanso being a new organisation, the *Student Voice* was a platform to introduce it to the general student population. And also to agitate for specific ideals Nanso believed in, and especially to highlight specific campaigns, such as the introduction of English as a medium of instruction at schools. Initially it was more of a debating forum, but eventually it became a kind of platform to channel ideas that were seen to be policies of the organisation, so that they could reach a wider student body. And also to challenge dominant ideas as they were coming through various forms of institutions and publications, controlled by the government, formal and informal.⁶³

The newsletter was initially published in English, but this changed to both English and Afrikaans following a fierce language debate within the student organisation.⁶⁴ However, during the

⁶¹ibid

⁶²ibid

⁶³Katjiuanjo interview, 1995. Katjiuanjo was Nanso's Secretary for Information and Publicity when the *Student Voice* was formally established in 1985.

⁶⁴This debate reflected a dilemma experienced by the students activists with regard to the language policy. Dempers said the students were divided on the issue of language. While

post-independence era, Afrikaans was dropped, following the adoption of English as the official language of independent Namibia.

The *Student Voice* was a monthly newsletter, but because of lack of funds at many occasions appeared infrequently.⁶⁵ The newsletter was produced in A-4 format from inception, but assumed a tabloid format from 1987 to the time of independence and beyond. From 1987, the newsletter expanded its scope beyond the parochial school concerns to focus on broader political, economic and social issues affecting students and the Namibian masses in general.⁶⁶

The *Student Voice* continued into the post-independence era, but its appearance became more erratic. It focused on matters relating to the reconstruction and development of the new education system, such as the new syllabus, integration of schools, and re-deployment of resources to formerly disadvantaged black schools.

one section wanted to maintain English as the only language for the newspaper, another section felt that both English and Afrikaans should be used. The dilemma was manifested by the fact that while Nanso campaigned for the introduction of English as a medium of instruction in schools, the majority of its members could not understand its crucial messages carried in the newspaper, because of their poor English. The student leadership, therefore, decided to maintain both English and Afrikaans in the newspaper, even though they disliked Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools, according to Dempers.

⁶⁵Dempers interview, 1994

⁶⁶see Chapter 10 for content of this newsletter.

THE NAMIBIAN WORKER

The labour movement was one of the social movements which re-emerged during the 1980s after a long period of dormancy.⁶⁷ While it resurrected during the second half of the decade (in 1987), the trade unions grew faster in comparison to other organisations, because there were underground union structures dating back to the 1970s already in existence, unlike other organisations which needed to be established from scratch. Central to the process of revival and the rapid growth of the labour movement was the role played by the publication, the *Namibian Worker*.

The *Namibian Worker*⁶⁸ was launched in mid-1987, shortly after the May Day celebration of that year, as an organising and education tool. It was to assist activists in their worker education campaigns of the 1980s.⁶⁹ Before then activists used pamphlets and leaflets in the education campaigns, but towards

⁶⁷Becker (1993) in her study titled: "From Anti-Colonial Resistance to Reconstruction: Namibian Women's Movement 1980 - 1992", notes that the existence of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) dates back to 1970 (she found a letterhead of the federation dating to 24 April 1970), however she could not obtain detailed information on the first formation of the NUNW. See p146 of the study.

During my study I talked to some trade unionists, including Pakleppa. They could not give an exact date on which the NUNW was formed, but maintained that the formation of this federation was proclaimed at the Swapo's Consultative Congress held in Tanga, Tanzania, from December 1969 - January 1970.

⁶⁸Pakleppa notes that the Department of Labour of Swapo in exile produced a publication as from 1985, with the same name. They (Pakleppa and his colleagues) decided to call their publication the *Namibian Worker*, in order to show solidarity with their "comrades in exile" and to "avoid confusion".

⁶⁹Pakleppa interview, 1995

the end of 1986, the Worker Steering Committee⁷⁰ decided to launch a newspaper.⁷¹ The stated aims and objectives of the newspaper, according to a worker activist who headed the Media Unit of the Steering Committee, were to:

bring the Namibian worker to unite with his/her fellow workers and to bring an awareness that there was a chance to improve their working conditions when they unite. But also to bring an understanding of the context in which this unity was happening; why workers were so exploited and oppressed; why we were in a war situation in Namibia. And why we needed to clearly link our struggle to the liberation movement for the independence of Namibia.⁷²

The first edition of the publication notes that the *Namibian Worker* was a newspaper "of the workers by the workers" and it invited workers to read the paper, and to contribute articles, letters, poems, as well as to assist in distributing it.⁷³

The first few editions were in a magazine (A-4 type) form, but the format was soon changed into a tabloid. The *Namibian Worker* continued into the post-colonial era. By May 1993 it temporarily ceased to come out and reappeared once in August 1993 during the national congress of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW).⁷⁴ It then disappeared from the scene shortly after the

⁷⁰This Steering Committee was set up in 1985 to help revive the traded union movement, and consisted of worker activists.

⁷¹Pakleppa interview, 1995

⁷²ibid

⁷³*Namibian Worker*, Vol.1, No.1, 1987, p1

⁷⁴Ndivanga interview, 1996. Ndivanga edited the *Namibian Worker* from 1991 to 1993.

congress again, but reappeared again as from 1995 in a simple and cheaper form of a newsletter, appearing infrequently and addressing general workers' issues.⁷⁵

The dormancy of the newspaper has meant a waste of hundreds of thousands of dollars of newspaper production equipment in disuse, provided by the donor community. Because of this neglect the NUNW decided to sell some of the Media Unit's equipment, while the darkroom was taken over by the Media Training Project (MTP), an initiative launched in 1991 by an umbrella of the NGOs, the Namibia Non-Governmental Organisation Forum (Nangof), and sponsored by IBIS (formerly WUS-Denmark). The project trains community media practitioners.⁷⁶

SUMMARY

The community press emerged to serve as communication outlets to community organisations and to highlight the activities of the emergent social movement during the 1980s, given the conspicuous absence of the people's voices and activities from the mainstream colonial media.

The community press was run by intellectuals (community media activists) who through their publications sought to organise and mobilise civil society. These intellectuals, while working within the ideological framework of the broader liberation movement placed emphasis on the struggles of the ordinary

⁷⁵ibid

⁷⁶ibid

grassroots people and their organisations. They held themselves accountable to the emerging people's organisations. Their objective was to empower the grassroots and to nourish a culture of self-reliance.

CHAPTER FOUR : PROGRESSIVE- INDEPENDENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter traces the emergence of *The Namibian* and outlines its aims. It examines the objectives of the intellectuals in establishing this newspaper, and highlights the problems encountered since its inception.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

While the community press came to provide a platform for the articulation of grievances and issues intimate to the grassroots during the 1980s, its impact remained limited because of structural impediments (discussed in chapters eight and nine). In addition, it was the state's interference with the community press which was characterised by verbal threats, detention of activists, occasional raids at the premises of these publications and the banning of some editions,¹ which limited the effectiveness of this press.

The fluid political situation of the 1980s, sketched in the previous chapter, rendered the community press' slow conception-production-distribution cycle inadequate.² This, together with the capitulation of the English liberal newspaper, the *Windhoek Observer*, which at that time was the only voice among the mainstream papers that addressed "the other side" of the

¹The author worked in the community press during the 1980s and is expressing his experience here.

²All these publications were published on a monthly basis as indicated in Table 9.1 in Chapter 9.

political spectrum³, raised the demand for a voice to represent the progressive organisations and the emerging social movements on a more frequent and more national level.

This vacuum was to be filled by the progressive-independent weekly, *The Namibian*, during the 1980s. But, as just noted, before *The Namibian* appeared on the scene, an English liberal weekend tabloid, the *Windhoek Observer*, covered and commented on issues which affected the marginalised black people, for a period of seven years (from 1978 to 1984) before it moved back into the dominant hegemonic order, "leaving the majority of Namibians once again without a media remotely interested in their views or aspirations".⁴

The *Windhoek Observer* was launched in 1978 and edited by the eccentric, but courageous veteran journalist Hannes Smith⁵, while Gwen Lister became the political editor and played a very prominent role in providing the "other side" of the political developments.

The *Windhoek Observer* was a combination of Smith's unconventional journalism which resembled the American "new journalism" and

³Herbstein, 1985, p10

⁴Lush, 1989 : 89

⁵Smith edited the *Windhoek Advertiser* before he was sacked because of his anti-DTA sentiments then. According to Lister, who resigned from the *Windhoek Advertiser* and assisted Smith with the launching of the *Observer*, the aim they had in mind was to provide an alternative voice to that of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance.

Lister's critical political journalism. Smith produced excellent investigative journalism, mixed with a heavy dose of sex and crime⁶, while Lister produced anti-government articles and political analysis which aimed to provide the readership with the human face of the progressive forces including Swapo, which arguably attracted black and white readers.⁷

While complaints against the *Windhoek Observer's* back page yellow-press nude pictures by "concerned Christians" continued unabated, it was the writings of Lister which were to land the newspaper in trouble with the authorities.⁸ Lister's political reporting, which the authorities saw as promoting the objectives of SWAPO, led to the banning of a number of the editions of the *Windhoek Observer*, many during the course of 1984.⁹ The first editions to be banned occurred as early as in October 1979, and by August 1984 a total of nine editions were declared "undesirable".¹⁰

Since Lister's critical political journalism was seen as the reason for the banning of the *Windhoek Observer*, the newspaper's management demoted her from a political editor to an ordinary

⁶Stavridis, 1992, p12

⁷Lister interview, 1995.

⁸Herbstein, 1985, p10

⁹ibid, p10

¹⁰see *Windhoek Observer*, Saturday, June 9, 1984, pp1,10

reporter.¹¹ The staff drew up a petition demanding her reinstatement, but management refused.¹² In a dramatic move the entire staff resigned and Lister followed.¹³

The capitulation of the *Windhoek Observer* had some implications. On the one hand the newspaper lost quite a number of its black readers, on the other, it appeared to retain its economically stronger readership and advertisers. The newspaper abandoned its critical journalism and became a "shadow of its former self".¹⁴ Lush sums up this development,

The *Observer* - until then Namibia's only campaigning newspaper - joined the ranks of those assisting the status quo, leaving the majority of Namibians once again without a media remotely interested in their views or aspirations.¹⁵

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Namibian falls in the category of what I have called the progressive-independent press. It was progressive in its approach to Namibian politics, and supported the progressive movement¹⁶, including Swapo, in their demand for the

¹¹Lister interview, 1995. In this interview Lister said that before her demotion, the co-owner of the newspaper, Mr Thurstan Salt warned her not to address the question of the linkage of the Cuban withdrawal from Angola to the Namibian settlement. Mr Thurstan apparently said that he would not allow a column containing the linkage issue in his newspaper.

¹²ibid

¹³This staff formed the core which established *The Namibian*.

¹⁴Herbstein, 1985, p10

¹⁵Lush, 1989 : 89

¹⁶As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the newspaper came to represent the progressive movement at the national level since the mainstream colonial press ignored the activities of the

independence of the country. At the same time, the newspaper was independent from capital and political ownership. It professed to adhere to liberal (libertarian) media tenets of objectivity, fairness and balanced approach in its news coverage, which presupposes independence from external influence. *The Namibian* can be placed, roughly, between two categories of its South African counterparts, the "social-democrat independent press" (*Weekly Mail* now *Mail and Guardian*, *Vrye Weekblad*, *Indicator* and *Die Suid-Afrikaan*) and the "left commercial press" (*South*, *New Nation* and *New African*)¹⁷. All these newspapers together with *The Namibian* were launched during the same period (the 1980s) and opposed South African apartheid hegemony.

The Namibian was launched on the 30 August 1985, almost a year after Lister was forced to leave the *Windhoek Observer*. The newspaper was to continue with the critical political reporting set by Lister as a political editor of the *Windhoek Observer*, and therefore came to fill the gap in the Namibian media mix created by the capitulation of the *Windhoek Observer*.

The establishment of *The Namibian* was an effort by Lister and a human rights lawyer, Dave Smuts. The newspaper was launched initially as a non-profit trust with funds obtained from the European Community.¹⁸ It started as an English weekly tabloid,

left organisations.

¹⁷see Tomaselli and Louw, 1991, p6

¹⁸Schoeman, 1990, p19

appearing on Fridays, until the 1st April 1989 when it became a daily.

The birth of *The Namibian* was not less painful and its existence from its establishment to shortly after independence was characterised by a spate of harassment and intimidation from the state and right-wing vigilante groups. The first obstacle which confronted the newspaper was that of registration.¹⁹ By the time *The Namibian* was established, the South African-initiated internal settlement (new dispensation) was in full swing. The Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) was established on 17 June 1985²⁰ with relative legislative and executive powers (excluding security, defence and foreign affairs), although some of these powers were subject to the South African President.²¹

Ironically, more than a year before the establishment of the TGNU the pro-South African political groupings comprising the TGNU in March 1984 published a Bill of Fundamental Rights and Objectives. The Bill called for the scrapping of ethnic authorities²² and the integration of health and educational facilities; the release of political detainees and prisoners and the easing of security measures.²³ That the TGNU was paying lip-service to this Bill

¹⁹see Lush, 1989: 89

²⁰see *The Namibian*, Friday, 14 June 1986, p6

²¹Steenkamp in Leys and Saul, 1995, p100

²²Under AG 8 of 1980 proclaimed by the Administrator General, Namibia was divided into eleven governments each taking charge of the activities of its own ethnic group.

²³Steenkamp in Leys and Saul, 1995, p100

and that the latter served as centrepiece of a propaganda campaign for international recognition, was revealed in the way the TGNU handled the registration of *The Namibian*.

Article 5 of the Bill provided for the rights of free speech and the freedom of the press²⁴, but the TGNU tried to block the registration of this newspaper, claiming *The Namibian* would be a "threat to state security".²⁵ The TGNU to this effect demanded R20 000 as a deposit which could be forfeited in case of a ban.²⁶ The normal registration fee for a newspaper at the time was R10.²⁷

The newspaper challenged the TGNU in court and succeeded in having the decision set aside. The court found that Cabinet considered "irrelevant factors"²⁸ in arriving at such a

²⁴op cit Burns, 1990, p342

²⁵Lush, 1989 : 89

²⁶Burns, 1990 : 342

²⁷Lush, 1989 : 89

²⁸Burns notes that Lister pointed out in her affidavits that while working for the another newspaper (*Observer*) she had written articles criticising the respondent (TGNU) and the respondent (TGNU) in turn attacked her in articles. The respondent stated that it had taken that factor into account, and in its view the attacks would tend to lower the esteem in which its members were held by the public, would tend to lower the status of the respondent, and would have the likely effect of endangering the security of the state. The court found that the rights of free speech and freedom of the press were enshrined in article 5 of the Bill of Fundamental Rights. If freedom of speech were to have any significance in a democratic country, freedom of the press had to be recognised because it was only by reaching a large number of people and rallying their support, that those freedoms could be utilised for the benefit of society.

decision.²⁹ The late Justice Hans Berker noted in his judgement that:

The fact that some people hold the South West African Government in contempt does not mean that a situation exists which constitutes a danger to the security of the state or the maintenance of law and order. Furthermore, the Internal Security Act establishes machinery for the protection and security of the state, and it cannot be used to settle private scores.³⁰

Notwithstanding this judgement the newspaper continue to face other obstacles in the forms of harassment and intimidation from the authorities and from far-right wing Afrikaner groups before and shortly after the independence of the country. Lush remembers this period as "one of tension, and yes, of struggle".³¹

Attacks against staff, their property and that of the paper became regular events. Car tyres were slashed, bullets and rocks shattered the office's bomb proof glass, staff were hassled and detained while going about their work, their films and cameras confiscated, phones - both at home and at the office - tapped, mail intercepted, and on one occasion, teargas put in the office ventilation system.³²

The newspaper had one of its editions banned. The 23 January 1987 issue which carried a front page photograph of a police armoured Casspir vehicle in the north, with bodies of Swapo

²⁹Burns, 1990 : 342

³⁰ibid

³¹Lush, 1989 : 89

³²ibid, p. 90

guerrillas strapped to the outside.³³ The South African Directorate of Publications announced the banning of the issue, but a few days later rescinded the decision after being challenged by the newspaper on the condition that *The Namibian* was a member of the Newspaper Press Union and was therefore, not subject to "arbitrary banning".³⁴

The Namibian also experienced two arson attacks of which the most devastating occurred on 10 October 1988.³⁵ The fire virtually gutted its offices, causing damage estimated in hundreds of thousands of rand.³⁶ One of the far right-wing vigilante groups, the "Wit Wolwe" (White Wolves) claimed responsibility for the arson a few days later.³⁷

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Why did *The Namibian* incur wrath from the authorities? What made it the target of the ultra-right vigilantes? Why was it dubbed the "SWAPO mouthpiece"? In answering these questions we need to look at the dominant agenda set by the authorities vis-a-vis the

³³Verbaan, 1989, p11

³⁴ibid. Section 47(1) of the then Publications Act, 1974 (Act 42 of 1974) provides that any newspaper published by a publisher who is a member of the Newspaper Press Union is excluded from the definition in the Publications Act of "publication or object", is exempted from the operations of the Publication Act and censorship by the Directorate of Publications and its committees. (See Kelsey Stuart, 1986, Ch 7)

³⁵Krige, 1988, p81

³⁶Verbaan, 1989, p11

³⁷ibid

counter agenda initiated by forces on the left, including *The Namibian*.

Central to the dominant agenda pursued by the authorities was a neo-colonial settlement, through bypassing an internationally accepted plan and thereby excluding the left forces from becoming hegemonic and subsequently taking over the state. The progressive forces on the other hand stood for the unconditional independence of the country to be effected through the immediate implementation of the UNSCR 435.

The newspaper's aims and objectives coincided with those of the progressive forces and this made it a primary target of the state and the right-wing vigilant groups.

The newspaper, soon after its establishment, made it clear that it was in favour of the implementation of the UN peace plan, resolution 435.³⁸ At this point seven years had lapsed since the adoption of this plan without any indication of it ever being implemented. *The Namibian* pledged to keep the demand for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 alive by actively propagating for its implementation and by giving coverage to those parties and groups that were committed to the peace plan.³⁹

³⁸Krige, 1988, p85

³⁹Stavridis, 1992, p16

In addition, *The Namibian* put high on its agenda the exposure of human rights abuses in the country, especially in the northern part of the country where the majority of the population lives.⁴⁰ The mainstream press refrained from publishing the "horrific reports of atrocities" committed by the security forces in the northern part of the country.⁴¹

By persistently focusing its reportage on the implementation of the United Nations peace plan and the human rights abuses in the country, *The Namibian* adhered to what Megwa calls the "effect-centric perspective" of the agenda-setting process, which assumes that media emphasis on certain issues leads to increased public perception on the importance of those issues.⁴²

Critics of the newspaper claimed it was a "Swapo mouthpiece".⁴³ Lister has on a number of occasions objected to this, claiming the tag was misplaced because, while the newspaper aligned itself more with the views of Swapo and other organisations calling for resolution 435 it was "editorially independent" and "not affiliated to any political grouping".⁴⁴ Verbaan sums up the position as follows:

⁴⁰Krige, 1988, p85

⁴¹Verbaan, 1989, p11

⁴²Megwa, 1992, p1

⁴³However, Lister in an interview with the author noted that they wanted to show that Swapo had a human face; that they were not communists and terrorists but were people who wanted to come back to their own country and have independence and self-determination.

⁴⁴Lister op cit Stavridis, 1992, p15

The Namibian's firm editorial policy, favouring the immediate implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (1978), providing for the territory's independence from Pretoria's rule, has resulted in the authorities and right-wing factions labelling the newspaper 'communist' or 'Marxist' and accusing it of being the mouthpiece of the opposition Swapo movement.⁴⁵

Thus, in the course of the struggle for independence *The Namibian* became a vehicle through which ideas and messages of the progressive forces could be transmitted at a more national level.

SUMMARY

The Namibian came to fill a conspicuous gap in the Namibian media mix by voicing the aspirations of the colonised black people on more a frequent and a more national level. The intellectuals who established the newspaper set out to articulate the wishes and interests of progressive forces, by continuously propagating and campaigning for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435, which promised the independence of Namibia from the South African colonialism. They further vigorously exposed the human rights abuses committed against the people by the colonial state and its apparatuses. *The Namibian* became, therefore, an important vehicle through which the pro-independence ideology of the progressive movement could be disseminated at the national level.

⁴⁵Verbaan, 1989, p11

SECTION TWO

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER

CHAPTER FIVE : OWNERSHIP, CONTROL AND STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

I have so far discussed the reasons for the emergence of the alternative press and the historical context in which it emerged, but have not yet examined the ownership, control and organisational structure of this press in detail. I will attempt to outline these in this chapter.

OWNERSHIP

Media ownership in Namibia between 1960 and 1990 can be roughly classified as follows: First one can distinguish a category of newspapers owned by settler communities - both German and Afrikaner. This again is sub-divided into those newspapers owned by white business interests (the commercial or capitalist press) on the one hand, such as the *Windhoek Advertiser*, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Windhoek Observer*, *Namibia Nachrichten*¹, *Times of Namibia*² and *Namib Times*, and those owned by white political parties on the other, such as *Die Suidwester*, *Die Suidwes*

¹This newspaper was founded in 1984 under the auspices of the Community of Interests of German-speaking Namibians, called the IG. It was left of the centre and supported interests and policies of the more liberal IG. It collapsed in 1991 after seven-year period and its assets was sold to the Republikein Group, owned by the DTA. See Annas, 1992.

²While this newspaper started as an independent newspaper published in English, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo, it increasingly came under the influence of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). In 1989 the editor, Jean Sutherland, was sacked for refusing to publish a right-wing advertisement which sought to ridicule the Swapo movement in the run-up to the United Nations supervised elections.

Afrikaner, *Die Joernaal*³, *Die Republikein*, and *Sunday Republikein*.⁴

Both these two newspaper categories are referred to as the mainstream press. In 1978 the main two commercial newspapers - *Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Windhoek Advertiser* - within the fold of the mainstream press were taken over by political interests. A pro-DTA publisher from Westphalia in Germany, Dr Dieter Lauenstein⁵ in April 1978 bought these papers and brought them under the control of the pro-interim government forces⁶. Editors of these newspapers Kurt Dahlman and Hannes Smith were sacked from their positions because they did not subscribe to the political outlook of the new ownership.⁷

The ownership, control and organisational structure of the mainstream press played a very crucial role in serving the economic and political interests of capitalism and the state, a field of study which still needs to be done in the Namibian context. The mainstream press, with the exception of the *Windhoek Observer* as we have seen in the previous chapter, by

³This was a weekly newspaper owned the National Party of *South West News* (NPSWA), but directed towards black readers.

⁴This was the sister newspaper of *Die Republikein* and was the country's first Sunday Newspaper. After independence it amalgamated with the *Times of Namibia* and the *Namibia Nachrichten* to form *Tempo*, also a Sunday newspaper.

⁵see Smith in *Windhoek Observer*, Saturday, 29 April 1995, p.5

⁶Mbuende, 1986, p89

⁷*Windhoek Observer*, Saturday, 29 April 1995, p.5

omitting oppositional viewpoints and by undermining the interests of the colonised people, in effect subscribed to the dominant hegemony of the state and thereby supported the status quo. This does not mean, however, that oppositional viewpoints from individual journalists in the mainstream press did not surface from time to time. But in most cases voices of dissent were not permitted by the ownership and controllers of the mainstream press. This led to self-censorship, as has been demonstrated by the case of the *Windhoek Observer*⁸ and the dismissals of a number of liberal journalists at the *Windhoek Advertiser* and the *Allgemeine Zeitung*⁹.

Secondly, there were those newsletters and free-sheets (such as *New Nation*, *On Record*, *Ombuze*, *Sari Aob*, *Eume*, *Ehumo Komesho*) and others owned directly by the colonial state and produced by the Department of Information Services. These state media included the *South West Africa Broadcasting Corporation* (*SWABC*: radio and television) and may be termed the colonial media. The mainstream press and the colonial media are being referred to as the mainstream colonial media in this study.

The *SWABC* was effectively controlled by the state and journalists not following the official definitions of events and issues were sacked. At least five black announcers were sacked because of

⁸The sacking of Lister from the *Windhoek Observer* and the subsequent capitulation of this newspaper is a case in point. See chapter 4.

⁹Former editors of the *Windhoek Advertiser* such as Jean Sutherland and Joe Putz were sacked from the newspaper because of their sympathetic stance towards the progressive forces.

what was seen as pro-Swapo sentiments.¹⁰ At one time the head and staff members of the German Service were sacked because of their critical attitude towards government of the day and replaced with pro-government staff.¹¹

A third category consisted of publications produced by the national liberation movement in exile and dubbed the "revolutionary press" or "underground press"¹². Both Swapo and Swanu produced publications in exile, which were prohibited inside the country by the colonial government. Swanu published *Freedom* and was supported by the *South West Africa Review*¹³, while Swapo published *Solidarity*, *Namibia Today*, *Namibia News*, *The Combatant*, *Swapo Information Bulletin*, *Namibian Youth*, *Namibian Woman*, and was supported by a number of anti-apartheid publications produced by solidarity groups¹⁴.

The revolutionary press, because of its prohibition, had a limited influence, if any, on the political development inside the country.¹⁵ It was, nevertheless, effectively used by the

¹⁰One of the those sacked was Immanuel Mwatara, who was the "head" of Swapo's "Namibian Police", a group of Swapo marshals established to maintain order at Swapo public rallies.

¹¹See an article titled: "Top People Fired at SWA Radio", by Tony Weaver in the *Sunday Times*, 14 October, 1984: p10.

¹²Kambombo, 1989, p50

¹³Ngavirue, 1982, p23

¹⁴see Heuva, 1992, pp36-45

¹⁵ibid

liberation movement as a propaganda tool to win international support for the independence of the country.¹⁶

Swapo on its part, in addition to publications, ran a wire service, the *Namibia News Agency (Nampa)*¹⁷. It also ran a radio broadcasting service, the *Voice of Namibia (VON)*, beamed to Namibia from about six neighbouring countries.¹⁸ The influence of VON on the political process inside the country still needs to be studied.¹⁹

The fourth category of press ownership, the alternative press, is the subject of this study. Mwase (1988) has referred to this category as the "semi-nationalist press".²⁰ To him this newspaper category,

was very critical of the colonial authorities and because it was inside the country, unlike the bulk of Swapo's revolutionary press, it bore much of the colonial anger. Some of the papers in this category were threatened with closure, their journalists and editors detained, harassed, denied travelling documents, and their newspaper offices and printing works fire bombed.²¹

¹⁶ibid

¹⁷ibid, p48

¹⁸Riddle, 1991. "Cross-Border Broadcasting: The Case of the Voice of Namibia". Unpublished Essay. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

¹⁹This study should look at the listenership of the Voice of Namibia. How effective the VON was in terms of political mobilisation and what problems it encountered in reaching Namibians inside the country, are areas needing attention.

²⁰Mwase, 1988, p237

²¹ibid

The alternative press was neither owned by commercial interests nor by the state or by political parties, either from the left or the right, except for *The Namibian Worker* which belonged to a Swapo-affiliated workers' federation.

THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Generally the alternative press was not meant to be a profit-making venture, but to provide 'vehicles' through which the apartheid hegemony could be challenged. The lack of profit-motive coupled with the urge for a democratic and participatory communication framework tended to discourage bureaucratic and hierarchical structures. This does not mean, however, that some newspaper traditions in the fold of the alternative press did not practise some measures of control, a sense of accountability and some organisational structures, as we shall see below.

However, one of the features which strikingly distinguished the alternative press from the mainstream colonial press was the issue of ownership. The alternative press was owned by forces outside the hegemonic order, while the mainstream colonial press was owned by forces within the dominant hegemonic bloc.

THE NAMIBIAN AND THE SOUTH WEST NEWS

The Namibian and the *South West News* were perhaps the only two newspapers in the alternative fold which loosely exhibited some hierarchical characteristics.

The *South West News* was co-owned by the emerging intellectuals and petit bourgeoisie within the marginalised Namibian society during the 1960s. The founders of the newspaper initially established a company, the African Publishing Company (APC), which was registered under the Company's Ordinance No. 19 of 1928 (as amended on 28 October 1959).²²

The APC was run by four directors: Zedekia Ngavirue, the founder of the company and Emil Appolus, a journalist who edited the first edition before being forced into exile after the deportation of his wife. The other two directors were John Garvey Muundjua and Willy (Uatja) Kaukuetu. Both were members of the South West Africa National Union (Swamu), the latter being the deputy president of the movement at the time.²³

Other persons who at one time served as directors of the company were David Meroro, who a decade later became the national chairman of Swapo and Clemens Kapuuo, who also became the president of the National United Democratic Organisation (Nudo).²⁴ Kapuuo also became the chief of the Otjiherero-speaking section of the population in 1971, after the death of Chief Hosea Kutako.

²²Documents in author's collection.

²³Ngavirue interview, 1992

²⁴NUDO is a tribal political party of the Otjiherero-speaking section of the population. The party, in 1977, joined the Turnhalle arrangements which resulted in the formation of a pro-South African umbrella body, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA).

The following persons, in addition to the directors, held shares in the company: Ben Tunguru Huaraka, who soon after the establishment of the newspaper left to study abroad on a Ghanaian government scholarship; Michael Uandara, a clerk; Edward Ndjoze a business personality and Ephraim Vitore, a labourer.²⁵

Notwithstanding this company ownership, the *South West News* was more of a "campaign newspaper" than a commercial venture as we shall see in the later chapters. The commercial arrangement was a strategy to make the whole undertaking financially viable rather than to make profit, because of the lack of any other financial resources, taking into account the poverty experienced by its potential target audience and the reluctance of whites to advertise in the newspaper.²⁶ In fact the APC, and for that matter the *South West News*, was one of the projects of Community Development Programmes devised by Zedekia Ngavirue, who was a social worker during the 1960s, and who had been trained at the then Jan H. Hofmeyer School of Social Work in Johannesburg in the late fifties.²⁷

The class character of ownership and control sketched above enhanced the newspaper's focus on the political interests of the emerging black organisations and interest groups, particularly Swanu. Owners and publishers of the *South West News* had a clear

²⁵Documents in the author's collection.

²⁶see Chapter 8

²⁷Ngavirue documents in author's collection

political agenda, which was to advance the cause of the black Namibians and to oppose the state's dominant agenda.

Journalists working at the *South West News* regarded the newspaper as their own and saw themselves as working for a cause rather than for economic gain.²⁸ Veii, the editor who witnessed the demise of the newspaper, remembers that no one received a salary from the company as their's was voluntary work trying to secure a voice for the voiceless black people.²⁹

The Namibian was another example of the alternative press which reflected a degree of hierarchical structure. It was run as a non-profit trust, as noted in the previous chapter, with funds from the European Community. Lister and Smuts were the only trustees and, therefore, the de facto owners of the newspaper.

Theoretically the structure of *The Namibian* was divided into three main divisions: the trusteeship which assumed the role of ownership, the editorial headed by Lister as the editor and administration headed by a business manager.³⁰ However, Lister played a very prominent role in all these three divisions. Her influential position on the newspaper led to the general perception that *The Namibian* was run as a "one-person-show" among the junior reporters.³¹ Management was accused by junior

²⁸Veii interview, 1994

²⁹ibid

³⁰Lister interview, 1995

³¹Shipanga interview, 1995

reporters of not consulting the editorial staff on important decisions concerning them and the newspaper on a number of occasions.³²

While *The Namibian* followed a hierarchical structure, it propounded a strong political agenda like the rest of the alternative press. Since the political agenda was the implementation of the United Nations peace plan, the staff associated themselves with this political objective even though they did not necessarily agree with the way the newspaper was run.³³

The commercial propensity of the newspaper was like that of the *South West News*, a means to an end and not an end in itself. It was to make the newspaper self-sustainable in case donor funds dries up, rather than to make profit as an end in itself.

THE CHURCH PRESS

The church publications dealt with in this study belonged to two main church denominations, the Catholic and the Lutheran. In most cases, these newsletters were part of the churches' "literature offices" and or the printing shops of these church denominations, save for the *CCN Information*. The day-to-day operation and other important functions were left to the editor

³²ibid

³³ibid

and his or her staff, who were accountable to the church management.³⁴

The editors enjoyed a relative editorial autonomy, as the church management rarely prescribed the content and the editorial policies of the newsletters.³⁵ However, because of the divergent political outlooks and affiliations of church membership, certain church members, notably those framed in the dominant agenda, protested about the political content of the newsletters, which they felt favoured the progressive forces.³⁶

Tjerije on this notes:

We had a period of tension within the church as some members saw that *Immanuel* had taken a certain direction, since the Open Letter. These members felt that the church publication was becoming political and was voicing political tendency from one particular persuasion, and they did not like that.³⁷

This opposition was more felt in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCIRN) and the Catholic Churches. According to Ambrosius Amutenja, the position was better in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) where the majority of the members were Oshiwambo and Okavango ethnic groups which were the main support base of SWAPO and at the same time exposed to harsh realities of army brutality.³⁸ These members on the

³⁴Amutenja interview, 1995

³⁵ibid

³⁶Tjerije and Wellerdieck interviews, 1994

³⁷Tjerije interview, 1994

³⁸Amutenja interview, 1995. Amutenja edited *Omukwetu* from 1978 - 1984 before he was forced to flee the country for fear of repression from the army after publishing a leaked document

contrary, demanded more political articles in the publication as they felt the editors did not give them enough.³⁹

The *CCN Information* was initially controlled by the General Secretariat of the CCN and later by the Communication Unit, established to take charge of the overall communication function of CCN.⁴⁰ The Unit was headed by a director, who also served as the editor of the newsletter.⁴¹ The Director was in turn accountable to the management, the CCN Executive Committee.⁴²

According to Protasius Ndauendapo, who was appointed co-editor of this newsletter on a part-time basis in 1985⁴³, the *CCN Information* enjoyed an "unrestricted editorial autonomy", as the CCN management did not interfere with the content of the newsletter.⁴⁴

But again, there were some conservative church leaders and members from the CCN member churches who felt that the newsletter was either indulging too much in politics or favoured Swapo.⁴⁵

containing names of prominent residents of northern Namibia targeted for assassination by Koevoet.

³⁹ibid

⁴⁰Ndauendapo interview, 1995

⁴¹ibid

⁴²ibid

⁴³ibid

⁴⁴ibid

⁴⁵Nandjaa and Tjerije interviews, 1994

A major consequence of the open support of the CCN and its newsletter for the progressive forces was said to have led to the withdrawal of the white-only German Evangelical Lutheran Church (DELK) from CCN in 1987.⁴⁶

THE COMMUNITY PRESS

The community press was owned and controlled by organisations in civil society: students, workers, women and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisation (CBOs). Most of the community newspapers exhibited McQuail's "democratic-participant model" of the media.⁴⁷ One of the main characteristics of the democratic-participant model is an "alternative" organisational structure which values horizontal communication and rejects monopolistic, bureaucratic and centralist forms of organisation.⁴⁸

The community press had a loose organisational structure, unlike the rigid one associated with the mainstream press. Most, if not all, of these publications were run on a 'collective' basis, as we shall see below.

Bricks community newspaper was published by the Bricks Community Project, which was a developmental NGO. While the day-to-day operation of the newspaper was the responsibility of full time

⁴⁶see *CCN Information*, July/August/September, 1987. No 9/10/11.

⁴⁷See McQuail, 1987, p121. See also chapter 6.

⁴⁸McQuail, 1994, p121.

community activists, on policy level *Bricks* was run by a Board of Advisors elected at the annual general meeting (AGM). The AGM was attended by interested people and groups of Katutura and Khomasdal townships, as well as by representatives from the NGOs and CBOs,⁴⁹ leadership.

The AGM served as the highest decision-making forum, especially with regard to policy formulation. It recommended policy and direction while the implementation of policies rested with the full time activists.⁵⁰

These arrangements, according to its protagonists, made *Bricks* the most representative, accountable and democratic in the fold of the grassroots press, since it solicited input from the community on its content and direction.⁵¹

The rest of the grassroots press had loose organisational structures similar to that of *Bricks*. Most of them were run on a collective basis, ensuring collective accountability and responsibility.

Sister Namibia was published by a feminist NGO, Sister Collective. The Collective was opened to all women "who show an involvement and commitment to the activities and ideals" of the

⁴⁹Strauss interview, 1995

⁵⁰*Bricks*, Vol.1, No.8, November, 1985, p.1

⁵¹Kondombolo interview, 1994

organisation.⁵² The activists embraced an egalitarian approach, where every member had an input in the magazine and decisions were taken collectively.

Speak Out, as already noted in Chapter 3, belonged to the management of the Katutura Community Centre. The newsletter was collectively managed by the management team, while the technical production side of it was entrusted to an editor, who was also part of the management.

The Namibian Worker was published by the Media Unit of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). The unit comprised worker activists who adopted an egalitarian approach in their production process.⁵³ The unit was accountable to the NUNW leadership, but internally there was no hierarchical structure.⁵⁴

The publication of the *Student Voice* during its initial phase was produced on an ad hoc basis by a combination of the leadership and active members - the leading core - of Nanso.⁵⁵ But as from 1987, with the acquisition of donor funds, the activities of the organisation were departmentalised, in a move to remove some of the activities from the leadership control.⁵⁶ Hence a media

⁵²Sister Collective Project Proposal, 1989, p.2

⁵³Pappklepa interview, 1995

⁵⁴ibid

⁵⁵Katjiuanjo interview, 1995

⁵⁶ibid

unit, under the Secretary of Information was established and assumed the task of publishing the newsletter.⁵⁷ The unit was manned by student activists, trained in newspaper production by media consultants from IBIS (formerly WUS-Denmark).⁵⁸

SUMMARY

The preceding discussion has attempted to highlight the ownership, control and the organisational structure of the alternative press in Namibia. As has been noted, this press was owned and controlled by forces outside the hegemonic spectrum of the state. This situation enabled the alternative press to unrestrictedly advance a counter-apartheid discourse.

The lack of hierarchical and bureaucratic structures found at most of the alternative publications (the community and church presses) facilitated collective responsibility among the media activists in managing their publications and enhanced equal participation in the production process.

⁵⁷ibid

⁵⁸ibid

CHAPTER SIX : JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE AND STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

The journalistic practice and strategies of the alternative press exhibit a variety of theoretical perspectives ranging from the libertarian to the democratic-participant models. Generally all the alternative newspapers can be said to have been operating within the democratic-participant framework, however, two of these newspapers, the *South West News* and *The Namibian*, used a combination of both the democratic-participant and the libertarian models.

THE SOUTH WEST NEWS AND THE NAMIBIAN

The orientation of the *South West News* and *The Namibian* was national, democratic and non-racial. They professed to be 'independent', from political and other influence, and to be 'fair', 'balanced' and 'impartial' in their reporting. However, the reality¹ of the Namibian situation made these ideals impossible to accomplish and these newspapers remained partisan and biased towards the "oppressed masses" and the progressive forces, as can be seen from their content, language and messages (see chapters 10 and 11). Nevertheless, both newspapers were not party politically owned, although their reporting was sympathetic to Swanu and Swapo.

¹The polarisation of the Namibian society characterised by division along political, ethnic and racial lines.

The inclination towards the dominant libertarian framework can be seen in the stated objectives drawn by the founders of the *South West News* and contained in its mission statement. They argue for instance that:

Our object is to serve as a vigorous instrument to promote the social and educational well-being of all inhabitants of South West Africa, irrespective of race, colour and creed.

Our desired aim is to give *objective news* and *political reporting*, unclouded by racial or political prejudices.

We aim to serve the uppermost interest of this territory, and will in the best of our ability assist in furthering its economical growth and political maturity.

We declare that no political party, religious sect, or individuals of any standing shall in any way dictate, direct or influence our policy, but we *will pursue a path of impartiality, honesty* and objectivity in all issues.

We shall constantly fight to uphold basic human rights for all people, and expose any injustice that may be perpetuated deliberately by Government, individuals or organisations on any section of the community.²

The Namibian also subscribed to the same libertarian principles. It maintained that the citizenry had 'a right to know' and the 'right to be informed'.³ The launch editorial notes that:

The newspaper will follow an independent editorial policy and will strive to achieve a *greater flow* of information and open debate, and at the same time will support internationally accepted independence for Namibia in terms of Security Council Resolution 435. By displaying editorial independence with *honest and realistic reporting*, we hope to contribute to a free and vigorous press for Namibia, a vital avenue of accountability open to Namibians in the absence of other democratic

²Ngavirue documents.

³see *The Namibian*, 30 August 1985, p16

institutions.⁴

The journalistic practice and strategies embraced by the *South West News* and *The Namibian* illustrate Butalia's argument that some newspapers in the fold of the alternative press operate within the confines and definitions of dominant media practice, "while on the other hand remained politically committed to the alternative goals".⁵

As noted earlier, and as we shall see in the next few chapters, both these newspapers subscribed to the political objectives advanced by certain groups and organisations in the divided Namibian society at the time and they could, therefore, not be totally "objective" in the true journalistic meaning of the concept, of providing 'both sides of the story', in a 'fair', 'impartial', 'independent' and a 'neutral' way.

Both *The Namibian* and the *South West News* strove towards professionalism. The degree of success or failure in terms of professionalism can only be measured against the availability of skills and professional expertise. With regard to the *South West News* all the practitioners, except one⁶, had no journalistic experience or training, nor did they have newspaper production

⁴ibid, p16

⁵Butalia, 1993, pp51-60

⁶Emil Appolus worked for the *Windhoek Advertiser* as a reporter before becoming the first editor of the *South West News*.

skills.⁷ This inhibited progress towards professionalism at this newspaper.

The Namibian on the other hand, was perhaps the only newspaper in the fold of the alternative press which succeeded in achieving professionalism. The appearance of the newspaper matched that of the mainstream press. The newspaper was staffed by a combination of aspiring black journalists and white professional staff, many of whom coming from the *Windhoek Observer* after resigning in solidarity with Lister. To help the disadvantaged black journalists the newspaper initiated in-service-training courses, conducted by foreign journalists attached to the newspaper on contract.⁸ In addition, the black reporters at the newspaper were sent abroad on courses and on exchange programmes.⁹ Despite these training programmes, no black journalist at *The Namibian* had ever advanced to a higher level beyond that of a senior reporter.¹⁰

The Namibian used advanced technology in newspaper production, it used desktop publishing with layout artists exposed to the new

⁷Veii interview, 1994.

⁸Lister interview, 1995. The training project for black journalists was in fact a condition for funding set by the donors, as we shall see in chapter 8 on funding.

⁹Reporter Chris Shipanga attended a journalism course in the UK sponsored the British Council, while Rajah Munamava went to the USA on an exchange programme.

¹⁰Shipanga interview, 1995. Shipanga says black reporters were overlooked, adding that even their salaries were lower than those of their white colleagues.

technology through courses and workshops offered locally and in South Africa.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned attempts *The Namibian* and the *South West News* differed very significantly from the mainstream colonial press. While the mainstream colonial media transmitted a "superstructure of the dominant capitalist mode of production and the norms and values of the ruling class",¹¹ *The Namibian* and the *South West News* carried messages which addressed the needs and aspirations of the colonised Namibian people.

COMMUNITY AND CHURCH PRESS

These presses eschewed the conventional journalistic practice in favour of strategies which represented a direct challenge to the conventional one. Both community and church media practitioners were subjective and partisan, favouring their constituencies, without claiming to be 'independent', 'impartial' and 'neutral'.¹²

Community media activists, more than their church counterparts, were more partisan. One community activist noted that:

We were emotional and subjective. Since we were coming from that background, from the problems, we mostly wanted to expose the rotten things in the system and therefore took the side of the people.¹³

¹¹see Mattelart, 1981, pp40 - 42

¹²Kondombolo and Strauss interviews

¹³Kondombolo interview, 1994

The subjective practice of the community press can be understood in reasons for its emergence and the stated objectives. Strauss is very clear on the reasons for subjective reporting:

We did not use the concept objectivity, but truth. Our difference with the commercial press was that we were pushing a very specific ideological line. To sum this in one sentence I can say that: development and empowerment of the people who were down-trodden, the workers, the peasants and the people who suffered in the dusty townships, in farms and homelands. We had a specific agenda and we kept it open.¹⁴

The church media practitioners adhered to advocacy journalism. Unlike the radical politics expressed in the columns of the community papers, their's was a voice of pastoral resistance. However, like other alternative papers, the church press "represented a model of alternative content and use".¹⁵

A Danish theologian, Jorgensen (1981) maintained that the media ethics of the Christian communication were concerned with human action to others in community and society.¹⁶ He stressed that Christian communication challenged "the status quo and related to the needs of the oppressed and those who had been pushed to the edge of society".¹⁷

¹⁴Strauss interview, 1995

¹⁵Jorgensen op cit *CCN Information*, July 1981, Vol.1, No.9, p3

¹⁶ibid

¹⁷ibid

The church press according to Ndauendapo, who at one time co-edited the *CCN Information*, had an activist role to play during the struggle for the liberation of Namibia. He said that they, as church media practitioners, believed that they were "part and parcel of a society confronted with evil which wanted to destroy the fabric of that society".¹⁸

In that situation we had to speak and write about those evils and thereby play an advocacy role by making sure that what we were writing could change the situation. We were not writing just for the sake of writing.¹⁹

The media activists of the community and church press eschewed simple reportage in favour of interpretation and analysis:

If I was to write an article propagating the improvement of the conditions of women, for instance, I will rely on a number of things: written books, articles which appeared somewhere, the Swapo bulletins, South African Students Press Union (Saspu) based newspapers and so on. I will also bring in my own perspective, because it is not a case of taking and saying this is what happened, but I will also try to analyze these materials in order to arrive at something.²⁰

Generally the main thrust of articles covered by the community and church press were issues and processes²¹ as opposed to the mainstream's press emphasis on "events" or what Tomaselli called "dead-in-a-day news".²² The alternative press, but specifically

¹⁸Ndauendapo interview, 1995

¹⁹ibid

²⁰Katjiuanjo interview, 1995

²¹See Chapter 10 of this study.

²²Tomaselli and Louw, 1991, p169

the community and church papers, favoured more analytical articles to the straight-forward news stories.

OBJECTIVITY

The concept "objectivity" needs some closer attention in order to understand the reluctance of the community and church presses to the application of this concept. To many professional journalists objectivity is the golden rule of the journalistic practice, the cornerstone of its professional deontology and the equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath.²³ However, two schools of thought can be distinguished with regard to this concept. One which holds that "objectivity" is an ideal, a goal or a desire which enables the journalist to be "fair, accurate, balanced, dispassionate, uninvolved, unbiased and unprejudiced".²⁴ The second school on the other hand argues that "objectivity" is a "myth", a mere rhetoric and an impossible goal to achieve.²⁵

The latter school of thought has been very critical of the applicability of the concept and its position is well articulated by the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) in Chile during the 1970s. The MIR's perception of objectivity was emulated by the progressive-alternative press in South Africa and Namibia.

²³Mattelart, 1981, p37

²⁴see Merrill, J.C. and Lowenstein, R.L., 1979, Chapter 5, "Objectivity: An Attitude", p202

²⁵ibid

The MIR has criticised a number of aspects with regard to applicability of objectivity which needs a closer attention for our purpose. Firstly, the protagonists of objectivity hold that a journalist penetrates "reality" and determines what is important to his/her audience and what is not, classifying some events as "news" and others as "side shows".²⁶ This presupposes the perceptive powers of the individual journalists. However, the MIR argues that the selection of the events and issues by the journalists is influenced by the norms and values of the society and or the social group to which the individual journalist belongs.²⁷

Secondly, objectivity posits that facts, events and issues are described by journalists as they are and not how they seem to be. This goes further to say that only the reader can produce 'meaning' out of the news item.²⁸ However, the 'reality' presented by the journalists is a mediated one and what the reader receives is in fact an interpretation of an event or issue by the professional journalist.²⁹

Thirdly, the opponents of objectivity claim that it leads to "alienation" of the journalist from his or her product. The journalist is "through this process" denied recognition of himself/herself in the product and is forced to act as the agent

²⁶see MIR, 1971, p132 and also Mattelart, 1981, p37

²⁷MIR, p132

²⁸Mattelart, 1981, p38

²⁹ibid

of ideological alienation of the exploited sectors who consume his/her product".³⁰

Fourthly, it has been argued that the practice of objectivity takes issues and events out of context.³¹ This is arguably done by the way of providing "facts" selected from reality which is defined as "ephemeral, transitory, conjectural and anecdotal par excellence, without ever revealing their context".³² It is therefore, argued that the practice of objectivity withholds from the audience the factors which would enable them to make a judgement and to integrate any particular fact into a process of active comprehension.³³

Lastly, it has been argued that objectivity implies a division of labour where the public is rendered a passive receiver of information from the professional communicator. The journalist is seen as the "expert who should give voice and presence to a reality lived by others".³⁴

The issue of objectivity has relevance to the struggle for hegemony as the latter cannot be achieved without the active and subjective participation of the intellectuals. To be objective means to be detached and neutral. Being the functionaries of

³⁰ibid, p39

³¹Both Mattelart and the MIR maintain this position.

³²Mattelart, 1981, p39

³³ibid

³⁴MIR, p132

their people's struggle for counter hegemony, the intellectuals (community and church media practitioners) could not be neutral, but active participants in that process. They therefore embraced a subjective and advocacy approach of the journalistic practice in order to intervene in the process of counter hegemony creation. The language and messages of the media activists in Chapter 11 attempts to demonstrate the above-stated argument.

PARTICIPATION

The community and church media practitioners subscribed to the democratic-participant model, which according to McQuail:

supports the right to relevant information, the right to answer back and the right to use the new means of communication for interaction and social action in small-scale settings of community, interest group or subculture.³⁵

The model further challenges the dominant conventional media practice and encourages a "multiple, small-scale, local, non-institutional, committed media which link senders to receivers and also favour horizontal patterns of interaction".³⁶ It "rejects the market as a suitable institutional form, as well as all 'top-down' professional provision and control".³⁷

This means that communications media must become tools for the expression of the practice of the dominated groups. The message must not be imposed from above. Rather, the people themselves must create messages destined for themselves and in

³⁵McQuail, 1994, p131

³⁶ibid, p131

³⁷ibid, p132

which they are the actors.³⁸

The community and church presses relied heavily on the people, their audience, for the raw material of their messages as well as on secondary material. Former *Bricks'* activist, Nelao Kondombolo remembers that when they were writing stories, "we used to ask peoples' comments before putting them in the newspaper".³⁹ Another activist said they involved the people through interviews. "We had direct interviews with the ordinary men and women".⁴⁰

Jorgensen on the church press noted that the "genuine Christian communication" is always "participatory communication", characterised by a "continuous process of information sharing in which all matters of importance to the community are fully discussed".⁴¹

COLLECTIVE APPROACH

Besides participation, another important strategy of the community press was collectivism. Collective approaches to newspaper production and collective responsibility to the overall running of these newspapers were the core strategies of the activists.

³⁸Mattelart, 1981, p42

³⁹Kondombolo interview, 1994

⁴⁰Strauss interview, 1995

⁴¹op cit *CCN Information*, July 1981, p3

One former media activist remembers that their newspaper production process was a collective one:

We went through the whole process from story-writing, editing, proof-reading, layout and final paste-up. Each and every activist knew all these steps. No one monopolized a certain skill.⁴²

Using *Bricks* as an example, the collective approach to newspaper production was done as follows: Media activists held news gathering or brain-storming sessions, twice a month.⁴³ At the first session, issues and events which needed to be covered in the next edition were discussed. Input from the public solicited during the door-to-door distribution and interviews were also discussed. Topics (and issues) to be covered were divided among the activists.⁴⁴ At the second brainstorming session draft articles were discussed and corrected in terms of content, style and language and suitable headlines were proposed.⁴⁵ Stories were then typed and proofread by two or more activists before being sent for type-setting.⁴⁶ All activists assisted with the lay-out and the pasting up of the articles.⁴⁷ Members of the

⁴²Kondombolo interview, 1994

⁴³The author was part of this experience.

⁴⁴This involved research and interviews with members of broader communities as well as those sources involved or associated with issues.

⁴⁵The author was part of this experience.

⁴⁶ibid

⁴⁷ibid

public were also encouraged to take part in these sessions and to submit stories.⁴⁸

DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

Together with the collective approach to newspaper production was the sharing of skills. This was done through a number of methods, including seminars, conferences and workshops. Activists at these workshops were trained to produce newspapers, posters and leaflets. They were taught how to write and lay-out a publication.⁴⁹

Sharing of skills was done to produce well-rounded personalities, equipped with all production skills and thus challenged the capitalistic division of labour which rendered some people deskilled.⁵⁰ Subject to this was the desire to demystify the journalistic practice.⁵¹

SUMMARY

The journalistic practice of the alternative press illustrates a variety of theoretical perspectives, in which the dominant libertarian and the alternative democratic-participant models came up very strongly. *The Namibian* and the *South West News* exhibited a combination of both these perspectives. These two newspapers, while advancing the rhetoric of the libertarian

⁴⁸ibid

⁴⁹The author was part of this experience.

⁵⁰ibid. See also Mattelart, 1981, pp42 -45

⁵¹ibid

model, were forced to operate within the confines of the alternative political goals because of the situation in which they operated.

The protagonists and practitioners of the alternative press, but more particularly those of the community and church presses, in general eschewed conventional journalistic practice. Being functionaries of their people's hegemonic struggle these media activists could not be "neutral", "impartial" and "objective" in that process and hence their "subjective" and "advocacy" journalism. Central to their modus operandi was the participation of their audience, collective approach to the production process and the demystification of the dominant journalistic practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN : TARGET AUDIENCE AND NEWS SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Who constituted the target audience of the alternative press? Which were the forces which populated the columns of this press and thereby influenced its agenda? The present chapter attempts to answer these two questions. It does not, however, intend to provide in-depth analyses of audience and news sources, but will briefly pinpoint them so as to enable the reader to understand the content and the context of the language and messages in chapters 10 and 11.

TARGET AUDIENCE

While newspapers purport to address a broad spectrum of audience, they have in fact a certain or specific audience they target. The reverse is also true. While members of the reading public are exposed to a variety of newspaper products, they tend to choose those whose messages appeal to them or with which they can associate or identify themselves.¹

Broadly speaking the audience of the alternative press was the colonised Namibian people. However, while the messages of the different newspapers might have appealed to all the "oppressed masses", each newspaper targeted a specific category of audience.

¹There are exceptions to this. For instance the South African daily, the *Citizen*, is said to have more black readers than whites, despite its white management and right wing sentiments. (See AMPS, 1995).

The first black-run newspaper, the *South West News*, professed to advance a non-racial discourse.² However, while the non-racial stance was the ultimate objective, the newspaper confined its focus to the black people, because the latter did not have other communication outlets. The following quotation confirms this argument.

To the bulk of our population which is illiterate and ignorant the paper must bring light and education; it must stimulate them to take a keener interest in their own lives. And this is a *basic function of the newspaper*.

For the *majority of our people whose voices are silenced, the paper must speak*.

To those who have been *conditioned to accept a lower status in life by continuous subjugation, the denial of basic human rights, and unhealthy indoctrination, the paper must strive to give hope and pride*.³

The foregoing quotation indicates clearly that while the *South West News* purported to represent all the "inhabitants of South West Africa, irrespective of race, colour or creed"⁴, its main focus was the black people. According to the media activists the newspaper was read by the petit-bourgeoisie: the teachers, clerks, nurses, small black business men and women, the youth, students and leaders of the emerging political parties, particularly Swanu.⁵

²The *South West News* was billed the "only non-racial newspaper in the territory". See the masthead of the *South West News*.

³Quoted from a memorandum prepared by the founders of the *South West News*, in the authors collection.

⁴ibid

⁵No readership surveys were carried out. These are opinions expressed by Veii and Ngavirue during interviews.

The high illiteracy of the black population meant that many of the black people during the 1960s, might have confined the readership to the above groups.⁶ The newspaper was written mainly in Afrikaans and English, which could be understood only by the literate section of the black population, which was at that time a very small percentage of the total black population. Figures available, if correct, suggest that of the 170, 720 black people in the so-called police zone by September 1960, only 1,9 per cent could read Afrikaans, and only 0,02 per cent could read English, while 20,7 per cent could read Otjiherero.⁷ In the northern areas only 2,6 per cent could read Otjiherero, while only 25 persons and 1 person could read Afrikaans and English respectively.⁸

The journalists at the *South West News*, however, made provision for Otjiherero, as some important articles were written in this language. This indicates that the intellectuals were biased towards the Otjiherero-speaking Namibians.⁹ The media activists

⁶1960 Population Census, Vol.1: Social Aspects - All Races. Government Printer: Pretoria, September 1960, p112.

⁷ibid

⁸ibid

⁹Veii notes that they found it very difficult to find people who could write in other vernaculars. Veii's argument is not convincing, as there were many Nama, Damara and Owambo teachers, even within Swanu who could have written or translated articles in these languages. Another aspect is that the founders, journalists, shareholders and directors were Otjiherero-speaking people, except for the first editor, Emil Appolus, who was Nama-speaking.

also pointed out that there was a multi-step flow from readers to the non-readers.¹⁰

All the media activists at this newspaper were Swanu members and/or supporters, and they therefore, appeared to have prioritised the aspirations of this political party to the detriment of others. The "mode of address"¹¹ of the *South West News* represented the voice of Swanu.

The newspaper down-played issues and problems experienced by the people of northern Namibia - the Oshiwambo speaking majority.¹² Issues such as the contract labour system did not feature prominently in the newspaper. The contract labour system was, according to Veii, not a national issue, "it was a tribal or regional issue at that time and did not affect everybody".¹³

¹⁰Both Ngavirue, 1972, pp286, 287 and Emmett, 1987, pp511 - 514) have indicated that the incipient intellectuals used to read and translate newspapers articles to the elders and traditional leaders, during the fifties and the early sixties.

¹¹see Chapter 11

¹²According to the 1960 census the population of the northern areas made up 60,2 per cent of the total population of the country during the 1960s. See p.103

¹³Veii interview, 1994. Veii is ambiguous about what he means by "everybody". The contract labour system affected the Oshiwambo-speaking part of the population, which made up more than half of the population. It is clear from Veii's argument that the newspaper was partisan in its focus on issues, even among issues which affected black people at that time. The *South West News* reported on death and burials of Herero chiefs and headman, which could not be constituted as national issues, while burning issues, such as the contract labour system on which the apartheid capitalism rested, were not touched upon.

The Namibian like the *South West News*, initially set out to be national in outlook and character, and to reach "all the Namibians in all corners of the country and to bring to them news and information which we feel has been denied them in the past"¹⁴, but narrowed its focus to the progressive forces.¹⁵

The Namibian focused on the progressive forces, because of a common objective it shared with these forces, which was to campaign for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435. The target audience of *The Namibian* included the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) Swapo, the pro-Swapo trade unions organised under the NUNW fold, Nanso and the emerging white liberals represented in the Namibian Peace Plan 435 (NPP435). Lister is clear on the forces they targeted:

The Namibian stands on the left side of the political spectrum. It gives news coverage to the left parties and organisations which are ignored by the rest of the press. This makes its role more significant because these groups represent the majority of the country's population.¹⁶

In addition, *The Namibian* focused on the residents of northern Namibia (the so-called war zone), who were the victims of army brutality.¹⁷

¹⁴*The Namibian*, 30 August 1985, p16

¹⁵Lister in an interview noted that *The Namibian* was "preaching to the converted".

¹⁶op cit Krige, 1988, p86

¹⁷The majority of the population, 72 per cent of the total population live in this area, according to the 1991 Population Census. See p10.

At the beginning of April 1988 the newspaper launched a supplement, called *Namibian Focus*, written in Afrikaans and Oshiwambo in order to reach a wider audience, including residents of the north.¹⁸ The newspaper explained its scope of target audience as follows:

We want to entrench ourselves among the Namibians, and become part of their lives. We do, however, feel that it is the majority of the population, the sixty per cent of Namibians who are beyond the 19th parallel, who need us most. These are the people in the far north; those whose daily lives are rent asunder by the war and who are subject to dusk-to-dawn curfews, increasing militarisation, and denial of fundamental rights, such as freedom of movement. But we believe that their - *northerners*'- need to be informed is not incompatible with the needs of other Namibians, particularly those who wish to see an end to the war and a peaceful future accompanied by stability and self-sufficiency.¹⁹

The church press focused on the Christians in general, but each newsletter aimed at members of its denomination and congregation, in particular. Most of these newsletters were written in vernaculars, the only exception was the *CCN Information*, which was written in English.²⁰ The *CCN Information* newsletter targeted the middle-class section of the CCN member churches and the international readership.

¹⁸This contributed to a higher circulation of the newspaper according to Lush and Lister. See Chapter 9. Afrikaans was the lingua franca of the country at that time, while Oshiwambo was the language spoken by the majority of the residents, because Oshiwambo-speaking Namibians made up more than half of the population.

¹⁹*The Namibian*, 30 August 1985, p16. Emphasis added

²⁰see Chapter 9

The community press as we have seen in Chapter 3 focused on members of organisations and groups in civil society. The *Student Voice* targeted the broad student population, both at the university and high school levels.²¹ *The Namibian Worker's* target audiences were both unionised and un-unionised workers.²² However, its specific constituency was members of the emerging unions affiliated to the National Union of the Namibian Workers (NUNW).

Speak Out targeted the black working class and its organisations, including the amateur sport organisations and clubs. *Sister Namibia* focused on the middle-class women in urban settings, women activists and their organisations.²³

Bricks, in contrast, came as a pioneer voice of the emerging NGOs and CBOs.²⁴ It targeted these organisations as well as the ordinary black working class.²⁵ More particularly, the newspaper served as the voice of two civic organisations, the Katutura Resident's Action (KARA) and the Khomasdal Burger Vereniging (KBV).²⁶

²¹Dempers and Katjiuanio interviews

²²Pakleppa interview, 1995

²³Coetzee interview, 1995

²⁴Strauss interview, 1995

²⁵ibid

²⁶See Chapter 3.

The language factor was very crucial in reaching the ordinary black working class. The community press was the most concerned about getting its messages across to its target audience as activists explained that:

We write in the language most working class people can understand, because people react more favourable if one uses their every day lingua franca.²⁷

NEWS SOURCES

The columns of the alternative newspapers were populated by forces on the left of the political spectrum. Since the alternative press set out to cover issues of the marginalised people, its main reliable news sources of information came from this section of the Namibian society.²⁸ Explaining their modus operandi, an activist noted that:

Our method is to write from the perspective of those involved - from the mouths of the people and not necessarily the views of authorities only. This reality is important if we want to set in motion change geared towards people's development.²⁹

This does not mean that the alternative press did not make use of 'official' or the 'known sources', such as government officials, police, army officials and other prominent actors within the dominant bloc. However, as noted above, the most reliable news sources of the alternative press remained sources within the emerging counter-hegemonic bloc. They were political,

²⁷Bricks Year Report, 1987, p13

²⁸Kondombolo interview, 1994.

²⁹Bricks Year Report, 1987, p13

religious, workers, students, feminists and civic leaders who under normal circumstances did not feature prominently in the pages of the mainstream colonial press.³⁰ They comprised leaders of the following groups and organisations: Swanu, Swapo, CCN, Nanso, NPP435, Damara Council, Mbanderu Council, Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Namibia Women's Voice (NWV), the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) and other NGOs and CBOs.

The above-mentioned news sources served as "primary definers"³¹ of some of the issues and events which the media activists addressed and disseminated in their alternative publications.

The news sources (progressive forces) and the media activists shared a common agenda, which was the independence of the country, and this confirms Megwa's (1992) assumption that there is sometimes a "similarity of perception of issues of importance" between news sources and media organisations.³² The alternative press articulated the interests of these sources and their constituencies.³³

The alternative press, and particularly the grassroots press, relied on secondary sources for its information. Activists identified books, publications and documents as important sources

³⁰Strauss interview, 1995

³¹See Hall, 1978, pp57 - 60

³²1992, p10

³³see chapter 11

of information.³⁴ They further maintained that the whole struggle waged by the oppressed Namibian people formed the raw material of information and content of the alternative press.³⁵ Issues, conditions and situations experienced by the masses served as important source of information.³⁶ In this way the alternative press reflected, while at the same time tried to shape and broaden, the views and perception of its target audience and news sources.

SUMMARY

The media activists had a specific audience for whom they produced and disseminated their messages. This was the section of the Namibian colonised population to whom they were organically linked. However, some of the alternative publications addressed particular groups, such as women, workers, students and ordinary grassroots people, within the broader spectrum of the colonised masses.

The primary news sources of the alternative press were drawn from the leadership of the progressive movement and from individual activists within this movement and from other "unknown"³⁷ sources within black community. These sources came to shape and influence the political agenda of the media activists. Generally

³⁴Coetzee, Katjiuanjo and Strauss interviews.

³⁵ibid

³⁶ibid

³⁷These were ordinary people the alternative press relied on and consulted for information and news tips.

this was achieved by accepting the sources' definition and explanation of events and issues and the dissemination thereof in their publications. However, a symbiotic relationship existed between the news sources and the media activists. While the sources relied on the media activists and their publications for the dissemination and popularisation of their views and ideas, the media activists on the other hand depended on the sources for the raw material of their media products.

SECTION THREE

ECONOMICS

CHAPTER EIGHT: FUNDING AND ADVERTISEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the funding and advertisement situation of the alternative press. None of the alternative newspapers had sound financial backing like their mainstream counterparts, and many, if not all, depended on external donor funding. In addition, these newspapers did not attract advertisements from the established business, which has been the backbone of newspaper revenue, for reasons we shall see below.

A number of factors contributed to this situation. One of these factors was the alternative press's rejection of profit. Its motive was political rather than profit making.¹ With regard to the church press the overriding motive was to spread the gospel and not to make money.

The second reason was ideological. The alternative press could not manage to attract advertisements from the white business community because of its alignment with the pro-independence and anti-government forces.² These businesses were constituted in the dominant hegemony and were in most cases hostile towards the forces propagating social change.

¹Journalists and activists interviewed were all in agreement with this point.

²ibid

ADVERTISEMENTS

Commenting on the attitudes of the white business with regard to advertising in a black-owned or an anti-government newspaper as far back as the 1960s, Ngavirue says,

Businesses at that time were dominated by the whites, but the whites would not want to advertise in the *South West News* because they did not want to be associated with a black-run newspaper which carried political commentaries.³

The wariness of white businesses to advertise in anti-government newspapers was difficult to overcome and this remained the pattern from 1960 to independence in 1990. *The Namibian* experienced the same predicament. White businesses refused to advertise in *The Namibian* because of its pro-independence stance. Lister notes that some white businesses who dared to advertise in her newspaper were intimidated by the authorities.⁴ At one point the army threatened to withdraw its tender from a local chain supermarket which advertised in *The Namibian*.⁵

No advertising expenditure figures are available because Namibia did not have its own independent market research body. The South

³Ngavirue interview, 1992. Ngavirue recalled that one company gave them advertisements, but after discovering that the newspaper was making political commentaries, decided to stop its advertisements. See Appendix D

⁴Lister interview, 1995. *The Namibian*, Friday, October 11, 1985 on page 10 carried a blank 10cm x 2 columns space with a question mark inside. The caption notes that: This space is sponsored by a local businessman who would like to advertise in *The Namibian*, but who is afraid of intimidation that may result.

⁵Lush, 1989 : 95

African Market Research Africa (MRA), like the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) catered only for the mainstream press.

Some of the grassroots press did not carry advertisements as a matter of principle. *Bricks* for instance decided to carry advertisements from the small black businesses only⁶, while *Sister Namibia* refused to take any advertisement from any quarter, because of fear of "sacrificing its independence".⁷

Among the church papers it was *Immanuel* and *Angelus* which carried a very limited number of advertisements. These newsletters were selective in taking advertisements. They could not for instance carry advertisements for alcohol and cigarettes.⁸ However, with regard to the *Immanuel*, advertisements stopped in the 1970s because of increasing commentaries on political issues⁹, while advertisements in the *Angelus* were significantly reduced as from the middle of the 1970s, for the same reasons.¹⁰

FUNDING

In the light of the lack of advertisements, the alternative press had to rely on the sales and subscriptions. However, Gallagher (1981) reminds us that, "the cost of production and distribution

⁶Strauss and Kondombolo interviews

⁷Both Rogger and Coetzee confirmed this point in separate interviews with the author.

⁸Wellerdieck, 1994

⁹Tjerije interview, 1994

¹⁰This conclusion was reached after the author had studied the back copies of this church newsletter.

can rarely be covered by sales and subscriptions".¹¹ The lack of the business acumen among activists responsible for distribution was another factor which contributed to the poor financial position of the community press.¹² External donors became, thus, the main source of funding for the alternative press, except for the *South West News*.

The majority of these papers were funded by donor agencies: *The Namibian* was funded by the European Community¹³, *Bricks* by Oxfam UK, the World Council of Churches through its Rural Development Programme, the European Community and private individuals abroad¹⁴.

Sister Namibia was funded by Oxfam Canada and the West German NGOs¹⁵, while the *Student Voice* was initially funded by the

¹¹Gallagher, 1981, p139

¹²From the interviews the author conducted with journalists and activists working in the alternative press it appeared that no proper control over the selling of most of these newspapers was exercised, with the exception of *The Namibian*, the *South West News* and the church newsletters. Katjiuanjo, for instance, said the *Student Voice* did not receive much of the money sold from its branches. Pakleppa said the situation with *The Namibian Worker* was the same. The author also knows from working at *Bricks* that the same happened at this newspaper. Thus, with regard to the community press, much of the revenue from selling was not recovered. One reason was the non-profit nature of these newspapers. The main motive was to take the message to the readers rather than expecting much in return from them in terms of financial contribution.

¹³Lister interview, 1995. Lister added that they also received money from the Scandinavian countries, however, the bulk of their funding came from the European Community.

¹⁴Strauss and Kondombolo interviews

¹⁵Rogger interview, 1994

Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) before receiving foreign funding.¹⁶ *Speak Out* was initially funded by a local white-owned foundation¹⁷ established to assist in the upliftment of the social situation in the townships. However, external donor funding was secured from a German NGO, the Frederiech Ebert Foundation.¹⁸ *The Namibian Worker* was established and run with a grant from a Dutch church group, the Inter-Kerkelijke Organisatie Voor Ontwikkelingssamewerking (the Inter-Church Organisation for Development Co-operation - ICCO).¹⁹

Donor agencies in general had certain conditions attached to the funds they donated.²⁰ With regard to *Bricks*, donors wanted the books to be independently audited regularly. Some suggested that the paper should also address environmental issues in addition to community issues.²¹

With *The Namibian*, according to a senior reporter of this newspaper at that time, donors insisted that the newspaper should train as many black journalists as possible.²² Donors funding the *Namibian Worker* and the *Student Voice* set as a condition a

¹⁶Dempers and Katjiuonjo interviews.

¹⁷The Private Sector Foundation.

¹⁸Ouseb paper, 1994

¹⁹Pakleppa interview, 1995

²⁰Strauss interview, 1995

²¹ibid

²²Shipanga interview, 1995

specific print-run per edition and demanded regular appearance of the newspaper.²³

The church press was mainly funded indirectly by international church groups. Some of the Namibian's 'indigenous' or 'independent' churches maintained links with their "mother" churches in Europe. These mother churches served as the main sources of funding and until today, by contributing towards the maintenance of the Namibian independent churches. The *Immanuel* during its initial years was funded by the Rhenish Church in Germany, which contributed an amount of N\$2,000 annually for the operation of the newsletter.²⁴ In 1963 the Christian Literature Fund of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa donated a similar amount of N\$2,000 to the *Immanuel*.²⁵

The money donated by the 'mother' churches to the local churches was used to fund various church activities, including the church press. However, channelling church funds to the newsletters was one of the difficulties the church press had to cope with, as Tjerije found out.

Funding was another problem of the church press. The church had to struggle to divide its resources and *Immanuel* did not get a large portion of it, as there were other priorities of the church. This does not say that *Immanuel* was low on the priority list, but was certainly not the number one priority of the church.²⁶

²³Katjiuonjo and Pakleppa interviews, 1995

²⁴*Immanuel*, Vol.2, No.11, August 1963, p16

²⁵ibid, p16

²⁶Tjerije interview, 1994

What facilitated the smooth running of the church press, however, was the fact that most of the churches did have their own printing shops, and money was only needed for newsprint, distribution and salaries of staff.²⁷ Churches also shared resources, such as printing facilities.

The *South West News* was not funded by donors, but by owners with little resources at their disposal. During the 1960s donor assistance was unheard of in Namibia.²⁸ The lack of external funding coupled with the reluctance of the white business community to advertise in the newspaper rendered the *South West News* bankrupt from the word go. By the seventh edition the intellectuals could feel the pinch of the financial burden and they appealed to readers for financial assistance.

We appeal to our readers to send us donations to keep us going. We have been running at a loss ever since we started and have now reached a point where we may be forced to stop printing your paper. This is sad news at a time when the paper is only beginning to arouse the interest of our people in places as far afield as Owamboland and Kaokoland. Let alone the towns far distant from Windhoek, e.g. Outjo, Tsumeb, Oranjemund, etc. The smallest donation will be welcome. Send your help to the African Publishing Company. PO Box 749, Windhoek.²⁹

In addition the directors of the company also appealed for financial assistance in the form of loans "on reasonable

²⁷Wellerdieck interview, 1994

²⁸Ngavirue interview, 1992

²⁹The *South West News*, Saturday, August 6, 1960, Vol.1, No.7, p2

terms".³⁰ Since financial assistance was not forthcoming the directors devised measures to save the newspaper from folding. However, these were not successful since they needed funds which readers and supporters could ill afford.³¹ The following alternatives were proposed:

- to run a mobile cinema
- to undertake transport service between the township and the town
- to embark upon other businesses in order to fund the newspaper
- to start by-activities such as cultural centres and clubs
- to buy a printing machine in order to reduce printing costs³²

COVER PRICES OF THE PROGRESSIVE PRESS

The alternative newspapers were sold at very low prices in order to be afforded by their poor target audience. The average income of a household during the late 1970s and the early 1980s was estimated at between N\$36 and N\$45 per month in the northern areas while in towns it was about N\$200.³³ Domestic workers during the same period earned an average wage of N\$25 per month.³⁴ The average income of a coloured household was estimated at N\$345, while that of whites averaged N\$835.³⁵

³⁰Ngavirue documents

³¹Ngavirue interview, 1992

³²Ngavirue documents

³³see Namibia: Perspectives for National Reconstruction and Development, UNIN, 1986, p859

³⁴ibid

³⁵ibid

The *South West News* for instance was sold at six pence per copy.³⁶ The initial price of *The Namibian* was 50 cents per copy, but as from January 1987 the price was increased to 70 cents per copy.³⁷ This price was again reduced to 50 cents per copy as from 1 April 1989, when the newspaper became a daily.

Speak Out and *Bricks* were initially sold at 20 cents per copy, but this increased to 30 cents and then to 50 cents at the time of independence.³⁸ *The Namibian Worker*, the *Student Voice* and *Sister* were all sold at 50 cents per copy each from their establishment to the time of the independence of the country.³⁹

The church newsletters were also sold at similar low prices. In the 1960s when they were established, they were sold at five cents per copy.⁴⁰ These increased gradually and by the time of independence they were sold at 50 cents per copy.⁴¹

SUMMARY

The chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the main driving force behind the alternative press was a political motive rather than other factors like ego or economic gain. Most of the alternative

³⁶Ngavirue interview, 1992

³⁷*The Namibian*, Friday, January 19, 1987

³⁸These cover prices were obtained from the back copies of the alternative newspapers.

³⁹ibid

⁴⁰ibid

⁴¹ibid

papers, with the exception of the *South West News* were funded by foreign donors. Where some of the papers might have shown a tendency towards advertisements, the reason was to achieve self sufficiency, in case donor funds dried up, rather than for profit. Some of them never considered soliciting advertisements, while the reverse was also true: white businesses, with allegiance to the dominant hegemonic order did not consider advertising in these highly politicised publications. There were a few exceptions, however.

Moreover the denial of advertisements by the white businesses was a blessing in disguise. This enabled the alternative press to advance its political agenda without interference from advertisers.

The alternative newspapers were sold at very low prices so as to enable the target audiences to afford them. Here again the overriding consideration was not how many were sold, but rather how many had reached the target audience and circulated further. Thus, the protagonists and media practitioners of the alternative press did not bother about the income per se, but focused on reaching their target audience.

CHAPTER NINE : CIRCULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

INTRODUCTION

After having examined the funding and the advertisements of the alternative press, and how these enabled it to operate outside the dominant bloc, we now turn to the circulation and distribution. The present chapter will briefly discuss how the alternative press circulated and was distributed in order to reach the target audience. It will also highlight problems encountered in the distribution process.

CIRCULATION

The alternative press had a very low circulation as table 9.1 below indicates. The low circulation restricted its penetration into peri-urban and rural areas. The reasons for this state of affairs needs closer attention.

Table 9.1: Circulation¹ of the Alternative Press

NAME	LANGUAGE	FREQUENCY	PRINT-RUN
<i>South West News</i>	English Afrikaans Otjiherero	Fortnightly	2000

¹Figures contained in this table were obtained from the circulation/distribution lists of these newspapers and from interviews with activists, but not from independent sources. The country did not have a body monitoring the circulation of its newspapers. The South African Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) focused only on the mainstream colonial press in Namibia.

<i>The Namibian</i>	English Afrikaans Oshiwambo	Weekly ²	5000 ³ - 10 000
<i>Bricks</i>	Afrikaans English	Monthly	2000
<i>Student Voice</i>	English Afrikaans	Monthly	5000
<i>Sister</i>	English Afrikaans	Monthly	250 - 1000 ⁴
<i>Speak Out</i>	English	Monthly	1 000
<i>Namibian Worker</i>	Afrikaans English	Monthly	10 000 - 15 000
<i>Omukwetu</i>	Oshiwambo	Monthly	10 000
<i>Omukuni</i>	Oshiwambo	Monthly	7 000 ⁵
<i>Angelus</i>	Afrikaans Otjiherero Nama/Damara	Monthly	4 000 ⁶

²The *Namibian* became a daily on the 1st April 1989, the day the Resolution 435 was implemented.

³While the initial print-run was 5000 it doubled to 10 000 after the newspaper launched a supplement, *Focus*, published in Afrikaans and Oshiwambo. See Lush, 1989 : 91

⁴The print-run of the first three editions was 250 each, but by independence in 1990 this increased to 1000 per edition.

⁵Sr Wellerdieck told me in an interview that the print-run of the newsletter was 7 000 copies per edition, however, a readership survey conducted by Father Ph Pollitzer (OMI) on behalf of the Catholic Church's Media Council set the circulation figure as 6 519. See *Angelus*, December 1989, p11.

⁶Again Sr Wellerdieck estimated the print-run at 4 000 while the survey set the circulation at 3 676, see *Angelus*, December 1989, p.11.

<i>Immanuel</i>	Afrikaans Otjiherero Nama/Damara	Monthly	1 500 - 2 000
<i>CCN Information</i>	English	Monthly	2 000

Financial constraints⁷, the high illiteracy of the target audience⁸, the lack of manpower, high printing costs and the lack of other vital resources and facilities were among the main limiting factors identified by the activists interviewed. These factors combined, forced the protagonists of this press to limit the print-run.⁹

The Namibian press is urban-based.¹⁰ Most of the newspapers are distributed in urban centres. The alternative press was not an

⁷see Chapter 8

⁸Before independence the illiteracy rate was set at 65 per cent and this figure was unwittingly taken by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in its Booklet titled: "Namibia: Facts and Figures" published in 1991. However, according to the 1991 Population Census published in 1994 the illiteracy rate is set much lower, estimated at 35 per cent for people aged 15 years and above, taking a four year schooling as an indication of literacy. Using self reporting (direct testing) as a proxy then only 24 per cent Namibians reported during the 1991 census that they could not read and write. Whether the methods used during this census are accurate or not, is not of major concern to this study. However, what is of concern is whether persons with a four year schooling will be able to read and understand mediated media messages or not. This is not, however, within the scope of this thesis.

⁹This view was expressed by the activists interviewed, such as Coetzee, Kondombolo and Rogger.

¹⁰This is the case until today (1996).

exception, save for the church press. This meant that most of the Namibian newspapers are only available to a small percentage of the population because only 28 per cent of the population is urbanized while 72 per cent lives in the rural areas.¹¹

Another conspicuous reality revealed by the 1991 Population Census is that Namibia lacks a newspaper reading culture. It is estimated that about 75 per cent of Namibian urban households do not buy newspapers, while the proportional percentage in the rural areas is 87.¹² With regard to the electronic media the situation is as follows: 60 per cent of the country's population own a radio and only 15 per cent have television sets, while in the rural areas people with television sets are about 3 per cent.¹³ These figures give us an indication of the general state of penetration of media messages into the Namibian society.

If the urban-rural population distribution figures mentioned above are to be trusted, coupled with the low print-run of the alternative press, then we can conclude that the alternative press had a very narrow reach. A study conducted five years after independence contains interesting data. The study was conducted under the auspices of the umbrella body of the Namibian

¹¹See the 1991 Population Census, published by the Central Statistics Office of the National Planning Commission, on p10.

¹²ibid

¹³ibid

NGOs, the Namibia Non-governmental Organisation Forum (NANGOF) in 1995.¹⁴

Table: 9,2¹⁵ Knowledge of the Existence of these Newspapers:

NEWSPAPER		URBAN	PERI-URBAN	RURAL
<i>Bricks</i>	Yes	20,3	6,5	4,9
	No	79,7	93,5	95,1
<i>Sister</i>	Yes	12,2	7,4	5,8
	No	87,8	92,6	94,2
<i>Student Voice</i>	Yes	23,2	16,2	15,5
	No	76,8	83,8	84,5
<i>Nam. Worker</i>	Yes	44,3	30,2	23,1
	No	55,7	69,8	76,9

The foregoing table illustrates the circulation of the community newspapers.¹⁶ These papers were slightly better distributed in urban settings rather than in peri-urban and rural areas. The readership of these community newspapers showed the same pattern as the table below indicates.

¹⁴see A Study on NGO Media Outreach conducted by the Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Corporation (SIAPAC) in conjunction with the Namibian Non-Governmental Organisation (NANGOF), January 1995.

¹⁵The figures in the table were obtained from the above-mentioned study on page 34.

¹⁶The reader is reminded that these figures indicate the circulation pattern of the community press for the period after independence and does not provide us with a true reflection of the pre-independence era. The figures, nevertheless, provide us a glimpse of the penetration of the community press in the Namibian society irrespective of the period. No similar study was done before Namibia's independence.

Table: 9,3¹⁷ Readership. Ever read these newspapers:

NEWSPAPER		URBAN	PERI-URBAN	RURAL
<i>Bricks</i>	Yes	34,1	32,1	4,8
	Yes, in Past	13,2	7,1	4,8
	No	52,7	60,7	90,5
<i>Sister</i>	Yes	30,9	33,3	34,6
	Yes, in Past	7,3	9,1	11,5
	No	61,8	57,6	53,8
<i>St. Voice</i>	Yes	24,8	26,0	43,8
	Yes, in Past	14,3	19,2	11,0
	No	61,0	54,8	45,9
<i>Nam. Worker</i>	Yes	18,7	24,4	28,4
	Yes, in Past	20,7	23,7	15,7
	No	60,6	51,9	55,9

Some factors could have contributed to this. Firstly the independence itself was a crucial factor in changing the people's desires and needs that were addressed by the community press prior to independence. The return of Namibian exiles might also have been a contributing factor to the increased number of people who did not know about the existence of the community papers and who never read them. Shortly before and after independence, two newspapers, *Namibia Today* (a Swapo mouthpiece) and *New Era* (a government-owned newspaper) were established which came to address the post-independence issues.¹⁸

¹⁷Taken from p36 of the study.

¹⁸This does not mean that the alternative press including the community newspapers were still locked in the past. They changed their content to focus on new pressing issues such as economic development, while still stressing the importance of civil society in the new dispensation. However, many of the returned exiles related more to *Namibia Today* and *New Era*, since these two papers represented the Swapo voice which they were accustomed to in exile.

While it can be argued that the alternative press had a narrow penetration into the Namibian society, the media activists maintained that the influence of the alternative press was remarkable, in terms of reaching the influential leaders of the progressive movement and in terms of the multi-step flow of messages from readers to non-readers.¹⁹

DISTRIBUTION

Some structural impediments have contributed to overall distribution problems faced by the alternative press. Geographically, Namibia is a vast country with a small but scattered population.²⁰ Distances between settlements are vast and this has led to an expensive transportation system. There were no organised distribution agencies and most categories of newspapers had to rely on private companies (couriers) which were expensive.²¹

The alternative press used a number of distribution methods, both conventional and unconventional, ranging from street corner

¹⁹Strauss and Kondombolo interviews. These propositions cannot be verified independently as no audience studies were done during this period.

²⁰According to the 1991 census, Namibia's total area is 823 144 square kilometres with a population of 1,4 million. The population density is estimated at 1,7 persons per square kilometre, one of the lowest in the world. See p.10. The area excludes Walvis Bay, because before independence this town was regarded as part of South Africa and fell under the Cape Province administration.

²¹see Lush, 1989: 91

sales, mailing to subscribers, shops sales to door-to-door sales made on foot.

The church newsletters were mainly sold at congregations in urban and rural areas. The newsletters would be dispatched by post or with church vehicles to the different towns and villages where they were sold to members on Sundays at church services.²² There were also a number of subscribers inside and outside the country who received the church newsletters by mail.²³

The *South West News* had very limited outlets. It was sold mainly by school children in the urban centres. Only two white-owned shops sold the newspaper.²⁴ Very few copies were sent to contact persons in the reserves (rural areas) for distribution.²⁵ The main consumers in the reserves were teachers, nurses, clerks and petty traders.²⁶

There were a few subscribers especially in Windhoek. Vei recalls that they had to deliver copies of the newspaper to

²²Amutenja interview, 1995

²³ibid

²⁴One was the Swakopmund Buchhandlung in Swakopmund, while the other was a German-owned bookshop in Otjiwarongo, owned by a certain Mr Dreikoning, according to Ngavirue.

²⁵Mostly in the so-called police zone. Vei and Ngavirue were in agreement that very few copies of the newspaper reached Owamboland while Kavango and Caprivi areas did not receive this newspaper at all.

²⁶Ngavirue interview, 1992

street addresses "on foot after work".²⁷ A limited number of copies were sent to South Africa and abroad.²⁸

The Namibian mainly used conventional methods of distribution, like the mainstream press. The newspaper was sold mainly in shops in the urban areas as well as in the far north. It was also mailed to subscribers locally, in the southern African region and overseas.

The distribution process of the community (grassroots) press was unique in that it was not only a way of disseminating news, but also a process through which the activists could assess and evaluate the impact of their messages.²⁹ One such method best used by the grassroots press both in Namibia and in South Africa was the "door-to-door" sales.

With the door-to-door distribution method, activists ensured that they talked to their target groups to solicit comments on the content and at the same time assess what were the issues affecting the people which needed to be covered in the following editions.³⁰ The distribution process was, thus, both a news gathering and evaluation process.

²⁷Veii interview, 1994.

²⁸ibid

²⁹The author was part of this process and he is expressing this experience here.

³⁰ibid

Activists at *Bricks* used this method as an attempt to secure a two-way communication process.³¹ Through this the activists sought to secure grassroots participation in the broader communication process and thereby building grassroots democracy (bottom-up approach) and to mobilise the of civil society.³²

As noted above the progressive-alternative press in South Africa subscribed to the same distribution method as well. Tomasseli, on the South African context, notes that the progressive-alternative press involved the community "not only at the formal level of representation on governing councils, but at the level of the readers themselves".³³

The couriers who delivered papers door to door were asked to get to know their readers, listen to their responses, and find out what they wanted to see in the paper. A relationship of trust was thus built up between publishers and readers and a social dialogue attempted.³⁴

While *Bricks'* activists favoured the door-to-door method of distribution for reasons just outlined, this method proved to be cumbersome.³⁵ It was time-consuming and hindered activists from carrying out other activities.³⁶ It could not be done on a large scale and therefore confined activists to known readers,

³¹ibid

³²ibid

³³Tomaselli, 1991, p166

³⁴ibid

³⁵Author's experience.

³⁶ibid

the "converted" ones, instead of broadening their readership scope.³⁷

In addition *Bricks* was distributed through shops, especially in the townships, while a limited number of the white-owned shops in town sold the newspaper as well. The newspaper was also sent to "contact" persons in the outlying towns and villages, who distributed them.³⁸ The contact persons further served as "correspondents" who contributed articles and news tips to the head office.³⁹

A number of copies were exchanged with the progressive-alternative publications in South Africa, such as *Grassroots*, *Saamstaan*, *Speak*, *Molo Songololo* and others. Copies of the newspaper were also mailed to subscribers locally and overseas, while donors and local libraries received complimentary copies.

The principal method used to distribute *Sister Namibia*, especially during its initial phase, was the selling of the newsletter at street corners and at women's meetings.⁴⁰ These methods enabled the activists to propagate their organisation and

³⁷These are some of the limitations of the door-to-door distribution method the author experienced while as an activist at *Bricks*.

³⁸The effectiveness of the method could not be independently assessed, because no readership surveys were contacted by media activists, neither in urban nor in the peri-urban or rural areas.

³⁹Author's experience.

⁴⁰Rogger and Coetzee interviews.

the newsletter.⁴¹ Gradually the activists canvassed subscribers and the newsletter was then mailed to them.⁴² It was later sold in shops in urban centres as well.

The rest of the grassroots newsletters were sold in mostly black-owned shops and also distributed through NGOs, CBOs, churches and other progressive organisations. The *Student Voice* and *The Namibian Worker*, in addition, were distributed through the branches of Nanso and the NUNW-affiliated labour organisations, respectively.

SUMMARY

The penetration of the alternative press into the Namibian society was hampered by factors such as financial constraints, the high illiteracy rate of the target audience, lack of manpower, high printing costs, to mention but some. The hostility of some of the white Namibians towards this press, especially the businesses, should also be added as another contributing factor. While the reach might have been narrow, the possible influence was something else altogether, judging by political and community activities unleashed directly and indirectly by the alternative press together with other actors in civil society. This, however, is the subject matter of a different study.

⁴¹ibid

⁴²ibid

The alternative press used a combination of both conventional and unconventional methods of distribution. The door-to-door method enabled contact between the media activists and their target audience. Through this the media activists could assess the impact of their messages, while soliciting comments at the same time on the pressing issues which needed to be addressed. Through this method the community media activists sought to initiate a two-way communication process.

SECTION FOUR

DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY

CHAPTER TEN: CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

The alternative press exhibited an extraordinary richness of content in terms of issues addressed and events covered. These issues were, according to the protagonists of this press, relevant to their audience but marginalised, if not totally ignored, by the mainstream colonial press.¹

Broadly speaking the main areas of coverage included: general news stories and informative articles; sports and entertainment and cultural stories; readers' letters; advice and opinion columns; poetry; labour matters; gender issues; economic issues; health matters; education and literacy; housing and urbanisation; social problems; political (constitutional) matters; community news/activities; foreign news; analysis, reviews and critique; personality profiles and life experiences; religious matters and editorial commentaries.

This does not mean that the mainstream colonial media did not cover most of these themes. The difference was the "angle". The mainstream colonial media approached these issues and events from the perspective of the dominant bloc, while the alternative press covered and addressed them from the perspective of the oppositional forces.

¹see *Bricks* Year Report, 1987: 13

SOME GENERAL THEMES

LETTERS, ADVICE AND OPINION

The intellectuals invited their constituencies to write letters to express issues and problems facing them.² The letter page served as a 'safety valve' and an important medium through which voices from within the 'oppressed communities' could be heard. The letters were written in English, Afrikaans and in the vernaculars.

The intellectuals provided their target audience with advice on burning issues and problems faced by their communities. Advice was given for example on housing, unemployment, health, labour and legal matters. Cartoons were also used to illustrate some of the problems and ways to solve them.³

The alternative press carried opinion columns in which the target audience and the primary news sources could air their opinions on issues which affected them and the country as a whole.

POEMS

Poetry was another medium through which the 'inner voices' of the 'oppressed people' could be expressed.⁴ Most alternative publications carried poems with the exception of the *South West News* and *The Namibian*. Apart from their aesthetic value, the

²Almost all the alternative papers encouraged readers to write letters.

³see Appendix E

⁴see Appendix F

poems addressed socio-economic and political situations in which the black people found themselves and conveyed messages of hope for them.

SPORTS

Sports coverage by most of the alternative papers was biased towards the marginalised activities (and sport codes) of the junior and amateur clubs in the townships.⁵ *The Namibian* was an exception as it covered a variety of sport events including those which had been traditionally associated with the dominant bloc, like rugby, hockey and cricket. Newsletters, like *Student Voice*, *Sister and Namibian Worker* hardly covered sport events, while the *Angelus* was the only church newsletter that featured sport articles, but confined its reporting to the activities of the Roman Catholic Church schools.

FOREIGN NEWS

In order to break the isolation imposed on the country and its people by the colonial government and to broaden the world-view of its target audience, some of the alternative newspapers carried foreign news bulletins.⁶ *The South West News* focused on the progress of African states towards independence and on the developments in the recently independent states. The church press covered activities and developments in the church on the

⁵Activists felt that junior and amateur sport activities were marginalised by the mainstream press and the activists took upon themselves to popularise these. The author, being part of this experience, was one of the activists who held this opinion.

⁶These being the *South West News*, *The Namibian* and the church newsletters,

international front. It focused on the activities of the World Council of Churches, World Lutheran Federation and also carried international news articles from the London-based Namibian Communication Centre. *Angelus*, for instance, had a column called "Catholic World Mirror", focusing on international developments in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Namibian carried a section titled: "News Flashes - News Around The World" or sometimes called: "International Briefs - The World This Week", focusing on important news items which hit the headlines during the week. It also set out to connect the Namibian people to their fellow Africans by reporting what was taking place in the rest of the continent, without neglecting developments at the international scene. It stated:

We also feel that Namibians should be conscious that they are part of Africa, and hopefully a country which will one day set an example, both to Africa and the rest of the world.⁷

The Namibian carried African news. One column titled: "Leaders of Africa", provided readers with profiles of African leaders, focusing on their roles in the liberation struggles and developments of their respective countries. A third column, the "Africa Page" highlighted issues and events in the rest of the continent. This page, in addition, carried reviews of some of the major newspapers on the continent.

⁷*The Namibian*, August 30, 1985, p16

The Namibian paid considerable attention to South Africa and it set aside a special page (pages sometimes) on the political developments in that country. The newspaper highlighted issues such as the state of emergency, detention, strikes, mass stay-aways and the violence committed by the state against the people. It also intensively covered issues and activities of the Democratic Movement (the United Democratic Front) during the 1980s in South Africa.

ENTERTAINMENT

The alternative press, also carried entertainment articles. The *South West News* featured social activities and functions, including dances and beauty competitions in the black townships during the 1960s. The community press focused on cultural activities, including community theatres, while *The Namibian*, featured television guides, theatre performances and information on musical hit parades, videos, movies and book reviews.

PERSONALITY PROFILES

The intellectuals set out to popularise prominent activists amongst the "oppressed masses". This was done through columns which carried profiles of leading individuals involved in the struggles and development activities benefitting the broader masses. *Sister Namibia* carried a column titled: "Women on the Move", which gave profiles of women, who according to the

magazine, were helping to "rewrite history".⁸ These were activists involved in the struggles for women's emancipation.

The Namibian carried a section titled: "People's Page", which featured people who made headlines in the news during the course of the week. *Speak Out* carried a column focusing on community activists involved in the development projects.⁹ In addition *Speak Out* carried a column focusing on female activists titled: "Women's Activists". This column popularised female activists involved in the emancipation of the Namibian women.¹⁰

The Namibian Worker, focused on "workers' experience". Ordinary workers related their daily experience at the workplace: the unsafe conditions under which they worked; the starvation wages they received and the harassment they endured from the bosses.

THE SOUTH WEST NEWS

The *South West News* carried the following themes:

- A1 - General interest news
- A2 - Community news
- A3 - Education
- A4 - Columns
- A5 - Political commentaries

⁸The first two editions of the magazine ran a column titled: "Fighting women: Then and Now", which provided profiles of women activists. This column was renamed "Women on the Move" as from the third edition.

⁹See *Speak Out*, December 1985, pp4,5.

¹⁰See for instance *Speak Out*, April 1986, p16.

Under the general interest news (A1) the *South West News* featured news stories of the time: issues such as new developments at the United Nations concerning the territory.¹¹ Well covered were United Nations Trustee Committee meetings and submissions before the Trustee Committee by indigenous Namibian petitioners.¹² The newspaper also kept its readers informed about forced removals, and the introduction of separate residential areas¹³; developments on education; pass laws and deportations of black people to the reserves. One such article titled: "Deportation! Deportations!", noted that:

A reign of terror characterised by arrests, pass refusals, dismissals from jobs, prohibitions and deportation orders are now prevalent in the main towns of South West Africa. The government through its Local Authorities is now quite determined to hasten the drive of Africans out of the urban areas.¹⁴

Other issues covered were increases in rent and important announcements by the Windhoek Town Council with regard to the black residents.¹⁵ The *South West News* exposed police intimidation campaigns against black people aimed at forcing them to move from the Windhoek Old Location to the segregated (apartheid) township of Katutura. One such article titled: "Location Police Busy", appeared in the launch edition. It said:

¹¹See for instance the edition of August 6, 1960, Vol.1, No.7, p1

¹²See June 25, 1960, p1 and also September, 1960, Vol.1, No.9, p1.

¹³May 14, 1960, p1

¹⁴*South West News*, Saturday, 6th August 1960, Vol.1, No.7, p1.

¹⁵March 5, 1960, p1 and September 3, 1960, Vol.1, No.9, p5

During the past few weeks the location police launched an intensive campaign against the residents of the Windhoek Location. Every morning at half past five sleeping residents are awakened by the police who sniff at alcohol, passes and 'illegal visitors' in the location.

The police also stop people on their way to work demanding to see their employment contracts. It is your own problem if you forget this document at home, or if it is with your employer.

In one example a man was arrested while on his way to a public toilet for not carrying his pass. His explanation that the document was at his house did not help. He was then taken to the municipality offices. His family followed him with the pass which was in order. Notwithstanding this he was fined for not possessing a pass.¹⁶

In what was seen as another intimidation campaign, a para-military force, the 150-strong active citizen force, the Regiment Windhoek, conducted 'mock battles' in the outskirts of Windhoek in what was regarded as an attempt to frighten the people and thus force them to move to the Katutura township.¹⁷ These 'mock battles' were conducted at night and involved real weapons and ammunition.¹⁸ The *South West News* reported this incident in full, noting that:

Reports have reached our office that frightened residents of the Old Windhoek Location streamed into the municipal offices to register for Katutura following the roar of guns in mock 'battles' by the Regiment Windhoek early on Wednesday morning.¹⁹

¹⁶*South West News*, Saturday, 5th March 1960, Vol.1, No.1, p2.

¹⁷*South West News*, Saturday, 23rd July 1960, Vol.1, No.6, p1.

¹⁸ibid

¹⁹ibid, p1

The black petitioners exploited these incidents to the full in their submissions before the United Nations Trustee Committee.²⁰ These in turn orchestrated fierce debates in the United Nations chambers and sparked off verbal ostracism and condemnation of the Pretoria government by the United Nations member states.²¹

Community news (A2) consisted of marriages, deaths and burials of "important people" in the black community, including headmen and chiefs in the reserves.²² Other issues covered included important anniversaries and memorial services.²³ Education (A3) was one of the important areas of the newspaper coverage.²⁴ Announcements of bursaries awarded were highlighted.²⁵ The newspaper monitored the development of education in the country and the regime's plans to introduce Bantu Education. It also covered activities of the black teachers' association, the South West Africa African Teachers' Association (SWAATA).

The *South West News* ran regular columns (A4) as well. One column titled: "When you are a farmer", carried basic agricultural

²⁰Ngavirue interview

²¹ibid

²²See for instance July 23, 1960, p2; June 11, Vol.1, No.3, p1.

²³See for instance September 3, 1960, p4

²⁴See for instance March 5, 1960, p2; July 1960, p2 and July 9, 1960, Vol.1, No.5, p1.

²⁵See for instance March 5, 1960, pp1,4.

information set to help communal farmers in the reserves.²⁶ The column was written in Otjiherero. Another column titled "Glance At Our Africa" appeared in English, Afrikaans and Otjiherero, and informed readers about developments in the rest of the continent.²⁷

A third column titled "African Writers" sought to introduce African writers and their works to the readers.²⁸ This column was a contribution by the editor of the German newspaper, the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Mr Ferdinand Lempp.²⁹ The column appeared in English only.

In addition to these three columns the newspaper ran an educational article which was delivered in two editions on the work and functions of the Advisory Committee, appearing under the heading: "What is Non-European Advisory Committee".³⁰

Lastly, the *South West News* carried political commentaries (A5) on important political developments in the country. It also

²⁶See May 14, 1960, p4 and June 25, 1960, p4

²⁷This column appeared in the following editions: June 11, 1960, Vol.1, No.3, p3; June 25, 1960, Vol.1, No.4, p3; July 9, 1960, Vol.1, No.5, p3; July 23, 1960, Vol.1, No.6, p3; August 6, 1960, Vol.1, No.7, p3; August 20, 1960, Vol.1, No.8, p3; and September 3, 1960, Vol.1, No.9, p3.

²⁸This column appeared in the following editions: June 11, 1960, Vol.1, No.3, p4; July 9, 1960, Vol.1, No.5, p3 and July 23, 1960, Vol.1, No.6, p3

²⁹Ngavirue interview

³⁰This article appeared in the following editions: June 25, 1960, Vol.1, No.4, p4 and July 9, 1960, Vol.1, No.5, p3

carried political statements of the emerging political parties, especially Swanu³¹, and of influential traditional leaders, such as Chief Hosea Kutako³².

BRICKS

Bricks community newspaper covered a variety of community issues which were regarded to be of utmost importance to the grassroots - issues which never even made "fillers" in the capitalist press, according to activists.³³ The following are some of the important areas covered by the newspaper:

B1 - General analysis, reviews and critiques

B2 - Health

B3 - Community activities

B4 - Labour

B5 - Education and culture

B6 - Housing and urbanisation

B7 - National political issues

The general analysis, reviews and critique (B1) focused on the burning issues which affected the man and woman on the ground.

³¹May 14, 1960, p2; June 11, 1960, p3; June 25, 1960, p2; July 23, 1960, p2 and August 20, 1960, p1.

³²See for instance the Saturday, 14th May 1960 edition on page 4, and also the launching edition, Saturday, 5 March 1960, p1. Chief Kutako fought against the German during their genocidal wars of 1904 - 1907 (see Moleah, 1983, p43) He later became a fierce opponent of the South African occupation of Namibia. Chief Kutako was also instrumental in petitioning the United Nations. He sent young Namibians to the United Nations to petition, including Fanuel Kozonguizi and Sam Nujoma. Kutako died on 18 July 1970 at the age of 100 years.

³³Kondombolo and Strauss interviews

Bricks analyzed, reviewed and provided a critique on a macro perspective of the prevailing socio-economic and political-cultural situation.³⁴ In most cases the newspaper initiated public debates on a variety of issues which affected the community, such as housing, rent, electricity, water and unemployment. In this way it aimed to encourage people into critical thinking and to develop counter strategies and solutions to problems facing them.³⁵

Health (B2) articles focused on preventative rather than curative methods. The newspaper provided hints to readers on how to prevent common diseases, like influenza, colds and diarrhoea. It also addressed tuberculosis³⁶, sexual transmitted diseases and contraceptives.³⁷ It is perhaps interesting to note how the activists laid the blame for the spread of some of these diseases at the hands of the colonial system. The March 1985 edition for instance notes that:

Diseases such as tuberculosis, diarrhoea and high blood pressure were experienced everyday in our community. The causes of these diseases are the bad social conditions, poor housing, dirty streets, stress and ignorance about basic preventative measures.³⁸

³⁴*Bricks* Year Report, 1987, p12.

³⁵Strauss interview

³⁶*Bricks*, Vol.1, No.3, March 1985 carried a cartoon explaining the causes of tuberculosis.

³⁷see *Bricks*, Vol.1, No.3, March 1985, 3 This edition also carried a cartoon explaining the causes of TB.

³⁸ibid, p3

Community activities (B3) covered were those carried by grassroots people and their organisations. The launching editorial for instance focused on the emerging NGOs and CBOs, and in an article titled: "Our People Stand Together - Community Organisations Grow", it introduced readers to these organisations, noting that:

We experience many problems in our communities because of unemployment, exorbitant food prices, and so forth. Then there is the poor housing and those who speak on our behalf speak without knowing us.³⁹ A number of groups had been established. It is better to come together, because problems can be solved easily.⁴⁰

Labour (B4) was another area covered by the newspaper. Although *Bricks* highlighted the activities of the emerging trade unions, emphasis was placed on educating its readers, many of them workers, about their rights (as workers). Education and culture (B5) was another important area of emphasis.⁴¹ The paper gave a wide coverage to the problems in the education system and highlighted alternative education initiatives undertaken by groups and individuals in the civil society. The development of independent creches and informal education initiatives was another area of interest. *Bricks* gave wide coverage to a broad spectrum of cultural activities. High on this list were community and protest theatres.

³⁹Reference here is made to the municipality-appointed councillors (advisors) who were regarded as "puppets" of the municipality because they were neither elected by the communities nor did they serve their interests.

⁴⁰*Bricks*, Vol.1, No.1, December 1984, p2

⁴¹See *Bricks*, April 1985, p7

Another area which consumed much space in the newspaper was housing and urbanization (B6),⁴² as according to the media activists these issues were the "focal points of the status quo of the time, which generated quite a lot of conflict".⁴³

The launching edition carried a photo on the front page showing Katutura residents demonstrating in front of the municipality offices against poor housing and unemployment in the township.⁴⁴ Katutura and Khomasdal faced an acute shortage of houses and a high unemployment rate prevailing in these townships. While the municipality of Windhoek does not have figures available on people who were on its waiting lists during the 1980s, I have based my calculations on the number of houses available at the time; the total population of the townships and the population density, in order to determine the housing need then.

By May 1985 there were 13 915 people in Khomasdal and 43 288 in Katutura against the 2 018 house-units in Khomasdal and 7 226 in Katutura.⁴⁵ This roughly gives an average of 6,9 persons per house-unit in Khomasdal and 6 persons per house-unit in Katutura. Most houses in the townships had two or one bedrooms. This clearly illustrated that most of them were over-crowded and or

⁴²See for instance *Bricks*, Vol.1, No.4, April 1985, 5, for an analysis of the critical shortage of houses in the townships.

⁴³*Bricks* Year Report, 1987, p12

⁴⁴see *Bricks*, Vol.1, No.1, December 1984, p1

⁴⁵Windhoek Municipality Population Census, 1985, pp11 and 156.

that many of the townships dwellers did not have roofs over their heads.

With regard to the population density, while the Windhoek town (white residential area) had a density of 7,98 persons per hecter, Khomasdal and Katutura had 30,42 p/ha and 56,85 p/ha respectively.⁴⁶ Figures available on unemployment rates in the townships indicate that 64,03 per cent of Khomasdal residents and 51,92 per cent of Katutura were not "economically active" by May 1985.⁴⁷

Bricks also ventured on the terrain of mainstream politics (B7) at the time. It levelled harsh criticism against the central government with regard to the latter's policies of education, health and fiscal policy. In its later editions (the late 1980s) the newspaper joined the clamour of voices calling for the implementation of resolution 435. It also covered political statements and rallies of the progressive forces, to a limited extent though. However, its focus remained grassroots politics - the bread and butter issues of the man and woman on the street.

The newspaper's indignation at the central government can be noticed as early as the installation of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) on the 17th June 1985, barely seven months after its launch. In its June 1985 edition *Bricks* carried

⁴⁶ibid, p43

⁴⁷ibid, p86

a "spread" focusing on the inauguration of the IGNU under the headline: "New Government in Perspective", with a sub-headline reading: "Our People Protested".⁴⁸ Referring to the South African move to impose an un-elected government (the IGNU), the newspaper noted that: "Again this is a flagrant denial of our basic democratic right to free participation in an election for an independent government".⁴⁹

SISTER NAMIBIA

Being a feminist publication the entire content of this magazine was devoted to gender issues. The following are some of the initial themes carried in the first three editions of the magazine:

- C1 - Teenage pregnancies and sex education
- C2 - Literacy
- C3 - Health issues
- C4 - Labour issues
- C5 - Women's rights and struggles
- C6 - Women in politics
- C7 - Rural women
- C8 - Domestic violence

Sister Namibia paid attention to the issue of teenage pregnancies and campaigned for the introduction of sex education (C1) at schools in an attempt to curb this problem. Ignorance of

⁴⁸*Bricks*, June 1985, Vol.1, No. 5, pp2,3

⁴⁹*ibid*, p2

contraceptives among the female students was seen as a cause for teenage pregnancies.⁵⁰

Literacy (C2) among women was one of the objectives of *Sister Namibia*.⁵¹ The newsletter carried articles advocating the introduction of nation-wide campaigns for the elimination of illiteracy among women.⁵² The articles also focused on the literacy campaigns conducted in other countries. To demonstrate the dilemma of women with regard to illiteracy the magazine in its second edition carried a cartoon showing a pile of books and a woman sitting at a desk writing, with an accompanying text reading:

Can you visualise the image of a woman sitting with her feet up reading a newspaper? It is something one can imagine easily. In reality, and even in cartoons this image belongs to the man; while the woman is busy around the house. In Namibia, as in the rest of Africa, it is women who suffer most under the burden of illiteracy.⁵³

The newsletter reserved space where new and complicated concepts used in the articles were explained in simple, everyday language. It also carried reviews of important books written by women.

Women's health (C3) was another priority of the magazine.⁵⁴ It carried articles on contraceptives, childbirth, breast-feeding,

⁵⁰see *Sister*, Vol.1, No.2, 1989, p6

⁵¹see Vol.1, No.2, p3

⁵²see also Vol.1, No.3, pp7-9

⁵³Vol.1, No.2, September 1989, p3

⁵⁴see Vol.1, No.2, pp8,9

general hygiene and on sexual transmitted diseases, including AIDS (HIV). These articles also urged men to use condoms and to assume the responsibility of preventing unwanted pregnancies and to assist in child spacing.⁵⁵ One such article argued that:

Women no longer have to bear the sole responsibility for preventing pregnancies. It is time that men took note of the types of contraceptives available to them, and use them.⁵⁶

Sister Namibia carried analyses of the politics of women's work (C4), emphasising on the "unpaid work" at home.⁵⁷ In an article titled: "Women's Work", the activists noted that women made up more than 50 per cent of the world population, while earning only ten per cent of the world's income.⁵⁸ The reason for that state of affairs, the activists noted, was because the majority of women provided services for which they were not normally compensated for.⁵⁹

A domestic worker is an unpaid labourer. This work is done by women with such love and enthusiasm but it is regarded by men as something which just happens and they do not always realise that it is hard work.⁶⁰

⁵⁵*Sister*, Vol.1, No.2, September 1989, p8

⁵⁶*ibid*, p8

⁵⁷see *Sister*, Vol.1, No.1, pp6,7

⁵⁸Vol.1, No.1, July 1989, p6

⁵⁹*ibid*

⁶⁰*ibid*, p6

A number of educational and analytical articles on the issues of women's rights and struggles (C5) were produced.⁶¹ In the first edition the *Sister Namibia* carried an article titled: "Fighting for Our Rights", which dealt with women's struggles being fought regionally, continentally and globally, on the continent and in the region, noting that:

Women have been on the march demanding equality in law with men and freedom from the oppression of a male-ruled society for many years ... While this situation was improving during the past twenty years women who were still burdened by centuries of oppressive tradition are beginning to organise to fight for their rights in the world.⁶²

The newsletter also carried women's demands. It listed the following demands:

- An undivided Namibia, free from the oppression caused by class, sex, race or ethnicity.
- Equality with men at home, at work and before the law.
- An end to all acts of violence perpetuated by men on women.
- The right to work and the right to effective maternity benefits.
- An end to sexual harassment - at home, in the community, at work and at school.⁶³

The theme on women in politics (C6) covered analysis of the past, present and future roles of women in Namibian politics. Emphasis was placed on women's participation in the Constituent Assembly, which drafted the first constitution for an independent Namibia.

⁶¹see *Sister*, Vol.1, No.1, pp4,5,7

⁶²Vol.1, No.1, July 1989, pp4,5

⁶³ibid, p8

The newsletter also campaigned for the inclusion of women in the first Namibian parliament.⁶⁴

Sister Namibia tried to highlight the deplorable situation rural women (C7) had to contend with in the absence of their menfolk who were recruited as migrant workers in the urban and peri-urban centres.⁶⁵

Domestic violence (C8) was another important focus of the newsletter. Here emphasis was on issues of rape and other forms of domestic violence committed against women.⁶⁶ In the editorial of the second edition *Sister* tackled the issue of rape:

the appallingly lenient sentences imposed on rapists in this country. Newspapers continually report details of this most heinous and violent crime against women. It is sad that our community appears to be numb to the politics and consequences of rape.⁶⁷

SPEAK OUT

This was a community newspaper covering activities of the Katutura Community Centre as well as general grassroots issues.

The following are some of the major themes covered:

D1 - Information articles

D2 - KCC activities

D3 - Educational matters

⁶⁴*Sister* Vol. 1, No.3, p.1

⁶⁵see *Sister*, Vol.1, No.3, pp11-13

⁶⁶see Vol.1, No.2, p1

⁶⁷Vol.1, No.2, September 1989, p1

- D4 - Social issues
- D5 - Labour Issues
- D6 - Medical issues

The newsletter carried general information articles (D1) with an emphasis on the development within the progressive movement, the NGOs and CBOs. *Speak Out* aimed at popularising the activities (D2) carried out by the Katutura Community Centre, such as the library, the community hall and the sporting facilities available to the communities.⁶⁸

It documented students' struggles and activities of parents associations (D3).⁶⁹ In addition, it carried critical articles condemning the prevailing education system.⁷⁰ Social issues (D4) addressed by *Speak Out* ranged from aspects such as alcoholism, malnutrition, unemployment, community development and religious matters.⁷¹

⁶⁸See *Speak Out*, December, 1985, p8 for an article titled: "How the Community Centre can help the People". Also *Speak Out*, April 1986, p6 for an article titled: "Katutura Community Centre 'What's all about?'" and also on page 11, and see also *Speak Out*, Nov./Dec. 1988, pp1,3

⁶⁹see *Speak Out*, April 1986, pp1,2,3,4,8,14; the Nov./Dec. 1988, p2, assessed and analyzed the 1988 national-wide student boycott.

⁷⁰See also *Speak Out*, August, 1987, p4

⁷¹See *Speak Out*, April/May 1987, pp3,4 for an in-depth article titled: "Social Problems in Namibia Today".

The newsletter also ventured on labour matters. It ran a column called "workers' corner" (D5) in which labour matters and workers struggles were analyzed, highlighted and recorded.⁷² Another column called "Medical Corner" (D6) addressed health problems in the community. It provided useful hints in preventing everyday diseases. Health risks such as smoking were identified and their adverse effect explained.⁷³

STUDENT VOICE OF NAMIBIA

Since this was a student publication about 75 per cent of its news was on educational matters. However, the newsletter also ventured on broader political issues, which included the demand for the withdrawal of the South African administration from Namibia and the implementation of resolution 435. The following issues enjoyed attention of the newsletter:

- E1 - Student demands and grievances
- E2 - National political issues
- E3 - Cultural issues
- E4 - Namibian history
- E5 - Gender issues
- E6 - Labour matters
- E7 - Political consciousness raising
- E8 - Information articles

⁷²See *Speak Out*, April/May 1987, p8.

⁷³The following editions of *Speak Out* focused on the following health issues: August 1987, p5 - Malnutrition; December 1987, p8 - Smoking; Nov./Dec. 1988, p7 - Breast-feeding.

Students' demands and grievances (E1) were the main focus of the newsletter. These included issues such as the abolition of the prevailing education system which was regarded as inferior; the introduction of English as a medium of instruction; removal of army bases in the proximity of schools in northern Namibia and the introduction of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at schools country-wide.

The Student Voice carried articles on national political issues⁷⁴ (E2) which centred around the independence of the country from South Africa. Some of these articles called for the implementation of resolution 435, while others called for the release of political prisoners and detainees and the withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia. Pro-Swapo comments and sentiments were also produced.

The newsletter set out to encourage the revival of the Namibian culture⁷⁵ (E3) through the coverage of cultural activities by the indigenous Namibian artists and focused on students and community protest theatres.⁷⁶

⁷⁴See for instance *Student Voice*, September/October, Vol.4, No.4, p1 With regard to the national political issues the newsletter focused more specifically on the implementation of the UNSCR 435. See also the same edition at page 3 for a coverage on deliberations on the independence of the country. See also November/December 1988, Vol.4, No.5, p3.

⁷⁵see for instance the September/October edition, Vol.4, No.4, p10

⁷⁶Katjiuanjo interview, 1995

The *Student Voice* produced a number of articles featuring what it regarded as the "true history" (E4) of Namibia.⁷⁷ These articles highlighted past and contemporary histories of Namibia. Student activists felt that Namibia's history written by the colonisers was distorted and that these articles were an attempt to provide students and the general readers with an alternative history written from the perspectives of the colonised people themselves.

The newsletter featured issues of women emancipation and other gender related issues⁷⁸ (E5). *Student Voice* came out in support of the workers' struggle and articles were written on labour matters (E6).⁷⁹

The newsletter carried analytical articles focusing on the political consciousness-raising (E7) of the student population. These articles were educational in content and addressed broader topics such as socialism, capitalism, mixed economy, imperialism and democracy. Some articles also focused on the role of students and the youth in the liberation struggle.

The *Student Voice* carried information articles (E8) about the activities of the students movements. These items were

⁷⁷see *Student Voice*, September/October 1988, Vol.4, No.4, p11, also November/December 1988, Vol.4, No.5, p6, also March/April 1989, Vol.5, No.4, p6 and also April/May 1989, Vol.5, No.4, p8.

⁷⁸see Vol.4, No.5, p1 November/December 1988. Also the same edition on page 2 for an article titled: "Women Liberation".

⁷⁹see for instance April/May 1989, Vol.5, No.4, p7

informative in content and some highlighted detention of student activists. The newsletter also monitored the moves and strategies of the "interim government of national unity" at the educational front and exposed what it saw as its misdoings.

THE NAMIBIAN WORKER

Being a labour movement's publication, the content of this periodical mainly reflected issues and matters of interests to the workers. This does not mean however, that the publication ignored broader political issues. Workers were seen as the most exploited section of the Namibian society and being the main pillar of the economy, the mobilisation of these forces was regarded as a major determining factor in overthrowing colonialism.⁸⁰

Following are the main themes contained in *the Namibian Worker*:

- G1 - Information articles
- G2 - Broader political issues
- G3 - Workers' histories and struggles
- G4 - Workers' campaigns
- G5 - Workers' education
- G6 - Editorial commentaries

The *Namibian Worker* carried information articles (G1), informing workers on issues and developments at the labour front. These included strike actions called by workers locally and in South Africa; the formation of new unions; statements and announcements

⁸⁰Pakleppa interview, 1995

by unions and political leaders as well as information about activities and developments on a broader liberation struggle.

These stories and articles were very central to the newspaper, and they were not selected randomly but purposely, as Pakleppa remembers.

The decision on what type of information to be provided was of interest. Why do you choose that information than the other? It was to marshall the forces of workers into unity, that would be defensive and that defensive unity would become offensive. We wanted to encourage workers to attack the pillars of the economy.⁸¹

The Namibian labour movement embraced a populist perspective of trade unionism. Since it emerged in a colonial situation characterised by foreign occupation of the country, the unions did not confine their struggle to the narrow workers' issues (workerism), but targeted the broader political foundation on which exploitative capitalism rested - apartheid. To this effect the newspaper reported and analysed broader political issues (G2). It called for the end of colonialism, the implementation of resolution 435 and the destruction of capitalism and the creation of socialism.

The newspaper covered workers' histories and struggles (G3), locally, in South Africa and internationally. Pakleppa notes that by informing the workers about trade union histories and struggles through the newspaper the activists wanted to:

create a very militant workforce arising from

⁸¹ibid

worker understanding of the history more broadly as well. Worker history in the world and understanding of their specific location in Namibia and what their colleagues elsewhere were experiencing. So, we would expose outrageous situations and conditions, hoping to force a unity that will help bring down the government.⁸²

The newspaper covered a number of workers' mobilisation campaigns (G4) initiated by the union leadership and which aimed to achieve a number of objectives. Some earlier campaigns the newsletter focused included the building workers' unity⁸³, the registration of unions⁸⁴, the living wage⁸⁵ and the observation of Workers Day. Shortly before independence the newsletter focused on the anti-privatisation campaign.⁸⁶

Moreover, some of these campaigns were carried forward in independent Namibia, since worker activists felt that independence did not necessarily mean the end of the workers' struggles, as the following statement indicates:

The liberation struggle in which the Namibian workers participated under the leadership of Swapo against colonialism and apartheid has come to an end. But the struggle of the workers for a Living Wage, housing, better working conditions and mutual

⁸²ibid

⁸³See *The Namibian Worker*, No.1, 1988, p4

⁸⁴see *The Namibian Worker*, No.2, April 1988, pp4-7.

⁸⁵see *The Namibian Worker*, No.1, 1988, pp5-9

⁸⁶Shortly before independence the South African administration and the outgoing interim government set out to privatise some of the major parastatals such as Post and Telecommunications, Water Affairs, SWAWEK (electricity) Railways, Airways etc, in order to cripple the incoming Swapo-led government financially.

benefits between employers and employees continues.⁸⁷

Another important aspect and which was the main reason for the establishment of the newspaper was workers' education (G5).⁸⁸ The newsletter explained in simple language and used cartoons in some cases in this education exercise. It addressed issues such as grievance procedures, the role and functions of shopstewards, workers control and workers participation.⁸⁹ The prevention of health risks at the workplace, came also in focus.⁹⁰

Other important aspects of the newspaper's content were the editorial commentaries (G6). Through these columns activists would call workers to action, to resist the bosses, to unite and to work for their (workers') benefits. The commentaries also singled out the bosses for a number of issues such as unfair labour practices. Some editorials were educational in content, focusing on the different economic systems but with a strong appeal for the implementation of socialism in Namibia.

Being a mobilising tool for "workers to be organised" *The Namibian Worker* in its editorials continued emphasising workers' unity and the unionisation of workers.⁹¹ Even towards the end

⁸⁷*The Namibian Worker*, January 1990, No.12, p1

⁸⁸Pakleppa interview, 1995

⁸⁹see for instance *The Namibian Worker*, No.2, April 1988, pp27,28

⁹⁰see *The Namibian Worker*, February 1-14, 1990, pp3,4 also *The Namibian Worker*, No.2, April 1988, pp12,13

⁹¹Pakleppa interview, 1995

of the liberation struggle, when independence seemed to be at the threshold, worker activists still emphasised the organisation of workers.

The trade unions are powerful instruments of the workers fight for their interests. One worker when dismissed unfairly cannot bring production to a stop in a factory of many workers. Workers organised into a trade union can stop production...

Unions are what make the workers strong in the fight for their rights. At the same time workers' participation in the running of the unions make the unions strong. Unions are not office institutions but workers' organs to be effectively run through the participation of workers.⁹²

THE CHURCH PRESS

The church newsletters are religious instruments and about 90 per cent of their content is devoted to religious matters. Buys and Kritzinger (1989) note that the content of the church press "from the early time consisted of religious meditation and news about the life and work of the respective denominations".⁹³ However, as noted in chapter 2, as from the early 1970s the emphasis shifted from purely religion to "comment on social, economic and political matters and to inform their congregations of the international dimensions of their situation and developments in that regard".⁹⁴

Following are the main areas covered by the church press:

F1 - Local news bulletins

⁹²The Namibian Worker, January 1990, Number 12, p1

⁹³p206

⁹⁴Moleah, 1983, p107

F2 - Church media releases

F3 - Sermons

F4 - Liberation theology

F5 - Analysis, assessments and in-depth articles

F6 - Editorial commentaries

F7 - Social problems

The church press contained local news bulletins (F1) informing members of their respective denominations about developments and events taking place in their congregations. These ranged from the ordination of church leaders, bishops and priests; the death of the church leaders; deportations and imprisonment of church leaders and activists by the colonial regime; important anniversaries and activities of church associations and groups. The *CCN Information* for instance carried profiles and activities of the CCN members churches.

The church newsletters carried media releases (F2) issued by the church, giving its position on important matters concerning the church and on political matters and decisions affecting their members and the broader society. The releases contained public denouncements of injustices, police brutality, partiality of the courts and so on. One of such earlier statements was the famous Open Letter to the then South African Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster.⁹⁵

⁹⁵see *Immanuel*, 10 September 1971, p17. See also Chapter 2.

The newsletters further carried important notices (circulars) which needed to be brought under the attention of church members, such as concerning important commemorations and special prayer sessions.⁹⁶ The *CCN Information* carried a column titled: "Documentation", that reflected major decisions taken by the CCN leadership.

The newsletters published important sermons (F3) by high ranking church leaders and which contained crucial messages to be brought under the attention of the members. Some of these sermons carried messages of unity, love, hope, peace, reconciliation and also touched upon the liberation of the 'oppressed masses'.⁹⁷

One of the most important and unique feature of the church press was the aspect of "liberation theology" (F4). The church's defence about its involvement in the broader political issues was based on this theology⁹⁸. Progressive church leaders spread this theology through the church press.⁹⁹

Liberation Theology more than any other kind of theological issues unfolds because of human suffering, anguish, death and humiliation ... It seeks to justify God and his ways to a perplexed,

⁹⁶The church arranged special prayer sessions devoted to a number of the pressing problems such as praying for the rain; for the detainees and for end of violence.

⁹⁷see for instance a sermon by Rev. Dr. Z. Kameeta published in the *CCN Information* titled: "What Does Unity Mean for Namibian Churches?", Vol.3, No.1, October 1982, p3

⁹⁸see an article titled: "The Namibian Liberation Theology", Rev. R,Z. Mujoro in *CCN Information*, Vol.5, Nos 8&9, July 1985, p2

⁹⁹see for instance an article By Rev, Dr Z. Kameeta titled: "Christ is for the Oppressed", in *Immanuel*, June 1977, pp2,3

rejected, and tortured people, that they might be inspired to do something about their God given lives.

This cry of God's people in Namibia stems from an organised crime against humanity, which is known as apartheid ...

...The content of this theology is not then the heretical apartheid's ideology that teaches three gods: race, colour and language, with the help of the Bible and in the name of Christianity and Western civilization ... Nor is it a mere political programme as some maintain.

The content of this theology is in the light of the Open Letter's tradition in Jesus Christ... Jesus is at the centre of this theology...¹⁰⁰

The church newsletters carried analysis, assessment and in-depth articles (F5) on socio-economic and political issues.¹⁰¹ Some of these articles were written by the editorial staff while others were contributions by church leaders, church workers and the general readership. Some of these articles were educational in content¹⁰², while others were informative and persuasive in nature.¹⁰³ Others discussed political related concepts such as

¹⁰⁰see *Immanuel*, April/May/June, 1985, pp1,2

¹⁰¹see for instance an article written by Dr Christine con Garnier titled: "The Economic, Social and Political Structure of Namibia", in *Angelus*, May 1986, pp7,8. See also an article in the *Immanuel*, May 1975, p6, addressing constitutional questions of Namibia.

¹⁰²see for instance the following articles:

- (a) "Race and Class" in *Angelus*, February, 1986, pp5-7
- (b) "What is Capitalism?", *Angelus*, June 1986, pp5,6
- (c) "What is Socialism?", *Angelus*, August 1986, p4
- (d) "Racist Capitalism", *Angelus*, July 1986, pp7,8,9
- (e) "What is Politics?", *Immanuel*, September, 1975, p7
- (f) "Relationship between Church and State", in *Immanuel*, June 1975, pp4-9

¹⁰³See for instance an articles titled: "What is the Role of the Church in the Liberation Struggle?", in *Angelus*, October 1986, pp1,2,3. Also *Immanuel*, September 1973, p5 for an article: "The role of Women in Africa", and *Immanuel*, October 1974, pp7,8

"freedom", with reference to Namibian freedom.¹⁰⁴ Others looked at aspects such as the issue of human rights, giving profiles of human rights violations.¹⁰⁵ Yet others focused on education and liberation.¹⁰⁶

The church newsletters further carried editorial commentaries (F6) giving the views of their respective denominations on issues concerning their churches, their membership and on the general political and socio-economic issues of the country.

The church newsletters also addressed social problems (F7) faced in the black communities. They carried articles and columns highlighting a number of these social evils and provided communities with information on how to arrest some these social problems. One of the main social problems addressed by all the church newsletters was alcoholism,¹⁰⁷ while family and marital problems also gained prominence.¹⁰⁸

Most of the churches conducted welfare services to their impoverished members, and professional social workers were

for an article: "Reconciliation between Black and White".

¹⁰⁴See for instance an article titled: "What is freedom?", in *Angelus*, March 1972, p7

¹⁰⁵see *Angelus*, October 1980, pp3,4

¹⁰⁶See for instance an article titled: "Education, Oppression and Liberation in Namibia ", in *Angelus*, December 1984, pp1-6.

¹⁰⁷See for instance an article in *Immanuel*, June 1967, Vol.6, No.8, pp21,22 titled: "Alcohol Abuse: A Big Evil Among Us".

¹⁰⁸See *Immanuel*, June 1968, pp16,17

employed in this exercise. *Angelus* for instance carried a column in which the church's social workers contributed articles on a number of problems in the black society.¹⁰⁹ *Immanuel* in addition paid particular attention to the problems experienced by migrant labourers.¹¹⁰

THE NAMIBIAN

The Namibian carried a broad spectrum of issues of which the majority were hard news and informative articles combined with a few in-depth articles and analysis. The following are some of the most important areas covered during the period under study (1985 - 1990).

- H1 - Hard news stories and information articles
- H2 - Editorial commentaries
- H3 - Primary health care
- H4 - Literacy: basic English
- H5 - Detention update
- H6 - Depth articles and interviews

¹⁰⁹Some of the articles submitted by the social workers dealt with the following issues: marital problems, alcoholism, prostitution, poverty, unemployment, child education, drug abuse, women problems. Other articles looked at the deplorable conditions experienced by township dwellers. One such article by Ms Lindi Kazombaue in *Angelus*, July 1984, pp1-6 analyzed the main social problems faced in the Katutura township. The article addressed issues such as housing, divorce, single quarters, lack of recreation facilities, and unemployment. See also *Immanuel*, November 1973, p10 for an article on family planning.

¹¹⁰See for instance *Immanuel*, April 1971, p5 for an article titled: "How to Help Migrant Labourers", and also *Immanuel*, February 1974, pp8,9 for an article: "The Problems of Migrant Labourers".

The greater part of *The Namibian* consisted of hard news stories and informative articles (H1). These were among others, exposures of the activities of the colonial state and its apparatuses, of which human rights abuses featured prominently.¹¹¹ Perhaps one of the striking exposures carried by the newspaper was the army's inhuman conduct of parading to the local populace the dead bodies of Swapo insurgents strapped to armour vehicles. The exposures of these incidents led to an abortive ban of the 16 January 1987 edition of the newspaper by the South African Directorate of Publications.¹¹²

The newspaper in its January 16, 1987 edition exposed this practice in a front page article accompanied by a blown up

¹¹¹See for instance the following news articles:

- (a) Exposure: "SA Raids Angola 'to safe' Unita", 20 September 1985, pp1,3
- (b) An investigative article focusing on the death in detention: "Detainees Death still a Mystery". 27 September 1985, p2
- (c) On police and army brutality: "Soldiers on Murder Charge", 27 September 1985, p2
- (d) Exposure: "Baby Died after Soldier Threw Stone", 18 October 1985, p5
- (e) Exposure: "Soldiers Beat and Buried Me - Mother", 8 November 1985, p8
- (f) Exposure: "Horror Incident in Northern Namibia - Beaten to Death" 6 December 1985, p1
- (g) Exposure: Four Koevoet Men Imprisoned for Rape", 8 November, 1985, p6

¹¹²*The Namibian*, Friday, January 16, 1987, pp1,3

photograph¹¹³ showing corpses fastened to the side and front of a casspir. The article noted:

Both the police and the army have denied liability for an incident in northern Namibia on December 29 last year at midday, when the bodies of dead insurgents were paraded to locals at Ondobe near Oshikango, by members of the security forces.

In spite of numerous denials by police and army over the year of the parading of corpses by security forces, the photographic evidence on this page is indisputable proof that this practice does take place.¹¹⁴

The newspaper's editorial of the following weekend condemned the practice noting among others that:

Such actions are to be wholeheartedly condemned, and neither will they succeed in winning over the hearts and minds of the people in such a manner. We call for an immediate stop to such actions, whether committed by either police or army, who cannot use their claims to Christianity as a shield against such incidents.¹¹⁵

While initially denying these incidents, claiming that they were Christians and dismissing the newspaper's photographic evidence as "fake",¹¹⁶ the police were later to succumb to pressure and finally acknowledged the incidents, saying they were transporting

¹¹³This photograph was taken by a young teacher from Tsumeb, Hosea Kaiyamo, who after independence became a member of the second house of Parliament - the National Council, and handed to *The Namibian* reporter Chris Shipanga. Kaiyamo received an award at the 10th anniversary of *The Namibian*, held on the 11 August 1995.

¹¹⁴ibid, p1

¹¹⁵*The Namibian*, Friday, January 23, 1987, p9.

¹¹⁶See the March 6, 1987 edition of *The Namibian*.

the corpses and since there was no room inside the casspirs they had to fasten them outside.¹¹⁷

The Namibian after the acknowledgement by the police noted:

The fact that this newspaper was widely condemned for publication of the photograph, in particular by the police, warrants an apology from those quarters.

But most of all, an apology is owed to the people of northern Namibia; those who are subjected to incidents such as these perpetrated by security forces. We also trust, now that the admission has been made, that such incidents will not occur in the future, and that some other means be found for transporting the bodies of dead guerrillas. There is no excuse for such inhumanity.¹¹⁸

A wide coverage was also given to the activities, statements and rallies of the progressive forces. While it tried to be 'balanced', 'fair' and 'objective' in its reporting, *The Namibian*, relied heavily on information from the progressive forces and by writing from their point of view. Lister was to defend this bias three years after independence as follows:

I am berated by certain section of the population for *The Namibian's* stance under the South African occupation. We were too one-sided, allege the critics, and we never showed what they refer to as 'the other side of the story', meaning, the official South African viewpoint at the time. At that time we were unashamedly biased in favour of Namibia's self-determination and independence and we believed we were ethically and otherwise correct in exposing atrocities against civilians by the South African military and police which other sections of the media then blatantly ignored, denied or simply turned the other cheek. We

¹¹⁷ibid

¹¹⁸ibid

were in any case not given access to 'the other side'.¹¹⁹

The Namibian was not blind to the misdoings of the progressive forces and did criticise them more often than not. However, this criticism was not meted out with the same vigour as that levelled against the state and its apparatuses. A clear illustration of this centred around the "Swapo detainees" issue.¹²⁰ After Swapo announced an alleged 'spy-network' among its ranks and the subsequent detention of about 100 of its members¹²¹, *The Namibian* endorsed the stand-point of the movement without a thorough investigation or accommodating opposing viewpoints such as those presented by a committee representing families of the detainees, the Parents Committee.

Motivating its action by detaining more than 100 of its members, the organisation noted that:

Swapo was not a charity organisation but is engaged in the liberation of our country. These men have provided information to our enemy that was used for killing our people.¹²²

Without double checking this information *The Namibian* came to support the authenticity of the Swapo allegations, claiming that:

On that point no-one could disagree. The war in

¹¹⁹Lister explained this issue in her address at the Prime Minister's Consultative Conference with the media, held three years after independence, on 10 and 11 November, 1993. She spoke on journalistic ethics in Namibia.

¹²⁰see Saul and Leys (1995) for more details of this issue.

¹²¹See *The Namibian*, Friday, February 21, 1986, pp1,3.

¹²²ibid, p10

the north of our country is not a make-believe game where the combatants pick themselves up after the latest fire-fight and walk away. Real men, women and children die in the armed conflict. It is brutal, nasty and very real and the consequences of betraying secrets to the enemy can be measured in men's lives.¹²³

However, in trying to posit its 'independence', the newspaper demanded a public trial for the Swapo detainees, noting that:

To deny those accused of serious crimes the right to a fair trial, the right to legal representation and the right to defend themselves is to move into the shady moral area currently occupied by the South African Government itself when dealing with political opponents. Similarly there are concerns about what happens to Swapo fighters captured by South Africa, only a few of whom are ever brought to trial.¹²⁴

Swapo in response to this suggestion took the newspaper to task and sharply rebuked *The Namibian's* editorial claiming it was based on a "false premise" and that the criticism contained in it was totally "unjustified".¹²⁵ *The Namibian* in turn failed to persist in its demand for a fair trial and the issue disappeared from its columns, until the return of exiles and the subsequent elections and independence.

The Namibian also carried editorial commentaries (H2) which criticised policies and activities of the colonial regime and the interim government. In addition, the editor ran a weekly column called "Political Perspective", which was a continuation of her advocacy journalism started while at the *Windhoek Observer*. This

¹²³*The Namibian*, Friday, February 21, 1986, p10

¹²⁴ibid, p10

¹²⁵ibid

column targeted the regime and the interim government and featured fierce criticism against these institutions while it morally supported the progressive movement. Other important preoccupations of both the editorial and the "political perspectives" were the issue of human rights abuses and the call for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435.

Like the community press, *The Namibian* paid attention to health issues and it carried a weekly column on primary health care (H3). This column tried to make information available to readers on general aspects of health care.¹²⁶ Readers were urged to send queries on health issues and a doctor's service formed part of that column.¹²⁷

The Namibian ran another column on literacy, titled "Basic English" (H4). The aim of this column was to assist readers and pupils improve their functional English.

Yet another column called "Detention Update"¹²⁸ (H5) featured names of persons detained by the police and army under security legislations. The column also featured names of persons who were subsequently released after having been detained without trial. The main sources of information for this column were members of

¹²⁶*The Namibian*, August 30, 1985, p26

¹²⁷ibid, p26

¹²⁸*CCN Information* was another progressive newspaper which ran a similar column.

the community including relatives of the detainees, church leaders and political activists within the progressive movement.¹²⁹ The police and the army on a number of occasions denied the whereabouts of such people.¹³⁰

A very important contribution of *The Namibian* to the political education and mobilisation of its readers were assessments, in-depth and analytical articles (H6). These articles were written by progressive academics and intellectuals, political and community activists and church leaders, dealing with broad issues ranging from educational, economic, social to more political aspects concerning the demand for the independence of the country.

In addition, the newspaper published exclusive interviews held with the main political players on both sides of the political spectrum. The aim of publishing these interviews was to provide readers with the viewpoints of the main political players on a number of issues concerning the independence of the country.¹³¹ Some of these interviews were held with exiled leaders of Swapo, while others were held with the South African government officials in Namibia, members of the interim government, police and military leaders.¹³² By publishing interviews with exiled

¹²⁹Shipanga and Lister interviews

¹³⁰ibid

¹³¹Lister interview, 1995

¹³²see *The Namibian*, Friday, November 8, 1985, pp6,7 for an exclusive interview with the then officer commanding the South West Africa Territorial Force, Major General George Meiring. See

Swapo leaders the newspaper sought to show that "Swapo had a human face despite the propaganda of the regime which displayed it as a communist monster".¹³³

SUMMARY

The alternative press provided a crucial communication outlet to the colonised people, by filling a vital gap in the Namibian media mix. This press addressed issues which were normally absent from the columns of the mainstream colonial press, such as community-based struggles and activities of the progressive movement and that of the liberation movement in exile. In its coverage, the alternative press put an emphasis on issues and events which were arguably of utmost importance to target audience, from their perspective. It further provided a platform, through the letter page and opinion columns, through which the people could air their views and grievances. The alternative press provided advice on problems and other difficulties experienced in the black communities. It sought to broaden the world-view and thereby break the isolation imposed on them by the regime by reporting issues and events in the rest of Africa and the world at large. It educated the people about their situation and informed them about developments in the

also the editor's exclusive interview with Swapo president titled: "Nujoma Speaks Out". *The Namibian* 31 July 1987, pp11-13. Also an exclusive interview with the then Swapo Secretary of Information and Publicity titled: "Hidipo Hamutenja Speaks on Marxism and Black Consciousness", *The Namibian*, 8 January, 1988, pp8,9

¹³³Lister interview, 1995

country on the political front, chronicled their struggles, voiced their aspirations and exposed human rights abuses perpetrated by the regime and its apparatuses. By addressing issues not covered by the mainstream colonial press and by covering events from an oppositional perspective, the alternative press not only provided an alternative communication channel, but also sought to nurture a counter-hegemonic culture.

CHAPTER ELEVEN : LANGUAGE AND MESSAGES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the language and the messages carried by the alternative press. It examines how the media activists twisted ideological discourses into the ordinary language used by the target audience. It further seeks to explain how the media activists manipulated the language to facilitate a favourable reception (reading) of the ideologically constructed messages by the target audience. The chapter also assesses the type of messages the media activists conveyed to their audience. It explains the role of these messages in the process of political and ideological mobilisation of the target audience.

THE LANGUAGE

The alternative press used what one of its protagonists referred to as an "oppositional language"¹. It was a language rich in alternative concepts, ideas, propositions and assumptions which one could normally not find in the dominant language carried in the columns of the mainstream colonial media. It was a language spoken and known by the masses.² This assumption is in line with Hall's assertion that normally the language used by newspapers is the newspaper's own version of the language of the public to whom it is principally addressed:³

Its version of rhetoric, imaginary and underlying

¹Strauss interview, 1995

²ibid

³Hall et al, 1978, p61

common stock of knowledge which it assumes its audience shares and which thus forms the basis of the reciprocity of producer/reader.⁴

Since newspapers do not address their audience in a face to face situation, they develop "an orientation" towards the type of audience they target.⁵ This orientation is referred to as the "mode of address".⁶

Each newspaper, whether mainstream or alternative has its own 'mode of address'. This means that the same topic, sources and inferential structures will appear differently, even in papers with a similar outlook, since different rhetoric of address will have an important effect in inflecting the original item.⁷

The mode of address of the alternative press was one of the most striking features which distinguished its rhetoric from that of the mainstream colonial press. It was through this mode of address that the media activists sought to achieve "an explanatory reach" and credibility of issues they addressed from their target audience.⁸ The tone of address and choice of words of the alternative press showed an orientation towards what the media activists referred as the "oppressed masses", which were their target audience.

⁴ibid

⁵see Hartley, 1990, p88

⁶Hartley, 1990, p88; Fowler, 1991, p48 and Hall et al, 1978, pp60,61

⁷Hall et al, 1978, pp60,61

⁸see Hall, 1977, p344

The following article attempts to illustrate the specific language used by the alternative press and the manner in which the media activists aimed to win consent from their target audience by addressing issues of importance to them through a language assumed to be familiar to them.

The struggle that is taking place in Namibia today is a struggle about a new order. It is a struggle by the mass of our people, workers and peasants organised in SWAPO and other political structures to change their lives. The aim of the struggle is, therefore, to found a new state that is progressive and revolutionary. Namibia is characterised by colonial and apartheid capitalism. People are divided into two different classes: those who own the wealth (the capitalists and colonialists: the bosses) and those who own nothing (workers and peasants). These people own nothing except their labour that they sell to the bosses as labourers.

The colonial state that we have today is always supporting the puppets, the capitalists and all reactionaries, whenever there is a conflict between the bosses and the workers. Most of the rich support this colonial state. The colonial state's policies such as the AG 8 are against our people. Most of our people - workers and peasants - do not support this government because it is oppressing them. Whenever there is a strike in the factory, the government sends Koevoet and the police to beat the workers. Therefore, it is clear that the state is not neutral but it is on the side of the colonialists.

In this way the state we have in Namibia today is a colonial capitalist one. It is a kind of a state that will never be neutral but always on the side of the bosses. Instead of supporting a state that does not represent their interests, the mass of our people, the workers, peasants and other sections of our society, support the liberation movement. They make up the majority of the followers of the liberation movement and support its political programme and the demands it contains.

In the struggle against the ruling class and colonialists the Namibian workers and peasants rely on the SWAPO programme and upraise it time and again. The Namibian liberation struggle is against the colonial capitalists state. The present struggle is about replacing this colonial state dominated by puppets, opportunists, capitalists and colonialists with a new state. The new state for which Namibian patriots and militants are

sacrificing their lives and fighting shall be a people's state. In other words, a new form of state where the interests of the majority, workers and peasants shall be dominant. Policies and decrees shall be in the interests of the people. There shall be direct democracy. Namibian workers shall dominate the government and they shall cooperate with other workers' governments.

However, proper assessment and preparations through the mobilisation of our people and creation of people's structures down the street level is needed in order to heighten the consciousness of the masses. In this way the masses will increase their influence over the state.⁹

The article is an example of other similar articles carried by the alternative papers. While it is twisted in Marxist overtones¹⁰, the language, ideas, concepts, propositions and assumptions used as well as the assessment of the situation are characteristics of the political outlook of the progressive movement (including the alternative press).

The article in general was constructed as an interpretation of the socio-political reality of the situation lived and experienced by the majority of the colonised Namibian people. The interpretation of this situation is informed by background information - the hard realities - these people experienced because of colonial domination. The article is thus an interpretation of the shared experiences of the media activists and their target audience.

⁹See the editorial titled: "Forward to a People's State" in the *Student Voice of Namibia*, Vol.4, No.5, Nov./Dec. 1988, p7.

¹⁰Not all the alternative papers were Marxist in orientation as some were feminist, nationalist, religious and liberal in approach.

The concepts or lexical registers (words and phrases) used by the media activists are traces of the interpretation of this situation. These lexical registers are highlighted here below.

... the struggle ... in Namibia ... is ... about
... new order ... the struggle ... is to change
their lives ... the struggle ... to find a new
state ... that is progressive and revolutionary
... Namibia is characterised by colonial apart-
heid capitalism ... people are divided ...
colonial state is supporting puppets, capitalists
and reactionaries ... colonial state's policies
are against our people ... Our people do not
support government because it is oppressing them ...
the state is not neutral ... it is on the side of
the colonialists ... the state does not represent
the people's interests ... the people support the
liberation movement ... the liberation struggle is
against the colonial state ... the struggle is
to replace the state with a new state ... the
majority shall be dominant in the new state ...
policies of the new state shall be in the inte-
rests of the people ... proper assessment and
preparations ... mobilisation of our people ...
down street level ... is needed ... In this way
masses will increase influence over the state ...

These lexical registers impose assumptions and serve as ideological cues to assist the target audience in interpreting the article, and represent 'explanations' which articulate what the target audience should think and know about their lived situation. The lexical registers are formal properties of the text (article) and are what the target audience is likely to carry away from it. This process, as Fowler suggests, is not explicit but implied, and lies embedded in assumptions and associations that are located as much with the reader as with the author.¹¹

¹¹Fowler, 1992, p232

The choice of words has an ideological dimension. The media activists for instance speak of "Namibia" and not of "South West Africa", of a "struggle" and not of a "revolt" or an "uprising". The media activists further "hail" their target audience as the "oppressed" and not for instance as "agitators" or a "mob" for that matter, as the colonialists would have preferred. Such words and phrases oppose the apartheid discourse and the media activists have, through their continuous usage in their publications, hoped to provide an oppositional understanding of the situation, which challenges the reality presented by the dominant bloc.

It should also be noted that members of the audience are not empty vessels into which meaning and interpretation are poured without their participation. They are active in the process of interpreting such articles.¹² While the article carries meaning (interpretation) of the situation experienced, the audience on the other hand also carry part of that meaning in their heads as background information.¹³ This is what Fairclough has referred

¹²It should also be emphasised that newspaper articles do not have fixed meanings, but are open to different interpretations. The meaning is not necessarily in the article, but in the process of reading it. Reading is thus an active process involving negotiation between the reader and the text. Readers bring to bear upon the written piece their own set of expectations informed by background information they carry in their heads (or store in their memories). See Fiske, 1987, "Active Audience", in Television and Culture.

¹³See Jensen, K.B., 1987. The Qualitative Audience Research: Towards an Integrative Approach to Reception.

to as "members' resources" (MR).¹⁴ It is argued that the readers of our article have a set of expectations which they will bring to bear upon it. They will activate their members' resources in the process of understanding these concepts, propositions and assumptions (incoming information) contained in the article. They will first have to negotiate with these issues before deciding upon a particular reading of the article.

While it is expected that readers with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds as well as with various political and ideological persuasions will provide different readings of the said article, it is expected that some readers whose background situations are in conformity with the lived experiences outlined in the article are likely to provide a favourable reading of the article.¹⁵ However, we have seen that the media activists as ideologues, imposed assumptions upon the text (article) in order to influence a preferred reading¹⁶ (positive interpretation) of the messages by the reading public. In this way they positioned

¹⁴Members' Resources according to Fairclough are what people have in their head and draw upon when they are interpreting media text. These include their knowledge of language, representation of their natural and social worlds, their values, norms, beliefs, assumptions, etc. See Fairclough, 1989, p24.

¹⁵See the thesis of "preferred reading" (encoding/decoding theory) in Hall, 1980; Fiske, 1987 and Morley, 1983. The discussion here is presented as a working hypothesis, research in this area is awaited with regard to the reception of the messages of the Namibian alternative press by its target audience.

¹⁶The "preferred reading", according to Morley means the "mechanisms which prefers one reading over other readings; the means which the encoder uses to try to win the assent of the audience to his/her particular reading of the message". See Morley, 1983, p108.

their target audience through ideological cues in such a way that they (target audience) bring ideologies to the interpretation of the article and reproduces these ideologies in the process.¹⁷

Having discussed this we now to return to the article and assesses what it attempts to convey to the readers. It first and foremost defines the situation in which the Namibian people find themselves : a "colonial situation" characterised by "apartheid capitalism". This is a situation in which the victims are not helpless, but engaged in a "struggle" : a liberation struggle to free themselves from "domination". This struggle is waged in order to "change the lives" of "the oppressed" and to create a "new order".

The article further explains the existing social relationship characterised by two opposing forces in an equal relationship. These forces were the masses (workers, peasants and other section of the oppressed people) on the one hand, and the colonialists (capitalists and settlers) on the other. This paradigm postulated an antagonistic relationship characterised by conflict, as the interests of these two groups were incompatible. Between these two forces stands the "colonial state" which is not neutral but favours the dominant bloc.

¹⁷See Fairclough, 1989, p85. The assumption that informs this analysis is that the media text do not spout ideology, but that it positions the readers in such a way that he/she brings ideology to the interpretation process of the text.

The state does not represent the interests of the Namibian people. The people support the "liberation movement" which has a programme catering for their interests. Most important, the "struggle" is about the "replacement" of the "colonial state" by a new one which will cater for the interests of the masses. This new state, according to the article, will be a democratic one, implying that the present one is not democratic. The article in conclusion emphasises the "mobilisation of our people" and the creation of alternative "people's structures" in order to heighten their consciousness.

By defining the situation in which the colonised found themselves, their relationship to the dominant bloc and by identifying them as distinct groups or classes from the dominant ones, it is argued that the media activists sought to create an oppositional identity and subjectivity in the target audience and thereby attempt to secure a different *weltanschauung* to the one presented by the colonial regime.

The media activists thus, served as ideologues who through their publications facilitated the dissemination of oppositional ideologies to the dominant ones prevailing at the time. In Bozzoli's terminology they were "ideological and political craftsmen whose ability to weave ideologies in the everyday language used by the masses was very successful".¹⁸

¹⁸Bozzoli, 1981, p11

In their attempt to achieve an explanatory reach of their messages and credibility thereof, the media activists did not only confine themselves to the infusion of ideology into the ordinary language, but also directly voiced the concerns of their constituencies in their articles and editorials in order to achieve "points of identification"¹⁹. The concerns of their target audience were voiced as their concerns and they took upon themselves to raise them. This was done in two ways: by directly taking the voice of their target audience, and also by speaking on their behalf, as we can see from these examples below. The taking of the voice of the audience is illustrated as follows:

Historically and legally your (the Union's) claim of South West Africa is unjust. And that is why the world cannot support you...

The underlying motives of the Union during the Great War of 1914-18 as well as Smuts' when he co-created the mandate system, are well known to the people of South West Africa. It is obvious the motives were not Christian but imperialistic. Hence the complications in the Charter of the League of Nations and the Union's bad reputation in the mandated territory.

We do not propose to argue the legal aspect which Mrs Millen dealt with in her second article on South West Africa, but prefer to take the case to the International Court of Justice this year. The Court will not only give a better legal exposition but the right of action as well. And the dreary talk which our writer refers to will definitely end.

Now, Sarah-Gertrude Millen, South Africa listen here once and for all: We do not want you, whether as a colonial power or a trustee, to rule us. We know that you are interested in our country for economic and strategic reasons and do not need your long explanations. We repeat, we do not want you. Hands off South West

¹⁹By 'points of identification' I am referring to the experiences the media activists shared with their audience with regard to the colonial situation. Both the media activists and their audience were exposed to colonial repression.

Africa.²⁰

In this example the alternative media activists directly take the 'voice' of their target readers. Note especially the personal pronoun 'We' in the editorial, which refers to the colonised masses (their target audience).

The second example:

... The majority of the population are well aware that theirs is not firm commitment to Resolution 435; it is pure opportunism and a case of "obeying their bosses" that prevents them from declaring Resolution 435 dead and buried.

The population also know why the interim government fears the implementation of this plan; and if they truly intended it, should be implemented, then they would continue in the trend of what is set down in the plan for bringing about of change in Namibia, which includes the scrapping of apartheid; ethnic governments and so on.

... In addition the interim government, as Namibians, have no right to collaborate with the South Africans in robbing their fellow countrymen of something promised to them in terms of the League of Nations' Mandate: "shall promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress of the inhabitants of the territory", and furthermore, to lead them to self-determination and independence.²¹

In this example the progressive media activists are not directly taking the voice of their target readers, but are speaking on their behalf. Note the following: "The majority of the population are well aware ..." and "The population also know

²⁰South West News, No.4, Saturday, June 25, 1960, p1

²¹The Namibian, Friday, July 24, 1987, p10

why ... ". By 'taking the voice' of their target audience and by 'speaking on their behalf', the media activists played a campaign role of openly shaping and structuring public opinion.

The above-mentioned examples have a potential ideological significance. The alternative press in these examples articulate what its target audience was supposed to think and say about their situation. Through these strategies the media activists sought to canvass and enlist public legitimacy for their views and ideas about the situation faced by their target audience. That shows how the progressive media activists attempted to shape and structure an oppositional culture, which was destined to challenge and oppose the South African apartheid hegemony.

I have attempted to demonstrate how the media activists tried to achieve identification with their audience by using the language in order to gain the audience's complicity and suggest "preferred readings" of their messages. I have further demonstrated how the media activists voiced the concerns of their audience by taking the voice of their audience as well as speaking on their behalf. I will now proceed to look at the type of the messages carried by the alternative press and how these messages were constructed in attempting to mobilise and politicise the target audience for social change.

THE MESSAGES

The progressive media activists in the dissemination of their ideology-infused messages, I will argue, were involved in a

process of ideological mobilisation. Ideological mobilisation, to paraphrase Therborn (1980), implies the fusion and condensation of several ideological discourses into specific threats, expressed into simple slogans.²² The fusion and condensation of political and ideological slogans in the Namibian context cannot however, be solely ascribed to the media activists,²³ but was a combined initiative between the media activists and their powerful news sources (the leaders of the progressive movement). These sources in some instances served as "primary definers"²⁴ of issues and events, which the alternative press carried and addressed.

The relationship between the media activists and their news sources needs to be explored further in a separate study. For the present purpose it suffices to note that this relationship had symbiotic and ideological dimensions. It was through this relationship that the ideologies of the progressive movement were transmitted and conveyed to the broader audience as ideological discourses.

Among the slogans created by the primary definers of news during the turbulent years of the liberation struggle, two stood very

²²p117

²³This, however, does not negate the autonomy of the media activists in constructing their own messages and slogans. What is being emphasised is that in some instances the media activists functioned as secondary definers of issues and events, while the leadership of the progressive movement assumed the role of primary definers of this issues at times.

²⁴See Hall, 1978, "Social Production of News", pp57, 58.

prominently, namely, "One Namibia, One Nation" and "435 Now!". The media activists assumed the responsibility of popularising and emphasising these slogans, by constantly focusing on their implications in their publications.

The "One Namibia, One Nation" slogan called for a united Namibian nation, free of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, class or ethnic origin and a unitary state not balkanised into homelands (or reserves). The slogan proposed a direct opposition to the colonial discourse exercised through apartheid, racism, ethnic division and bantustanisation (the divide and rule approach of the South African regime).

In their assessment the progressive media activists saw that the then dominant discourse of apartheid was based on its practice which,

by its very nature divides and destroys...
Apartheid inevitably forces people of different
tribes and cultures apart and thereby creates
hostility and enmity ...²⁵

The second slogan of "435 Now", was a call for the independence of the country from colonial rule. It was based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 435 which provided for an internationally supervised election in the territory. The resolution 435 promised the independence of Namibia from the South African colonialism, which was agreed upon by all the parties to the Namibian conflict, including South Africa.

²⁵CCN Information, October 1982, p4

The media activists took upon themselves to campaign for the immediate and unconditional implementation of the resolution because of the South African delaying tactics. They expressed their disappointment in the delay as follows:

Our freedom and liberation remain but dreams as long as we are being ruled by a foreign country, by a foreign power, as long as we remain a colony, as long as we are prevented from becoming independent and as long as we are prevented from electing our own leaders, our own government, in a free, fair and supervised elections.²⁶

One Namibia, One Nation

The discourse of unity among the colonised people was very much pertinent to the media activists and all the alternative publications carried messages to this effect. The idea was to unite the people into a single force as a precondition for the attainment of political hegemony.²⁷

The media activists for instance felt that the unity of the colonised people was "being prevented from becoming a reality by the sin of apartheid, division, separation and ethnicity, exaggerated as it is in Namibia".²⁸ They highlighted the South African regime's contradictory conceptualisation of unity and its fear of the colonised people's unity and further pointed out at the advantages of unity of the colonised black Namibians.

²⁶Angelus, Jan./Dec. 1987, p10

²⁷Pakleppa interview, 1995

²⁸see Angelus, January/February 1987, p10

In an article in the *Immanuel* titled "Political Unity".²⁹, the media activists questioned the regime's tactics of dividing the black people. They emphasised political unity among the colonised people, maintaining that this transcended differences between people. What was of importance was the "ultimate objective", which could be the "unifying factor".³⁰

It is this goal which has united the whites in maintaining the status quo. What happened to the animosity between the German and the English during the Second World War? Between the Afrikaner and the English during the Anglo-Boer War? Today they are united in oppressing the Blacks, as if there was no hostility between them.

Do the Whites speak one language? Is there something such as one European culture? In so far as the Spanish and the Norwegian, as far as the culture is concerned? Or are the differences between the Black people more conspicuous, more unacceptable?

For the majority of the Black population there is only one end objective: the doing away with the South African Government and all its diabolic practices; the independence of Namibia as a unitary state; sufficient unitary factor to unite the Black people irrespective of origin, religion, culture and language. Yet there are some who see this aspiration towards unity as an obstacle, simply because this unity will mean the end of oppression.

When it comes to the black people then it is only when we hear that there will be political domination of one tribe by the other and civil war when Namibia becomes independent. Why does this possibility not exist among the Whites?³¹

Not only did the intellectuals appeal to the masses to unite, but constantly reminded and urged the leaders of the progressive

²⁹see *Immanuel*, June 1975, p11

³⁰ibid

³¹ibid. This article was translated from Afrikaans into English by the author.

organisations to work towards unity. They reflected this appeal in their columns.

Probably the most pressing problem of all, and one which needs to be addressed, not only by Swapo, but all organisations termed as 'progressive' in the country, is the vital question of unity: how to achieve it and practically implement.

Namibia is probably at the most divisive stage of its history. It can almost be said that the South African Government has succeeded beyond its own expectations, increasing division and disunity among Namibians.³²

While the ultimate goal of the progressive movement was unity of all the "oppressed people" at national level, united groups with sectoral objectives, such as women's-, workers'- and students' movements were encouraged and the alternative publications carried, in addition to national unity, messages focusing on unity among these sectors. The following example illustrates this point:

Groups are stronger than individuals. Most women in their homes or workplace are alone against men who want to dominate them. To secure a position of strength in a future Namibia we must form organisations to demand and to protect our rights. We must build strong structures to unite women and we must remember that our best weapon in the struggle is our collective, organised strength.³³

In another example the media activists called for the formation of pressure groups to address specific issues such as education:

In emergent Namibia, parents would be expected to demand more education for their children. Black parents should involve themselves more than ever in the decision-making process and should form parents-

³²The Namibian, Friday, February 5, 1988, p10

³³Sister, Vol.1, No.1, July 1989, p1

teachers associations for bargaining powers and to negotiate terms and bases on which Black children in this country should be educated.³⁴

The community press, more specifically, lay emphasis on the organisation of civil society, through the establishment and strengthening of community-based organisations. The objective of the community-based organisations was self reliance, through the creation of alternative structures. The media activists propagated the importance of such structures, arguing that:

People learn how to think critically and detect lies. People learn how to organise, to use their bodies and minds to do things for themselves. People understand their history, the present and know what they want for the future. People live as human beings when they are involved in community based organisations, and they refuse to be slaves of the colonialists.³⁵

In the messages the media activists urged their audience to be vigilant against the manoeuvres of the regime and often criticised them for falling into the regime's traps. After a critical analysis of the composition and practice of the black soccer team during the 1960s, for instance, the media activists noted that while soccer was the "only organised game", it still "cast a shameful picture" since it was organised along tribal lines.³⁶

The media activists noted that because of that division, soccer matches were seen as "inter-tribal competitions with victory

³⁴*Speak Out*, April 1986, p3

³⁵*Bricks*, March/April 1987, p4

³⁶*South West News*, June 25, 1960, p4

being hailed as triumph over the inferior, a sign of tribal complex."³⁷ According to them the "smallest misunderstanding among the players on the pitch, at times, leads to friction among spectators of the different sections".³⁸

The media activists took to task their target audience (which were also the players and spectators), urging them to desist from the racial and tribal practices propagated by the regime for its own benefit.

In our daily life we proclaim to fight tribalism and racism in every form they appear, yet in this particular case we remain unconcerned. Is this a shameless surrender? Let those who care for the interests and welfare of their people heed this: An ideal cannot be attained by a mere declaration of lofty principles, but by the practical application of such principles in all spheres of life.³⁹

In a strong and unequivocal terms the media activists in their reports and articles urged the target audience to openly defy the South Africa 'racist' policies.

This means a concerted and open resistance and disobedience to all those laws which divide and violate and deny the dignity and equality of all human beings.⁴⁰

435 Now

The "435 Now" call was an appeal to all the "oppressed people" to dedicate themselves to the liberation struggle in order to

³⁷South West News, June 25, 1960, p4

³⁸ibid

³⁹ibid

⁴⁰CCN Information, October, 1982, p4

achieve freedom and independence. The ideological discourse around which this call centred was unambiguous:

Comrades, the real issue is for the Namibian people to make a bold choice between continued oppression and colonialism offered by South Africa and her puppets on the one hand, and genuine freedom and national independence offered by Swapo of Namibia on the other hand. It is clear that the students and the broad masses of our country are tired of colonialism and want genuine independence and freedom.⁴¹

The media activists made it clear to the masses that in the struggle for freedom and independence the people themselves were their own liberators. To this effect, they propagated the conscious mobilisation of the people in order to wage the struggle to its logical conclusion, despite the hardships they might endure to that effect.

In the midst of this harsh repression, the challenge to us students and the people of Namibia has become that of intensified effective organising. The time has come for us the youth of Namibia to dedicate and commit ourselves to the struggle for national liberation. It is for us to take up the challenge facing us and to wage the struggle up to its logic conclusion ...⁴²

The intellectuals time and again analyzed the prevailing situation and the strategies of the regime and informed their audience accordingly. But again, they always encouraged and urged them to rise to the occasion irrespective of the hardships they might encounter in executing their 'historic duty'.

After exhausting a lot of power they had as a result

⁴¹*Student Voice of Namibia*, July/August 1989, Vol.5, No.3, p2

⁴²*ibid*

of their complete control of our national wealth and resources, as well as their complete control over the social institutions, such as schools, media, etc, the colonial oppressors and their local backers are only left with one alternative: the use of brutal force to suppress the genuine aspirations of the people of Namibia. Thus, violence in whatever form, whether physical, political, economical, cultural or social, is the only avenue open for them to continue dominating the oppressed people of Namibia.

Therefore, such violent actions should sharpen our commitment and determination to fight tirelessly until final victory. Independence of our country lies in our own hands, through collective and unified actions. Namibia will be free.⁴³

In addition, the media activists encouraged the leaders of the progressive movement to take their responsibility seriously. Time and again they reminded them of this responsibility towards the masses. They provided the leadership of the progressive movement with ideas, strategies and suggestions on how best to serve their followers. They advised the leadership on the organisational and mobilisation strategies and on how to counter the regime's manoeuvres. In this way the media activists served both the masses and the leadership. The following example illustrates this point.

In order to draw up a practical plan of action for the future - the goal being a free and independent Namibia in which justice and peace prevails - parties, individuals and organisations need to reassess the activities of the past year, and decide whether progress (if any) has been made towards the ultimate goal of removing Africa's last colony from the yoke of South African colonialism.

As far as political parties are concerned, there is a need for drastic re-organisation and re-assessment on the part of the progressive groups. In most of these parties, including Swapo, there is a need for new leadership, new strategies, new attempts at mobili-

⁴³ibid, p1

sation and new action to get them out of the dormancy mode. The Council of Churches too, needs to re-evaluate its service to the community and the 86 per cent of the population who are members.

While the people as a whole expect little or nothing from either the South African Government or its proxy Government in Namibia; they do expect some leadership, some guidance and some concrete actions from alternative groups. Namibians should cease looking abroad for a solution, instead they should attempt to be masters of their own fate. The only way in which they can do this is to jerk themselves out of their apathetic state; out of the dormancy into which they have fallen; address the issues which need addressing; and renew their commitment to the people they claim to represent.⁴⁴

Finally the media activists urged all the "oppressed people" to be determined and courageous in their struggle, knowing that in the end they will be victorious and that the country will be free.

As we are moving towards scoring our final victory against racist South Africa, let us be strong in order to be able to hit hard and deliver a final blow.⁴⁵

The primary objective of the messages outlined above was to provide a common political agenda for the majority of the colonised Namibian people. This agenda as Therborn reminds us implies the "summing up the dominant aspects of crisis, identifying the crucial targets, the essence of evil and defining what is possible and how it should be achieved".⁴⁶ The political agenda set by the media activists sought to resist the

⁴⁴*The Namibian*, Friday, December 1987, p14

⁴⁵*Student Voice of Namibia*, Vol.4, No.4, September/October 1988, p2

⁴⁶Therborn, 1980, p116

dominant bloc's attempts at ideological control and to nurture a culture of resistance among the colonised masses, and thereby set the stage for the process of social change.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the intellectual work the media activists were involved in. This activity was performed in the columns of their publications. It involved the definition and presentation of the needs and interests of their target audience and the provision of strategies of how best these aspirations should be realised.

The intellectuals re-formulated the interests and needs of the audience in such a way that they could be identified as different from the colonisers. Their aspirations were in collision with those of the dominant bloc. In doing this they hoped to create and a different version of social reality and thereby bring into being new mode of thoughts and weltanschauung among the ranks of their constituencies.

The media activists manipulated the language to help the audience understand and accept their messages and to create a favourable condition for the expansion of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid ideologies. In these messages they analyzed the prevailing situation, highlighted its contradictions and provided methods of how social change could be initiated. The media activists guided their people's resistance to colonialism and enhanced their efforts towards sovereignty.

Through their alternative publications the intellectuals sought to provide a horizon of thought and action within which their target audience could operate. This in itself demonstrates that the intellectuals were a crucial element of the thinking, mobilising and organising strata of the colonised Namibian people's struggle for the attainment of political hegemony.

SECTION FIVE

ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER TWELVE : CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to show the emergence and development of the alternative press in Namibia from 1960 to 1990. It has been argued that the alternative press emerged to cover and address issues and aspirations of the colonised Namibians, due to their marginalisation in the mainstream colonial press. It has also been pointed out that the alternative press did not only cover or record issues relevant to its target audience, but intervened in this process through its subjective and advocacy journalism as can be seen from the language used and messages carried in Chapter 11.

The alternative press was owned and controlled by people and organisations who operated outside the South African colonial hegemony. This, together with the sources of funding and advertisements enabled the alternative press to challenge the dominant discourse.

One of the most striking features of the alternative press was its rejection of profit. It adopted a political motive instead. Appeals for advertisements by some alternative papers were aimed at self-sufficiency rather than for profit per se.

With regard to the organisational structures, most of the alternative publications depicted loose structures, devoid of heavy bureaucracies and hierarchies. This enabled and enhanced collective responsibility in the running of the publication and

facilitated an egalitarian approach to the news production process.

Most of the alternative papers, with the exception of the *South West News* and *The Namibian*, eschewed conventional journalistic practice of objective, fair and impartial reporting. They embraced a philosophy of subjective and advocacy journalism. This was because the media practitioners of this press had a political agenda which was to guide their audience in the process of attaining political hegemony. The *South West News* and *The Namibian*, while operating within conventional practices were still committed to the goals of the progressive movement.

The relevance of the theoretical frameworks used in this study lies in the fact that they provide us with an understanding of how a colonised people, denied access to the mainstream communication system of a country, set up an alternative communication system to cater for their interests.

The fundamental contention attached to the role of the media in the mainstream communication research has been the presentation of media as the instrument of the ruling elites in maintaining social control.¹ Such perspectives do not provide for an understanding of the media that arise from the ranks of the subordinated class and serve to challenge the elites at social control. This, in a nutshell, explains the utility of the theoretical frameworks used in this study.

¹See White, 1983, p290

Of foremost importance to the theoretical frameworks used are the functions performed by the media activists. The struggle for the attainment of hegemony is guided by "organic intellectuals" in a dialectical relationship with the masses. The present study has attempted to show how the intellectuals (media activists) have guided this process in the Namibian context, by using their alternative publications. Through the alternative press the media activists sought to mobilise, organise and politicise the masses to develop a critical self-consciousness which enabled them to challenge the dominant discourse and to proceed in their pursuit of political autonomy.

The intellectual activities of the media activists can be seen from the content of the alternative press. The decision to cover issues and events neglected by the mainstream press was in itself a political act. The media activists in this way set out to bring into the mainstream certain practices and activities (such as human rights abuses committed by the regime against the oppressed) which the colonialists wanted to go unreported. They also chronicled the struggle of the grassroots which hardly ever made headlines in the mainstream press. They covered activities of the exiled liberation movement which the regime had blacked out.

The ideological function of the alternative press came very strongly in the language and the messages the media activists used in the publications. The language presented to the audience

was manipulated in such a way that they could recognise themselves in it. This was such that the audience could see that they were the ones the media activists were speaking to and that it were their grievances and aspirations which were being addressed. This, thus, delineates the political and ideological roles of the alternative press.

The achievement of the alternative press relates to the facilitation of participation of the disadvantaged people in issues and activities which influence their lives in order to enable them to work towards the betterment of their situation. By participation the alternative press sought to nourish grassroots democracy and the active involvement of the people in civil society.

It provided a voice and a platform to the many voiceless Namibians from where they could air their hopes and aspirations, despite the conspicuous absence of their issues in the mainstream press. As one media activist remarked: "It was an achievement that the people could now have their own press they could relate to".² In the same vein another activists argued that the creation of the alternative press was "an act of empowerment", as people were empowered to speak for themselves and made their voices heard.³

²Kondombolo interview, 1994

³Strauss interview, 1995

The alternative press helped to forge ideological and political unity among the people and enhance social dialogue. It also filled the gap caused by the absence of rural and vernacular newspapers.

The alternative press was, in itself an evidence of people's resistance against the colonial domination.⁴ Media activists argued that this press "radicalised the masses, through the development of a radical memory and a radical reminder of the harsh conditions people were living in".⁵

The alternative press, however, encountered problems and had some shortcomings, both external and internal.⁶ External problems related to the whole hostile environment in which it operated. The state was hostile towards it and its protagonists. It demonstrated this by the banning of some editions of the publications, detaining media activists and raiding their offices.⁶

⁴Pakleppa interview, 1995

⁵ibid. A separate study is needed to assess the impact and role of the alternative press, as has been indicated already in the introduction.

⁶While this hostile environment has not been adequately elaborated in the study, reference is, however, made about intimidation campaigns directed towards *The Namibian* in Chapter 4 for instance. The offices of the community press were raided occasionally, according to activists interviewed. The church press was also target as indicated in Chapter 2, in the forms of verbal threats and sabotage of its printing press. See also Mwase, 1988, Molea, 1983 and Herbstein, 1985. Herbstein (1985) provides an account of the draconian press laws enforced by South Africa on the Namibian media, including the Alternative Press.

Other external problems can be placed at the door of the liberation movement itself. The main liberation movement, Swapo, was against the idea of grassroots organisations, including the press which sought to mobilise civil society for its immediate concerns. The argument advanced was that grassroots struggles would divert the attention of the people from the main issue of political independence. This could be one of the reasons which limited the development of some of the community organisations and community papers. While a brief mention has been made about the above-mentioned dilemma in Chapter 3, and despite comments by some authors on the issue, such as Becker, 1993, Cleaver and Wallace, 1990 and Leys and Saul, 1995, a separate study is still needed to assess the consequences of Swapo's policy on community organisations.

Internal issues related mostly to shortcomings, such as the lack of funds, equipment, skilled personnel to operate the alternative papers in order to increase its reach and penetration into the far flung areas of the country.

No study is however, complete unless it answers questions and raises new ones. The issue of the impact of the alternative press, the effectiveness of its messages and the audience reaction, are subjects of interest to future students of the Namibian media. The present study did not intend to address these aspects. The study also suggests research to establish the role of the mainstream colonial media in assisting the dominant bloc in its attempts at hegemony. It will be interesting to find

out how the Afrikaner press, assisted the Afrikaners in drawing their erstwhile enemies, the Germans, into a dominant bloc, which came to rule and oppress the black Namibians. How for instance did the Afrikaner press contribute to the hegemony of the South African colonial authorities in the territory? What was the role and contribution of the South African Broadcasting Corporation and its subsidiary the SWABC in ideological indoctrination and the maintenance of the South African authority? These are some of the issues and questions the present study has brought to the fore.

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E. INTERVIEWS

Dempers Uhuru, September 16, 1994, Windhoek.

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Eises Auguste, (a) March 8, 1993, Windhoek
(b) September 14, 1994, Windhoek.

Katjiuanjo Steve, May 25, 1995, Windhoek.

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Pakleppa Richard, June 23, 1995, Windhoek.

Veii Gerson, July 22, 1994, Windhoek.

Wellerdieck Irmburga, September 24, 1994, Dobra (Windhoek).

South West News

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 Price 6d. (Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.) SATURDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER, 1960. No. 9.

The Woman behind the Move



Miss Angie Brooks, assistant Secretary of State (Liberia) who spoke for her country on the South West Africa issue at last year's session of the UN General Assembly. She is seen here with Mr. Telli, Guinea Ambassador, described by Mr. Kerina as a "symbol of the new African woman" Miss Brooks proved that not only men, but women as well want independence for African colonies.

Kindiauda inda paraisina Miss Angie Brooks na Liberia puna o Ambassador ja Guinea Mr. Telli. Miss Brooks eje lunne usimbu mlekondjersa angutukira jehi retu. Eje usaisa nijihurera nijina kuje kutja angutukira jehi isokhurena lahe nomukazendu nomumendu.

ATTENTION!
 Kindly Notice Change of Address:
 Our New Postal Address is:
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SEE MATIARERO-DAY
 CELEBRATIONS
 ON PAGE 4
 IN THIS ISSUE.

Unless otherwise stated, all political news, comment and headlines in this issue of "South West News" by: Hapei German Van, of 117, Windhoek Location.

Addressing the Committee on South West Africa — Mburumba Kerina had this to say among other things "this year we will mobilize all the resources at our disposal to have the case of South West Africa taken to the International Court of Justice for compulsory jurisdiction — this is our first positive step towards the complete emancipation of our country from the Union Government and I am convinced that the future is in our favour, very soon South West Africa will have African Ministers in its Government".

Both photos U.N.

The "International Delinquent" will be taken to the International Court

In defence of his stand against South Africa, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana said the South African Government was an "international delinquent" and had to be dealt with accordingly. That was said in connection with the trade boycott and other measures by the Ghana government aimed at forcing the Union to abandon her racial policies. The other move is that of taking the "delinquent" to the International Court for its compulsory jurisdiction in respect of the South West Africa issue.

Speaking in New York early this month the resourceful South West African spokesman at the United Nations, Mr. Mburumba Kerina said the African States with representation at the United Nations will collectively present the case early next year before the International Court of Justice at The Hague, Netherlands.

"Liberia and Ethiopia will offer a team of lawyers to augment a panel of international jurists who will present the case against South Africa", he said.

Mr. Kerina who is on Liberian government payroll, is engaged in a research for the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the UN. His research borders on writing a thesis on the atrocities and other repressive conducts committed by the government of South Africa against our people.

Mr. Kerina also visited West Africa this year where he met President Tubman and Secretary of State Cranes, both of Liberia, and with whom he had successful talks, according to a Liberian newspaper.



BRICKS

NIE-PROFYT GEMEENSKAPSKOERANT
OL. 3 NO. 5 JULIE/AUGUSTUS 1987 20c

Die vampiere is op ons

“Die onderdrukte moet terugveg”

aliteit regoor die neem op 'n daaglik-basis toe. "Geweld is geweld" is 'n bekende spreekwoord. hierdie toestand 'n oniese en voorbe-ke karakter gee is die skynlike toestem-ting van diegene in be-van koloniale struk-(en hul zombie-ge meelopers se rbare stilsweye).

IRBEELDE

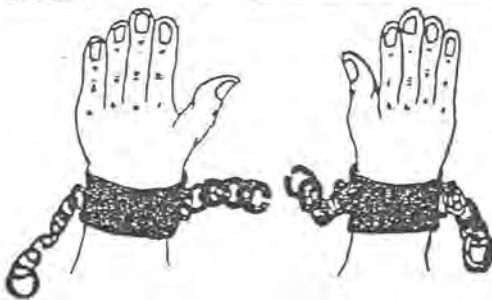
Die hostels vir oorwe-ting Ovambo-sprekende trekarbe-

de basis. Elke slag kom die naam Swapol-Tin (of koevoet soos hulle "populêr" bekend staan) ter sprake.

SIEKTE

Vrae wat opkom is baie. Met kritiese ontleding kom die Namibiane wat nog saniteit oor het aan oplossings laat dink.

Ons kan nie soos lam-mers na die slagpale ge-lui word nie. Ons bly eg-ter voorlopig by net 'n paar vrae (die oplos-sings moet NOU deur el-ke regdenkende Namibi-



**BRICKS
DEUR DIE
MENSE VIR
DIE
MENSE**

aan uitgewerk word.

1. MOET ONS DIE ON-LOGIESE AANRANDING OP ONS AANVAAR?
2. INDIEN ONS DIT NIE AANVAAR NIE, WAT STAAN ONS TE DOEN?
3. OF IS ONS AL SIEL-KUNDIG SO AF-GESTOMP? DAT ONS VRAE EEN EN TWEE GAAN IGNOREER?

BRICKS MAAK 'N STEL-LING: ONS KAN NOG

Eenheid
bou
krag

Bricks

(NON-PROFIT)
COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER
P. O. Box 20642
WINDHOEK 9000 NAMIBIA
P. A. de Wet Street KATUTURA

LEES
BINNE

Moeders van ons volk word uitgebuit

Bl. 2

Pryse skok

Bl. 3

Het jy 'n boertjie in jou kop?

Bl. 4

Napdi Kursus

Bl. 5

Dwelms: 'n Ge-vaar

Bl. 6

Siektes broei uit stelsel

Bl. 7

Gedigte

Bl. 8

ders in Windhoek en Luderitz word hard-handig deursoek. Fi-siese kontak met die inwoners lei tot bloed van laasge-noemde orals.

'n Swapo-jeugliga vergadering het tot gevolg; aanranding van jonk en oud, Traanrook, rubber-koëls, bloed, woede, vrees en leuens.

aslike dag en week-

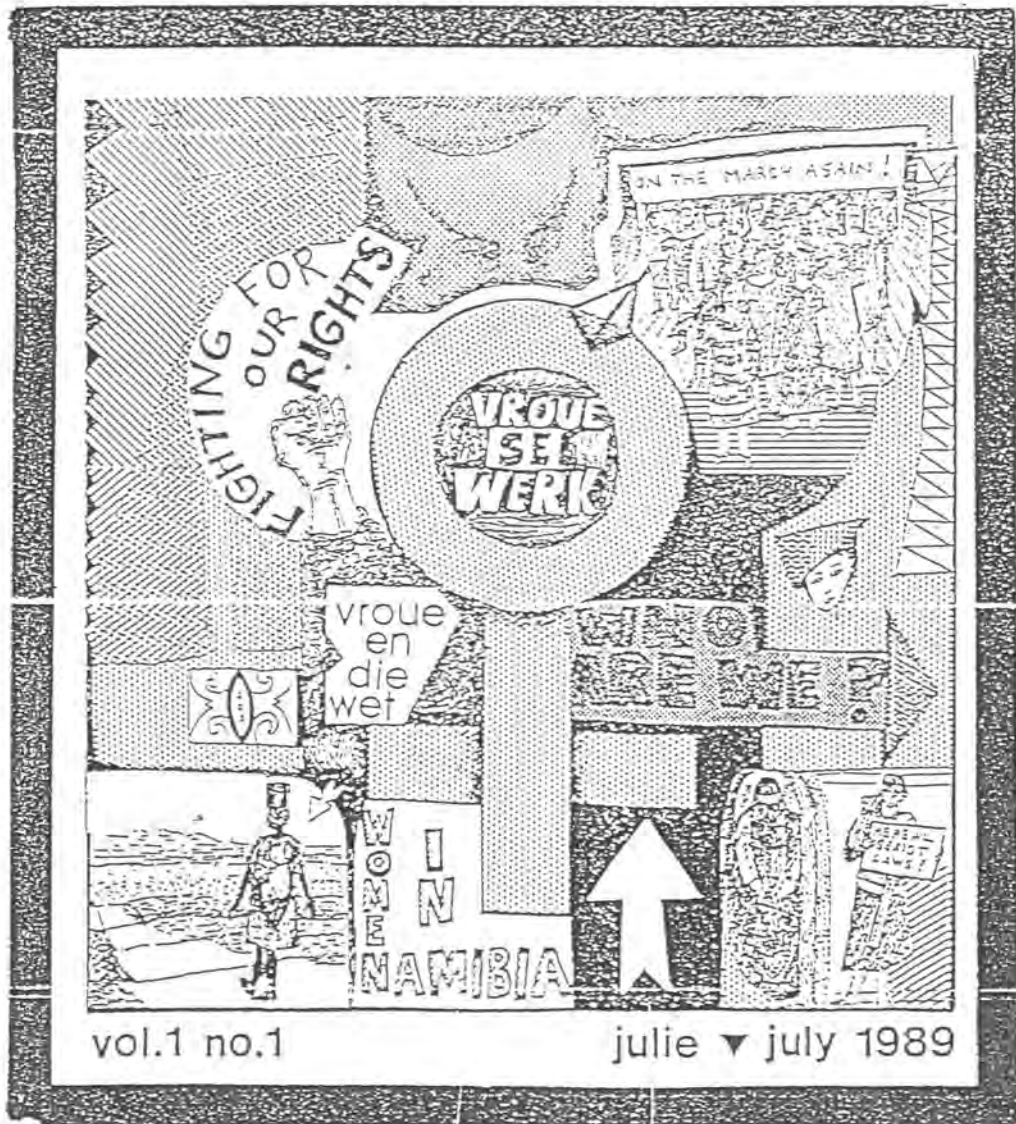
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N A M I B I A



vol.1 no.1

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SPEAK OUT

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1988

50 cents

non profit katutura community centre newsletter

Katutura Community Centre's Model Playground Project gets off the ground

The first phase of the Katutura Community Centre model playground project will be inaugurated at the end of November 1988.

The occasion will be celebrated with a week-long feast of song, sport and cultural activities as from Monday November 28th to Sunday December 4th.

When completed, the project will accommodate a junior traffic training area, mini soccer fields and facilities for staging games such as dominoes, draughts, ringboard and kerm-boards.



Project Model! Playground was initiated during August this year by the K.C.C. Management to combat the high rate of road accidents in our townships, especially where pedestrians are involved.

Generally where children are concerned it was found that they were actually playing in streets, at shopping centres, service stations or other unsafe public places with open spaces.

Sometimes they are hit by vehicles while running across the streets without proper caution which is mainly caused by their ignorance of traffic rules.

At the moment there are some climbing structures at government schools and a few private crèches which are mainly for the toddlers. The K.C.C. is aiming for something that will be of interest to the community at large.

The K.C.C. in co-operation with the Windhoek Traffic Department will educate the community by means of lectures, demonstrations and film shows.

The K.C.C. Management would like to thank the following organisations for their support which was more than a stepping stone to start this project:

1. CDM on 24/8/88
2. Sonnex on 25/8/88
3. P.G. Glass on 29/8/88
4. Midmacor on 5/9/88
5. Model on 9/9/88
6. Swabank on 12/9/88

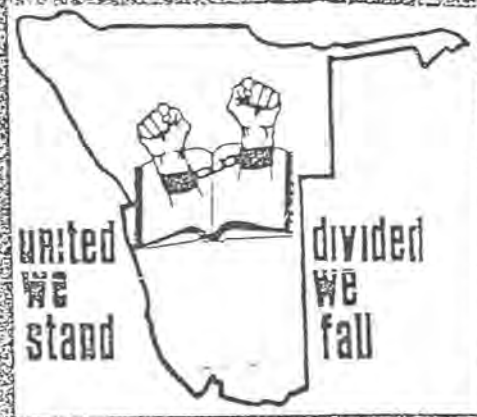
Thank you very much for your understanding and assistance. We are still in need of funds and donations are welcome. Send your contributions to:

*The K.C.C. Playground Project,
P.O. Box 7208 Katutura 9000, Namibia
or Account Number 7003339726
First National Bank Main Branch Windhoek*

Mr Accoty Ouseb, K.C.C. co-ordinator of sport and recreation, advising some of the youngster on how to erect and decorate part of the playground fence during the July school holidays project.



The STUDENT VOICE of NAMIBIA



VOLUME 4 NUMBER 4

50c

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1978



The peaceful 435 demonstration under the banner of the SWAPO youth league which was disrupted by koevoet thugs.

435 ANNIVERSARY SPARKS COLONIAL VIOLENCE

September the 29th marked the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Resolution 435, which is an internationally accepted 'peace plan' for the settlement of the colonial conflict in Namibia leading to free and fair general elections and consequently to Namibia's independence. On that day, the United Nations Security Council accepted the Western Five's proposal and adopted it as a resolution 435.

Since then, the people of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO have campaigned and demanded for its unconditional implementation.

South Africa and USA continued to place obstacles in the road to the implementation of the resolution such as the Cuban withdrawal from the Peoples' Republic of Angola as a precondition to the implementation of 435.

Organised under the banner of the SWAPO Youth League, the Namibian youth took to the streets of Windhoek their disgust against Pretoria's delaying tactics and their consistent demand for the implementation of the 435.

With placards written '435 NOW' and 'NO CUBAN LINKAGE', they marched to the official residence of the South African Administrator.

General in Namibia. The youth's peaceful demonstration was met with state violence and bloodshed, as the colonial task force invaded the peaceful crowd with van loads, handguns, whips and batons. Bloodshed flowed that day, and many people were seriously injured.

The tenth anniversary of 435 came at a time when in certain corners, both at local and international levels, a wave of optimism about the implementation of 435 has increased. However, to the people of Namibia who had still confidence in the current talks, their positive attitudes were shattered by the bloody actions of the racist forces on Thursday, the 29th September.

The events of the day have indicated to us that racist South Africa together with her local puppets, are not really serious with current negotiations. Not only the actions of that day, but also the increasing repressive actions of the colonial forces all over the country.

The present actions of Koevoet and colonial police in many areas such as in Otavi, Oshakati, etc are indications that racist Pretoria does not really want the resolution 435 to be implemented. Even the puppets' insistence on reconciliation before 435 has been

nullified by such actions. "How can they talk of reconciliation if they don't even allow peaceful demonstration to take place?" one seriously-injured comrade asked.

After exhausting a lot of the power they had as a result of their complete control of our national wealth and resources, as well as their complete control over the social institutions such as our schools, media, etc the colonial oppressors and their local backers are only left with one alternative: the use of brutal force to suppress the genuine aspirations of the people of Namibia. Thus, violence in whatever form, whether physical, political, economic, cultural or social, is the only avenue open for them to continue dominating the oppressed people of Namibia.

Therefore, such violent actions should sharpen our commitment and determination to fight tirelessly until final victory. Independence of our country lies in our own hands, through collective and unified actions, Namibia will be free.

INDEPENDENCE OR DEATH, WE SHALL WIN !!!

IMMANUEL

Jaargang 19

Mei/Junie 1980

Nr. 8/9



~~~~~  
"Ons het kom jag mos!"  
Dit is die taalgebruik van  
die kinders by die vuil s-  
loop. Hulle is "op jag na  
kos, na hul lewensbestaan!"  
~~~~~



"Maar wie die goed van die
wêreld het en sy broeder
sien gebrek ly en sy hart
vir hom toesluit hoe bly
die liefde van God in hom?"
1Joh.3:17.
~~~~~

T94/0231

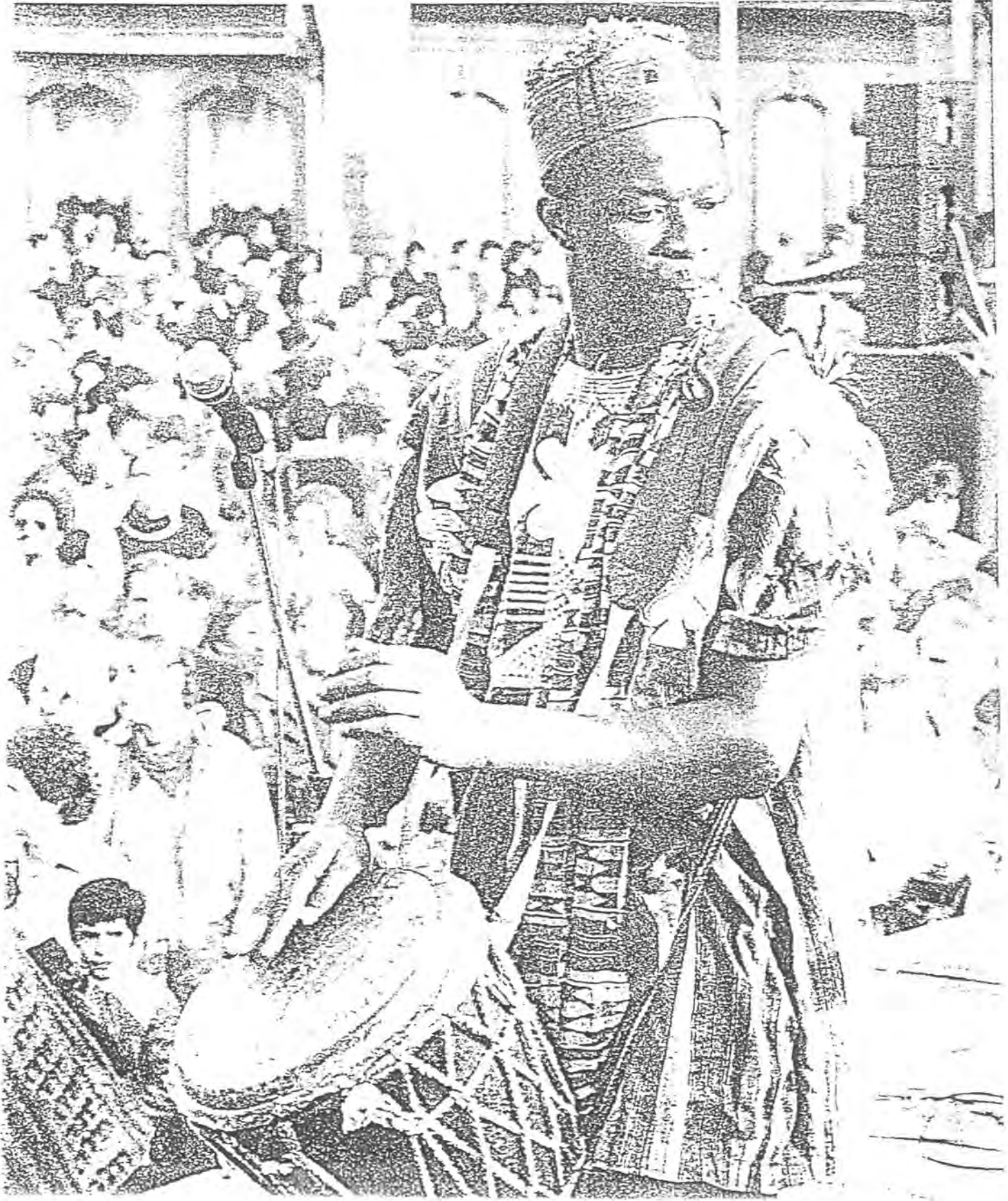
ARGANG 23

NOVEMBER 1985

No 11

# ANGELUS

Geregistreerd by die Hoofposkantoor te Windhoek, prys per eksemplaar 30 sent



1440501



# OMUKWETU

Oshifo shOngerki onkwaevangeli paLuther yomOwambokavango Die Tydskrif van die Evangeliese Lutherse Owambokavango Kerk

No. 17

SEPTEMBER

1968

## OOYAKWETU

Mark. 12: 41-44.

Okwali esiku lyesapati. Jesus okwa yi motempeli ngaashi kwa igilila. Oye okwa tameke okuyuvithila noku ya longa. Oye sho a hulitha oku ya longa, okwa kuutumba a taalela okatungwa kongalo, oshoka ethimbo, lyokuumba ongalo olya thikana. Nomo-kutongolola, oonakuumba ongalo. okwa dhimbulula, oyo oye li moon-gundu mbali. O n g u n d u yimwe oya li ondjambo. Oyo oya tula mo-katungwa kongalo pawindji weliko lyawo. Ihe mokugandja kwawo Omuwa okwa dhimbulula kutya, eyambo lyawo kali na ekwatathano noomwenyo dhawo, onkee ina hokwa okutula mo kwawo mongalo, oshoka uuntsa neinenepoko lye ya kwatele komeho.

O n g u n d u yoohepele. Ongundu ndjoka yaana sha. Ongundu tayi gandja eyambo lyomuselekadhi. Ongundu tayi gandja eyambo li na ekwatathano noomwenyo dhawo. Ongundu Omuwa Jesus te yi popi nokugana. "Oshili mbaka oya tula mo ye vule ooyakwawo, oshoka mbe-ya oya tula mo ihupe yomaliko gawo. Ihe mba oya tula mo moluhepo lwawo ayihe kwa li ye yi na iipalutha yawo."

Onda li nda kuminwa esiku limwe oonakutula mongalo yamwe. Aayakuli yongalo sho ya ka yalula ongallo, oyi itsu mongalo iinima mbika: okasiikilo kokakende "Kacuca," oshipeta shekende (bottel) uumbandi uutokele (knope) oshimaliwa shi na ombululu shimwe shi na edhila lyafa ekodhi. Onda li nda kumwa shili. Tala u tale kuume kandje ngoye Simon nenge Marta. Ando Omuwa Jesus a thikame ete ku pula, eku taalela nomeho ge ga fomulilo ta ti "Simon, oshili mondjato yoye okasiikilo nkano kaCuca a keke u na nenge oshimaliwa shino shombululu nosho tuu?" Ou na tuu omukumo oku mu yamukula "eeno Omuwa oyo ayihe mbika ndi yina."



Pastor Salomo Elago

Tu dhiladhileni Ananias naSafira sho ya pulwa ngele oyo tuu imaliwa mbyoka ye yi landa epya lyawo, Sho ya fundju, nando ya li ye shi shi hayo, yimwe ye yi holeke. Kalunga okwe ya geele ayehe yaali noya si esiku limwe. Pamwe nangoye to ka adhika komupya nguka, sho to kambadhala okufundjaleka aantu nokuya kokatungwa kongalo wa kaminina, oshimaliwa shombululu. Kotoka ino dhana nomulilo oto pi. Iihuna yomuntu oyi vule yombwa, u kuthemo okasiikilo koye, niimaliwa yoye yomadhila gafa omakodhi. Ope na gumwe ha mono meholamo, nokwa tongolola nawa egumbo lyoye. Inatu ifundjalekeni Kalunga iha nyekelwa.

Osondoha yonena oya pewa edhina ndika "OOYAKWETU." Ndishi ngashingeyi oto yi okweeko mondjato, ooyakweni oyenipo moongundu ndhoka mbali twe dhi popi? Omundjoka Omuwa Jesus inaa hokwa eyambo lyawo, nenge oyo ndjoka tayi pandulwa kOmukulili?

Nonena Omukulili ota kala omu-tumba a taalela okatungwa kongalo, megongalo lyaandjeni nokwa tongolola egumbo lyoye. Otse otatu gandja mbyoka ye, oshoka inatu eta sha muuyuni muka, tse ishewe itatu zi mo nasha, oshoka evi olyOmuwa nooha dhalyo, noshaa shoka shuudhilila mo. Nangame ogwe. Omukulili omuholike taamba okayambo kandje nonena ndji.

## OSHIGONGI SHAAGUNDJUKA MOSHITAYINGERKI SHONDONGA

Osha gongala mOshigambo okuza eti-7-9 Juli 1968. Osha kwata ketumbulo: "Dhiginina oshiholelwa shoohapu dha kola" 2Tim. 1: 13. Ayehe ya thiki nawa.

Mohungi yotango yetameko, twa popithwa kutatekulu David Shihepo, nkene tu nokuya ontuku okahalu kuugundjuka, ihe tu kondje ekondjo ewanawa lyeitaalo. T. Shipanga e tu popitha wo: "Ayehe mboka ye mu taamba, okwe ya pe oonkondo ya ninge oyana yaKalunga.

Esiku lyongula twi idheula nokonima twa tungwa motundimbimbeli ya ningwa kuS. Mvula. Okwe tu ulukile omugundjuka Josef gwonale omuholelwa omwaanawa.

Otwa popithwa ishewe opendji. Omaudhigu taga keelele aagundjuka kiigongi, oga kundathanwa. Omakwatathano netungo lyaagundjuka moshitayingengerki, oya kundathanwa wo.

Moshigongi mwa li wo aayelee. Oya pulakene omapopitho nenyanyu notwa tala oluhepo lwawo.

Aayelee ya kundu omagongalo gOndonga noohapu dhi li muRom. 10: 13-18.

## YA SILE MOOMBESA

Tokio-Aantu 100 oya si sho oombesa mbali dha li tadhi enditha aapashiyoni dha mono oshiponga kegwo lyemanya etadhi gwile momulonga. Shika sha ningwa muJapan.

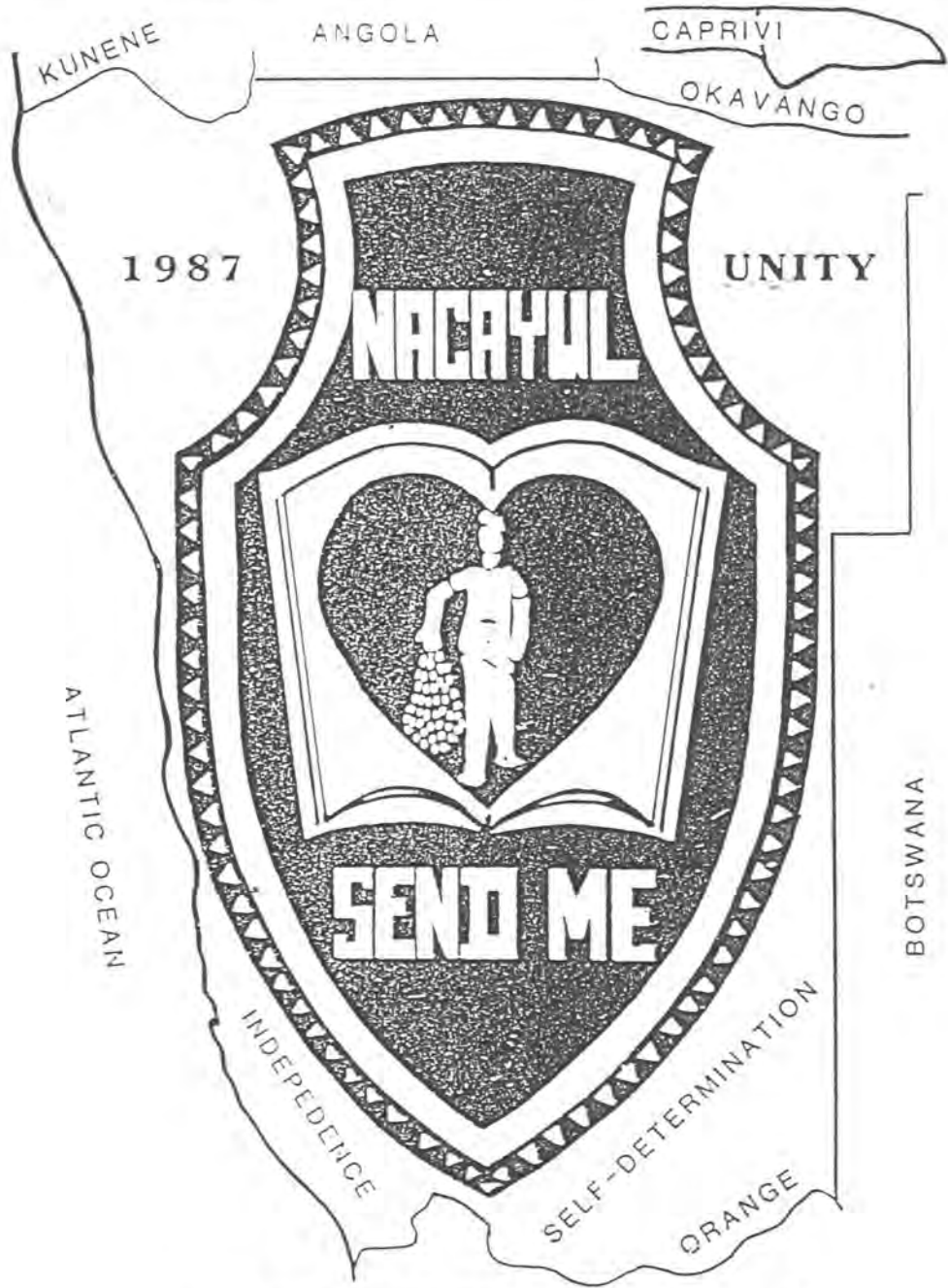
Kwa monika omidhimba odhindji. Aantu yatatu ayeke oya londo noya zi miitekaukile mbyoka noya hupu.

TC14/0330

# OMUKUNI

Registered at the GPO as a Newspaper 40c

Vol. 42 JANUALI 1987 No. 1



"...MAY THEY ALL BE ONE  
 AS YOU FATHER,  
 ARE IN ME AND I IN YOU...",  
 (JOHN 17: 21a) ISSUED: NACAYUL



# INFORMATION

A NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NAMIBIA

Vol. 5

AUGUST 1985

No. 10

## BILL OF RIGHTS THROUGH THE WINDOW

The "Namibian" **BILL OF RIGHTS**, a document that saw its light in the Multi-Party Conference (MPC) and prophesied to be directive for any future government (including the South African Sponsored and appointed Interim Government) was thrown out of the Window when Mr. Dawid Bezuidenhout ordered the continued detention-without-trial of Mr. Josef Katofa.

Mr. Bezuidenhout, Chairman of the "Cabinet of the Interim Government" said in his affidavit, submitted by the Council for the Cabinet, that he is satisfied that the then Administrator General (Dr. Willie van Niekerk) was entitled to be satisfied that Mr. Josef Katofa was "a person who committed or attempted to commit or promote the commission of violence or intimidation of persons" as envisaged in proclamation AG 26 of 1978. To this conclusion he came after perusing reports on Mr. Katofa's detention. These reports are normally supplied by the police, and in many a political case by the Security Police.

Josef Katofa, whose two other brothers - Nicodemus and Ephraim - were detained at the Mariental camp where many of the survivors of the Cassinga raid were kept involuntarily, campaigned strongly for the release of his brother from this camp. Shortly before the release of his brothers, Josef was detained by the Security Forces - and he has been in detention ever since, from May 7, 1984 up to now.

What makes this case so special? It is special because the people who blamed responsibility for drafting the **BILL OF RIGHTS** are in fact the ones to violate the same - as with all the other rights that are denied to Namibians: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, etc. It is possible also symptomatic of so many other detentions without trial cases in Namibia, where the stroke of a pen can order a person to continued detention without recourse to the courts of law - that's democracy the "namibian" way.

May be the **BILL OF RIGHTS** was simply adopted to impress the International Community - to "show" that there were people who were bent on ruling properly, by accepting something like the **BILL OF RIGHTS** which "South Africa does not subscribe to".

The Katofa case (that was brought to court), and so many other "unknowns" who are detained without trial under the notorious Security laws in Namibia, is a heavy indictment against the so-called "**BILL OF RIGHTS**" and those who candidly claim to have the interests of Namibia at heart!



Mr. Phillip Tjerije - former Editor of "IMMANUEL"

history, he said that it was all the time his ideal to become a teacher and that he only became a journalist by 'accident'. "My move to journalism was because of a disruption that ended my academic career, but I discovered journalism to be something enjoyable to me and I plan to do it on a part-time basis."

Mr. Tjerije was born 38 year ago in the Omaruru district and then spent his childhood on a farm before starting primary school at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Omaruru in 1957. In 1966 he went to the Secondary School of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) in Karibib (forrunner of the present

Martin Luther High School).

He matriculated in 1970, and from August 1971 to August 1972 he was as an exchange-student in West Germany. In 1973 he went to the University of Fort Hare (SA) on a scholarship of ELC but was unfortunately forced to come back home because of student strikes.

From 1974 to 1976, he was again back to Fort Hare, but he could not finish due to the Soweto riots. Returning to Namibia, he became assistant editor of "IMMANUEL" and the following year (1977) became editor. Because of his political activities as a SWAPO activist, he was arrested in May

1979 under AG 26 and was released in February 1980. Since 1980 he was slapped with banning orders.

In January this year (1985) at the General Meeting of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), in Katutura; Windhoek, he was nominated a member of the editorial Board of CCN-Information.

The editors and members of the Editorial Board want to thank Mr Phillip for his contributions towards our Newsletter in particular and media work of the Church in general, and we wish him all the best in his studies and future endeavours.

## "NAMIBIA NEEDS A FREE PRESS", SAYS TJERIJE

"Namibia needs a courageous, investigative and articulate press to expose the oppressive measures applied by the illegal South African Regime on the Namibian people, and to expose the puppets imposed on his people by SA," said Mr Phillip Tjerije, former editor of "IMMANUEL", a monthly publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Rheinish Mission Church).

This advice to the Press in Namibia comes from Mr Tjerije, 38, who is leaving for Sussex University (Britain) on August 22, 1985 to study for a four-years degree in African History on British Council scholarship.

Mr Tjerije who, for eight years has worked as a journalist said in an interview on Friday, August 16 with CCN-INFORMATION that his advice stems from the fact that the press in Namibia is not free.

I think the press in Namibia is not free, because most newspapers in his country, are party oriented. An

independent press is almost non-existent and there is a vast vacuum for a free press especially in this particular time where we have an imposed interim government where people qualify as politicians on the basis of their adherence to the South African system; and the level of politics reflected by these news is pathetic. The newspapers are not objective. I am looking forward to live in a society in which a 'relatively' free press exists," the soft-spoken Mr Tjerije said.

Mr Tjerije who has been under restriction for about 5 years for being a SWAPO activist said the following: "I really felt constraints because of the restrictions. As a journalist, I could not attend press conferences with the exception of Church ones. I could not move free anywhere at anytime to cover events. As a journalist I felt sometimes very frustrated because of my movement being restricted."

In response to a question on why he is changing from journalism to

## DETENTION IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA

| NAME                     | AREA OF ORIGIN                                   | DATE ARRESTED |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Mr Jona Kambundu      | Ongwediva (Lutheran)                             | 24.07.1985    |
| 2. Ms Victoria Moshana   | auxiliary nurse at Engela, originally from Odibo | 26.07.1985    |
| 3. Mr Frans Jimene       | teacher at Olupandu Secondary School             | 22.07.1985    |
| 4. Mrs Ester Jimene      | wife of Frans Jimene, Olupandu Sec. School       | 22.07.1985    |
| 5. Mr Immanuel Hamutenya | teacher at Olupandu                              | June, 1985    |
| 6. Mr Nahas Ndevehoma    | teacher at Kongo (ELOC)                          | 29.07.1985    |

The following two people are believed to be detained by Koevoet:

|                                                                |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| (a) Mr Lamek Kavila, 24 years old, from Oukwandongo, Ombalantu | 11.07.1985 |
| (b) Mr Absalom Onesimus, 27 from Oukwandongo, Ombalantu        | 11.07.1985 |

The following people were detained during June 1985, but are now released on Aust 2, 1985

|                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Rev. Paulus Musheko (ELOC) | from Olupandu                     |
| 2. Mrs M. Kambundu            | ELOC Music Secretary at Ongwediva |
| 3. Mr Leonard Handuba         | teacher at Olupandu               |

The following two people have been detained on August 6, 1985:

|                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) Ms Lucia Nanghama | from ELOC                    |
| (b) Mr Andreas Namoya | Evangelist of ELOC at Endola |

# VICTORY

## Another Supreme Court defeat for the interim government

STAFF REPORTER

THE DEPOSIT of R20 000 levied on this newspaper in terms of Section 6 of the Internal Security Act, was set aside by the Windhoek Supreme Court on Wednesday in an historic judgement which marked yet another courtroom defeat for the Cabinet of the interim government, who were also ordered to pay the costs of the application.

The then Cabinet Chairman, Mr Moses Katjiuongua, in a sworn statement, said that the Editor of The Namibian, Ms Gwen Lister, had in the past written articles critical of Cabinet members, thus lowering the Cabinet in the esteem of the public. These articles adversely affected the political integrity and credibility of the Cabinet which had a cumulative effect of presenting a 'threat to the security of the state and maintenance of public order'. But Mr Justice Harold Levy dismissed these arguments, saying that 'to maintain that Lister's personal criticism of members of responsibility will bring respondent into contempt and that this criticism will only be to the benefit of Swapo' is not a sound logical conclusion and there is nothing on record to justify it".

The Internal Security Act, in terms of which the R20 000 deposit was levied on The Namibian, provides for a newspaper to be closed down if it is found that such a newspaper posed a threat to the stability of the state or promoted aims of communism and banned organisations.

the press and freedom of speech as guaranteed in the interim government's Bill of Rights, constructive criticism by newspapers, provided it was factually correct and fair, was fundamental to a healthy democratic society.

He said that public figures who felt aggrieved about unfair attacks

**Continued on page 2**



SEEN leaving the Supreme Court on Wednesday after Judge Harold Levy set aside the R20 000 deposit imposed on The Namibian by the interim government Cabinet, is Editor Gwen Lister, with the newspaper's attorney, Mr Dave Smuts of the law firm Lorenz and Bone



Manuela Zacht, 6.

## Another victim of prejudice

BY JOHN LIEBENBERG

AN APPLICATION by a German-speaking couple to have their six-year-old child registered at the Deutsche Schule Windhoek (DSW) this week was refused on the grounds that the child was 'not white'.

Mrs Hilde Zacht and her daughter, Manuela, approached the authorities at the predominantly German-speaking school early this week to have the child registered, but the headmaster of the school, Mr Hans Diehl, suggested that the child's father should visit him.

The reason for this was that the child's mother was a Coloured, and Mr Diehl was not satisfied that the child was registered as a 'white'.

When Mr Josef Zacht, a white Windhoek resident, returned to the school with his daughter he was told that his daughter could not be admitted.

Both parents were of the opinion that it did not matter how the child was registered, because the entire family spoke German as their home language.

When approached for comment, the headmaster of DWS said that he had checked the child's identification with the Department of Civic Affairs, and the Department had confirmed that the child was registered as a Baster.

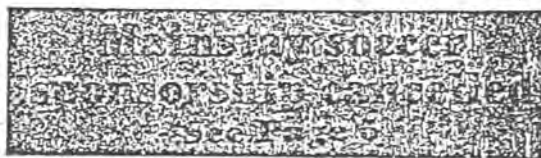
The Director of Education for the Ad-

ministration for Whites, Mr Jan Visser said that if there were problems with the registration of the child, the parents were 'free' to contact him and he would do his best to find a solution.

He said he did not want to create the impression that his Department was being 'hard and one-sided', or that they were digging their heels in over this matter.

He emphasised that the relevant legislation still reads that the child

**Continued on page 3**



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## APPENDIX B

### "SOUTH WEST NEWS"

#### 1. WHO RUNS IT?

"South West News" is published by the African Publishing Company, a private company which was registered under the Companies Ordinance No. 19 of 1928 (as amended), on 28th October, 1959.

The project was one of several items on a Community Development Programme drawn by Zedekia Ngavirue, a social worker who graduated at the now defunct Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Work, Johannesburg at the end of 1958.

Together with his colleagues, listed here below, Mr. Ngavirue endeavoured to found the A.P.C. and then "South West News" the only paper which aims at serving all races; and the first and only newspaper by the Africans in South West Africa.

#### Directors Of The A.P.C.

| <u>Name:</u>        | <u>Occupation.</u>                                       |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Zedekia Ngavirue    | Social Worker,                                           |
| Emil R. Appolus     | Journalist - now in exile in the Congo Republic.         |
| Willy Kaukuetu      | Now a student at Lund, Sweden, on a Swedish scholarship. |
| John Garvey Muunjua | Driver.                                                  |

#### Shareholders Of The A.P.C.

| <u>Name:</u>        | <u>Occupation:</u>                                         |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ben Tunguru Huaraka | Now a student in Ghana, on a Ghana Government scholarship. |
| Michael Uandara     | Clerk.                                                     |
| Edward Ndjoze       | Businessman.                                               |
| Ephraim Vitore      | Labourer.                                                  |

#### 2. FOR WHOM ?

"South West News" strives to serve all the people of South West Africa, irrespective of colour or creed, on a territorial basis as well as in relation to the whole of Africa and the world.

To the bulk of our population which is illiterate and ignorant the paper must bring light and education; it must stimulate them to take a keener interest in their own lives. And this is a basic function.

For the majority of our people whose voices are silenced, the paper must speak.

To those who have been conditioned to accept a lower status in life by continuous subjugation, the denial of basic human rights, and unhealthy indoctrination, the paper must strive to give hope and pride.

Because the founders believe in the common humanity of all nations - our common stock Homo Sapiens - the paper must strive towards the achievement of better race relations, and international peace. Co-existence.

Then the whole world must be informed, as far as possible, about conditions in South West Africa and the rest of the continent.

To keep these goals in mind the founders have adopted a definite policy given here below:

#### 3. POLICY DECLARATION.

a. Our object is to serve as a vigorous instrument to promote the social and educational well-being of all inhabitants of South West Africa.

- b. Our desired aim is to give objective news and political reporting, unclouded by racial or political prejudices.
- c. We aim to serve the uppermost interest of this territory, and will in the best of our ability assist in furthering its economical growth and political maturity.
- d. We declare that no political party, religious sect, or individual of any standing shall in any way dictate, direct or influence our policy, but we will pursue a path of impartiality, honesty and objectivity in all issues.
- e. We shall constantly fight to uphold basic human rights for all people, and expose any injustice that may be perpetrated deliberately by Governments, individuals or organisations on any section of the community.

#### 4. PRESENT POSITION.

The share capital of the Company is FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS (£500. 0. 0) divided into five hundred shares of One (£1. 0. 0) each, with power to increase or decrease the capital, to consolidate the shares, and with power also to divide the shares in the original or any increased capital into several classes, and to attach thereto respectively any preferential, qualified, special or deferred rights, privileges and conditions, and from time to time to alter or modify the same.

However, only 85 shares have been taken out. A little capital indeed. Besides, from the beginning we have been running at a loss. Thus we have a debt that may force us to stop printing the paper.

On the other hand the paper is gaining great popularity - it is read in practically every town of the country as well as in the so-called Reserves - our rural areas (see enclosure No 1). But, while geographically speaking the paper is widely spread, the circulation remains low (only 2000). This is mainly due to the high rate of illiteracy.

Because of the low circulation we are now compelled to sell the paper at 6d (six-pence) a copy which is not quite economic to our people who live below subsistence level.

As a young paper and perhaps due to some <sup>other</sup> reasons, we have not yet been able to attract enough advertising to augment the paper's revenue.

Chances are very narrow for Africans to secure loans. Racial discrimination does not only make it impossible for the African Publishing Company to secure loans but cripples the press machinery in many ways. (See enclosure No 2).

While the above are difficulties peculiar to our situation, there are other handicaps that are common to the African press in Southern Africa. Mr. Brian Bunting, a prominent South African Journalist, has this to say in his survey of the Non-White press in the Union of South Africa:

"It should be borne in mind, of course, that great difficulties face the African people with regard to the establishment of an independent press. The greatest difficulty is lack of capital. It costs a great deal of money to start a newspaper and keep it in being until such time as it has established itself and is able to keep going on its own revenue. In addition to capital, the establishment of a press requires the right to own freehold property and to carry out business undertakings with the maximum security - all rights which are denied to the African people, which in consequence has a very small middle class. Any paper which openly voiced the policies of the liberation movement would also find it extremely hard to attract advertising into its pages, as the experience of "New Age" has shown - and advertising is the greatest source of revenue for most papers. Big business will not support policies which are fundamentally opposed to its own interests. (See enclosure No 3).

"Secondly, a stable press really needs a stable population to support it, and the African people, in consequence of the provisions of the Urban Areas Act (Its counter-part in South West Africa is the Urban Proclamation of 1951)

The share capital of the Company is FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS (£500. 0. 0) divided into five hundred shares of One (£1. 0. 0) each, with power to increase or decrease the capital, to consolidate the shares, and with power also to divide the shares in the original or any increased capital into several classes, and to attach thereto respectively any preferential, qualified, special or deferred rights, privileges and conditions, and from time to time to alter or modify the same.

However, only 85 shares have been taken out. A little capital indeed. Besides, from the beginning we have been running at a loss. Thus we have a debt that may force us to stop printing the paper.

On the other hand the paper is gaining great popularity - it is read in practically every town of the country as well as in the so-called Reserves - our rural areas (see enclosure No 1). But, while geographically speaking the paper is widely spread, the circulation remains low (only 2000). This is mainly due to the high rate of illiteracy.

Because of the low circulation we are now compelled to sell the paper at 6d (six-pence) a copy which is not quite economic to our people who live below subsistence level.

As a young paper and perhaps due to some <sup>other</sup> reasons, we have not yet been able to attract enough advertising to augment the paper's revenue.

Chances are very narrow for Africans to secure loans. Racial discrimination does not only make it impossible for the African Publishing Company to secure loans but cripples the press machinery in many ways. (See enclosure No 2).

While the above are difficulties peculiar to our situation, there are other handicaps that are common to the African press in Southern Africa. Mr. Brian Bunting, a prominent South African Journalist, has this to say in his survey of the Non-White press in the Union of South Africa:

"It should be borne in mind, of course, that great difficulties face the African people with regard to the establishment of an independent press. The greatest difficulty is lack of capital. It costs a great deal of money to start a newspaper and keep it in being until such time as it has established itself and is able to keep going on its own revenue. In addition to capital, the establishment of a press requires the right to own freehold property and to carry out business undertakings with the maximum security - all rights which are denied to the African people, which in consequence has a very small middle class. Any paper which openly voiced the policies of the liberation movement would also find it extremely hard to attract advertising into its pages, as the experience of "New Age" has shown - and advertising is the greatest source of revenue for most papers. Big business will not support policies which are fundamentally opposed to its own interests." (See enclosure No. 3).

"Secondly, a stable press really needs a stable population to support it, and the African people, in consequence of the provisions of the Urban Areas Act (Its counter-part in South West Africa is the Urban Proclamation of 1951) and other laws, are at any time liable to be moved from one area to another, banished or deported, with no right of permanent domicile anywhere in the country. It would, for instance, be extremely difficult for an African paper to keep its staff together: an African journalist who incurred the wrath of

the authorities would ...

the authorities would always be liable to summary arrest and deportation without trial." Here we have the near example of Emil Appolus, who edited the first issue of "South West News", and who had to leave the country because of a deportation order against his wife. "Finally the problem of illiteracy."

In his survey Mr. Bunting shows a record of failure in the Union to create and maintain a press. One must bear in mind that Africans in the Union are far superior in numbers compared to us, about 40 times more than we are. The ratio of literacy is about the same. The difficulties in South West Africa with regard to the maintenance of a press are, therefore, greater than elsewhere in Southern Africa.

#### 5. PLANS FOR CONSOLIDATION.

In the light of the foregoing, the Board hopes to consolidate the position of the Company by increasing its activities. The Company aims at carrying out the following functions which are, inter alia, embodied in its memorandum:

- a. Running a Cinema (mobile). Here the inclination will be educational rather than outright commercial.
- b. Transport. The Windhoek Town Council has invited tenders to undertake transport services between African residential areas and the town. The African Publishing Company wishes to snatch at this opportunity, or;
- c. Undertake any other business which may subsidize the newspaper as the latter cannot run on its own revenue.
- d. By-activities e.g. cultural centres and clubs to help in the promotion of our people.
- e. Last but not least is to ultimately buy our own printing machines.

#### 6. APPEAL.

It is mainly with the above goals in our view that we are calling for help and guidance:

- a. The Board wishes to appeal for financial help in the form of loans on reasonable terms, and perhaps donations.
- b. The Board would appreciate it very much if benevolent bodies of the world could donate educational materials in the form of books, a film projector, a variety of films, periodicals, magazines, records etc.
- c. The Board would welcome advice on the running as well as constructive criticism of the project.

We hope that this appeal will be considered sympathetically,

Yours faithfully,

p.p. CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

# African Publishing Company

(PTY.) LTD.

## Publishers of "South West News"

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO  
THE SECRETARY

"S O U T H W E S T N E W S"

P.O. Box 749  
Windhoek S.W.A.

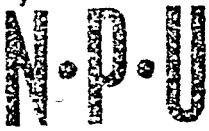
.....19.....

### GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. No responsibility can be accepted for losses arising from typographical or other errors.
2. All contracts must be completed within 12 months unless otherwise arranged.
3. All approved accounts are nett and payable monthly; otherwise cash with order.
4. The right is reserved to refuse blocks considered unsuitable or objectionable.
5. Orders are subject to space being available.
6. Translations for all advertisements provided free of charge, but no responsibility can be accepted for losses arising from translation errors.
7. Copy must be in printers' hands twelve days before publication if proofs are required.
8. The proprietors reserve the right to edit and revise or reject, even after accepted for publication, any advertisement deemed by the proprietors to be untruthful or objectionable in subject matter or wording, or detrimental to the sale of a competition branded article with a fixed retail price, whether space for the said advertisement has been booked in advance under order or not.
9. Should the full number of insertions agreed to in any order not be used within the period specified or should cancellation be desired, the rate shall be adjusted on insertions which have appeared.
10. Advertisements may be changed after each insertion without any extra charge.

DIRECTORS:- D. MERORO. Z. NGAVIRUE. E. APPOLUS. JOHN G. MUUNDJUA. C. KAPUJO.

APPENDIX C



NEWSPAPER PRESS UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

FOUNDED IN 1932

AFFILIATED TO THE NEWSPAPER SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE COMMONWEALTH PRESS UNION

Telephone: 33 0211: 2 • P.O. Box 10537 • Tel. Add.: "Newspaper" • Suite 502 Fifth Floor • 36 Prichard Street • Johannesburg

8th December, 1959.

President  
 L. H. WALTON  
 Secretary  
 J. H. VAN DER MERWE  
 Treasurer  
 H. M. MALAN  
 General Secretary  
 G. G. ALLEN

The Director,  
 African Publishing Co. (Pty.) Ltd.,  
 P.O. Box 749,  
WINDHOEK S.W.A.

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge, with thanks, receipt of your letter dated 30th November, 1959, in which you request to be furnished with six blank Press Identity Cards for your editors and reporters.


In terms of our arrangement with the Commissioner of Police, Press Identity Cards may only be issued to members of the Newspaper Press Union, and I am therefore not in a position to comply with your request.

I would suggest however that you write direct to the Commissioner of Police with a request that cards be issued to you.

Insofar as membership of the N.P.U. is concerned, I enclose an application form and would draw attention to the following provision in our Constitution relating to membership :

"3.(1)(a) European employers, being the proprietors of newspapers, engaged in that section of the Printing and Newspaper Industry in which newspapers are published in any part of South Africa shall be eligible for membership, provided however that where the applicant is a company it shall not be eligible for membership unless the directorate of such applicant is composed solely of Europeans."

Yours faithfully,

  
GENERAL SECRETARY.

GGAU/RP

APPENDIX D

M. PUPKEWITZ & SONS (PTY) LTD.

DIRECTORS

M. PUPKEWITZ (14th. Dy)

M. PUPKEWITZ

J. PUPKEWITZ

THE LARGEST DISTRIBUTIVE ORGANISATION IN S.W.A.

AND SERVING THE BUILDING, FARMING, MINING, FISHING, TRANSPORT AND OTHER PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INDUSTRIES, AS WELL AS PUBLIC BODIES AND HOUSEHOLDERS BUYERS, GRADERS & EXPORTERS OF KARAKUL WOOL, PELTS, CASEIN & OTHER FARM PRODUCE

PO BOX 352 WINDHOEK SWA TELEPHONE 2011 CABLES ENPSS CODE ABC (11) EDITION

OUR REF. SN/RE

YOUR REF.

29th August, 1960.

The Secretary,  
African Publishing Company (Pty) Ltd.,  
P.O. Box 352,  
WINDHOEK.

Dear Sir,

re : ADVERTISEMENT ACCOUNT.

We refer to your letter of the 8th instant, enclosing back copies of the "South West News".

It was understood that when we agreed to insert an advertisement, that the newspaper would deal only with non-racial and non-political topics.

We regret, however, that we do not wish our advertisement to continue and must ask you to cancel future advertisements. We will, of course, pay for all advertisements which have been inserted up to date.

Yours faithfully,  
M. PUPKEWITZ & SONS (PTY) LTD.

  
SECRETARY.

BRANCHES:

WALVIS BAY, OTJIWARONGO, OUTJO, GROOTFONTEIN, GOBABIS, KEETMANSHOOP, ARANOS, TSUMIS PARK, KALKRAND, SCHLIP

APPENDIX C

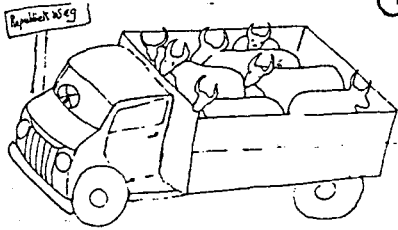
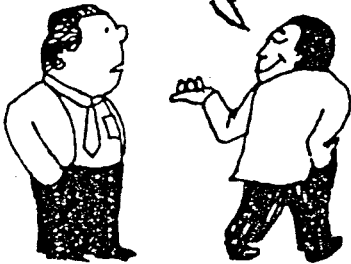
# WERKLOOSHEID - WAAROM?

Baie van ons mense is werkloos en diegene wat werk het, verloor ook daaglikse hul werk. Daarby styg pryse net hoër en hoër! Ons mense wil weet waar om ons posisie so sleg is. Hoekom kan ons land nie sy mense voedsel nie?

Die regering se ekonomiese is swak, want daar is 'n resesie en inflasie en daarby is die Rand se waarde besig om te daal!

Wat beteken dit alles? Waarom het ons dit alles? Wat kan gedoen word om ons posisie te verbeter?

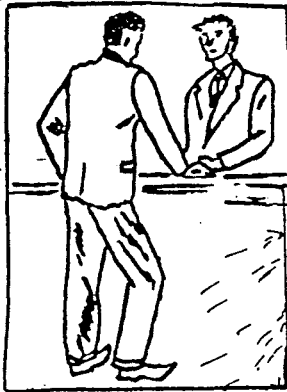
Die anti-waarde is baie eenvoudig.



1) Mnr. P.W. Botha en die A.G. stuur alles na Suid-Afrika, sodat dit daar verwerk word. Daarna stuur hulle die klaargemaakte artikels/goedere na ons land toe en verkoop dit baie duur aan ons. Hoekom het ons nie fabriek hier nie, sodat ons ook werk kan kry nie?

2)

Hulle bring mense uit ander lande om hier te kom werk. Hoe sal ons werk kry?



3)



Dit is nie al nie. Die regering spandeer miljoene rande op onnodige goed, byvoorbeeld die salarisse van politikusse. Waarom moet die kloperts, Rivinkos, Bezuidender-houts en Mudges sulke groot salarisse kry?

4)

Die regering kan nie al hierdie bekostig nie. Daarom verhoog hulle die pryse en bou drankwinkels ordls.

Ons probleme word vererger deur die baaie. Hulle word deur die regering gedruk met belasting en in plaas van om van hul rykdomme, wat ons oor die jare heen opgebou het, met die regering te deel, dank hulle ons af om te bespaar. Hulle het geen simpatie met die feit dat ons hulpe help om ryk te word nie!

5)



6)

Wat kan ons doen?



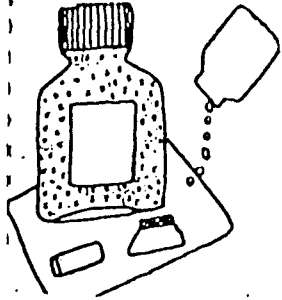
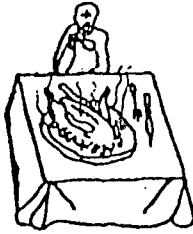
Baie kere pak ons die probleme alleen aan. Alleen dink dat hulle alleen die of daardie probleem het. Nee, ons almal het probleme. Daarom moet ons saamkom en met een stem praat. As ons sit en tekyk - wie sal hier ons praat?

**ADVIES**

Briekes April 1985, p.4

# HOË BLOEDDRUK

\* Te veel sout inneem.



\* Te veel pynpille drink.

\* Te gespanne is.

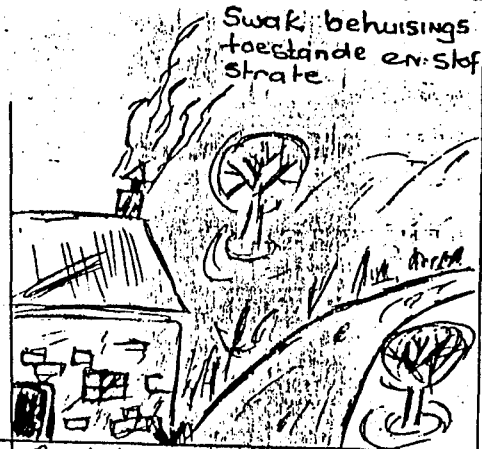
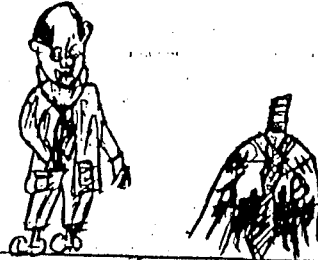


\* Oorgewig is.

Let op die bogenoemde dinge en u kan die hoë bloeddruk voorkom.

# T.B. HOEKOM?

Wat is die oorsaak van TB?



Swak behuisings toestande en stofstrate.



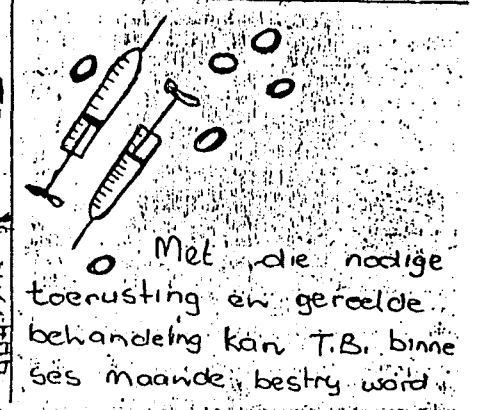
Swak en ongesonde werksomstandighede



As kinders nie die regte voedsel soos melk kaas en eiers eet nie sal hulle verswak.



Baie huise in Katutura en Khomasdal is oorvol. TB kan maklik versprei.



Met die nodige toerusting en gereelde behandeling kan T.B. binne ses maande bestry word.

# WORKERS UNITE FOR A LIVING WAGE!

Ons het niks te verloor nie, net ons kettings.

Elke werker kan bydra na die stryd vir 'n Living Wage. Ons eenheid groei as almal verstaan wat ons doelwitte is en as almal verstaan hoe om in die vakbond saam te werk.

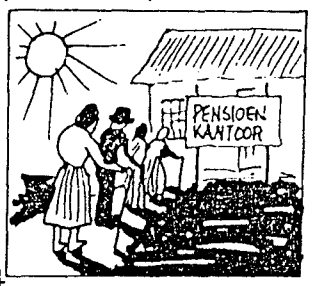
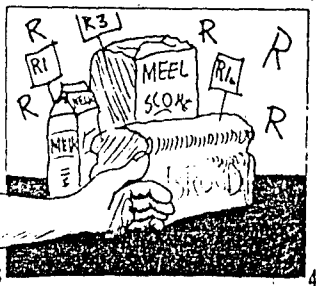
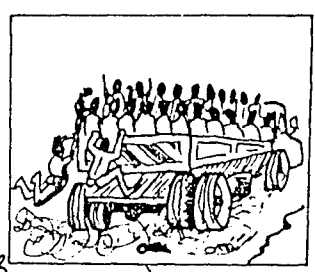
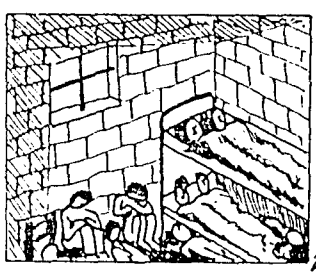
Gebruik hierdie prentjie storie om die boodskap van die werkers aan iemand oor te dra. Elke vakbond lid is ook 'n organiseerder! Viva NUNW, NAFU, MUN, MANWU, NAPWU

1. Etse! Kyk wat maak jy nou... Jy ORGANISEER die WERKERS! Is dit nie genoeg dat jy jou vriend gister begrawe het nie? En steeds gaan jy voort?!

VEREER ek hom as ek die slawery aanvaar waarheen ons veg?

2.

1. kyk na hierdie huise. Kyk hoeveel mense in 'n klein kamer moet slaap. 2. Die paaië en die vervoer is gevaarlik. 3. Die pryse van kos styg maar ons kry nie meer geld nie. 4. Die ou mense moet in lang toue staan en wag vir hulle pensioene. Ai man! wat het jy om te verloor? Werker, jy mag vir jou regte veg. Kort saam met my...



3.

Dit is die Werkers Kantoor. Hier bespreek die werkers hulle probleme. Hier leer ons van die KRAU wat ons het. Hier leer ons om saam te staan en vir ons regte te veg.

Jy hoef nie bang te wees nie. Hulle sal ons nie afbreek nie, want hulle het ons nodig. Sonder ons, wie sal die stede bou, die kos plant? Wie sal in die fabriek en winkels werk? Wie sal die diamante en die uraan en koper uit die grond haal??

5.

Nou kan ek sien hoekom jy so sterk kan wees.

WERKERS ORGANISEER JULLE SELF. JULLE HET NIKS TE YERLOOR NIE; NET JULLE KETTINGS.

# HOE KRY DIE WERKERS WAT HULLE WIL HÊ?

## 'n NUNW KOMITEE VEG VIR VERVOER

Eendag by 'n fabriek in Windhoek was werkers vertel dat hulle nie meer vervoer by die werk en terug gaan kry nie...

Etse, vanaf 1968 het ons buskaartjies of vervoer by die werk en terug gekry. Die vorige eienaar het gesê dat geld van ons salaris afgetrek word vir vervoer. Die nuwe eienaars het ons betwee dat alles net die selfde sal by. Nou kry ons niks etse.

Ons eis dat hulle vir ons vervoer betaal, of ons lone verhoog. Ons werk hart en lang ure. Van ons is al vyftien jare in diens.

Die pryse van klere en kos, asook vervoer styg die hele tyd. Ons groot-base ry BMW's. Nou moet ons ons eie vervoer betaal van ons lone wat nlaag is. Ai!

Kamerade, as julle ernstig is kan julle julle vervoer terug wen. Maar julle het 'n werktuig nodig. Jou werktuig is eenheid! Maar eers moet julle geduldig en duidelik julle probleem aan julle werkgewer verduidelik.

Die komitee besluit om 'n brief aan die werkgewer te skryf. MAAR... Voordat die brief aan die werkgewer gegee is, word die werkers daarvan vertel en hulle besluit om dit uit te voer.

Die werkgewers wou nie vervoer aan die werkers gee nie. Hulle het nie geglo dat al die werkers die eise ondersteun het nie...

**GEEN VERVOER!**

DIE KOMITEE HET TERUG GEGAAN BY DIE VAKBOND...

Wat doen ons nou? Ons werkgewer neem ons nie ernstig op nie. Kan jy hulle nie verplig om met ons te praat nie?

U werkers het probleme. Hulle komitee wil met u praat...

WAT? watter probleme? Dis net die vakbonde wat probleme maak!

Jou werkers is die vakbonde. Ons sal vir u 'n lys bring met die name van alle vakbond lede en die name van die komitee wat deur die werkers gekies is.

DIE LYS...

VAKBOND LEDE KOMITEE:  
VAKBOND LEDE:

Uiteindelik het die werkgewers met die werkers gepraat. Nou het hulle geweet dat die werkers verenig was en dat hulle ernstig was oor hulle eise vir vervoer...

Ons het besluit om voort te gaan met julle vervoer of buskaartjies soos dit altyd was.

VIVA NUNW! UNITY IS STRENGTH!

WORKERS FIGHT FOR A LIVING WAGE!!

EACH ONE TEACH ONE!

# 'n Huiswerker se dag

Douvoordag staan sy op om te gaan skrop en bak en was in baas se fensie huis  
 Net maar nog 'n dag van eindelose werk sonder stop  
 Die huis moet van hoek tot kant skoongemaak en alle lakens, komberse en kussingslope gewas word  
 ... en kleinbaas ... 'n bedorwe stukkie mens moet na omgesien word.

Gisteraand se skottelgoed staan die hele kombuis vol ... die kamers lyk naar ... die wasgoed buite opgehoop en die kleinbaas het sy broek vuilgemaak.  
 Oor die middaguur kom mevrou inspeksie doen.

Vinnig werk Siena, vinnig werk, die tyd stap aan.  
 Nou moet jy jaag om alles betyds klaar te kry  
 En wanneer die skemering van die nuwe nag daal vinnig draf om die laaste bus betyds te kry.

En wanneer ek terugleu op die harde sitplek van die bus koers my gedagtes outomaties na my huis en my kinders  
 Vol verwagtinge en met vuil gesiggies word ek dan ook ingewag om te weet wat ma gebring het  
 Met 'n pyn in my hart pak ek dan uit, die krummels van mevrou se tafel nie eers genoeg om die magies te vul nie

Eindeloos, moedeloos breek die dag van môre aan voor die eerste hanekraai ... die bus!  
 Dofweg in my agterkop wonder ek of my kinders betyds die skool sal haal

Hoekom moet sulke dinge tog gebeur?  
 Hoe anders was die lewe van my groot-groot ouers nie?  
 Waar hulle die besitters was ... maar nou ... ons behoortereg is van ons weggeneem ... net geweld!  
 Hoe lank sal ons die juk kan dra, ek en al die ander wat daaronder gebuk gaan;

Mede-susters, huiswerkers, ons sal moet dink 'n plan moet maak om hierdie las ligter te maak.  
 Wat ons moet doen is saam te staan die stryd te kan oorwin  
 Om môre as oorwinnaars uit die stryd te kan tree.

Renetta

Bricks July/August 1987, p.8

## Katutura

Katutura, Katutura  
 Discriptive Katutura  
 Your shantiness, remoteness  
 paint you like a lion den.

Yes, to Windhoek you are a rural area  
 A forest though not a savannah  
 Your black fire-wood electrifies Windhoek  
 Your black fuel for commercial complexities.

Big trucks come in and out  
 Blue Monday, Africa goes to Europe  
 Busses overload - sixty seated fifteen  
 Standing is no law at all.

Katutura is the place of the hopeless  
 the desolate, the less human, the underpaid  
 Yes! the unfortunate souls of God  
 Marx, Engels would have run out of papers.

Katutura your blankets would be warm  
 but, your rooms attract cockroaches  
 Your rent are beyond our purse  
 Your streets are dusty, oh Katutura.

Your name "Katutura", we can't settle"  
 is what it means - you are right Katutura  
 Our schools, hospitals, shops, politics,  
 even the winking of an eye, division is the term.  
 Katutura shall be Windhoek.

SUN Dec. 1989 p.6

# DON'T QUIT

Don't quit when plans seem to wither,  
 when everything you do is wrong in somebody's mind

Don't quit when people seem to follow  
 Bad intention on their minds.

Don't quit when people try to tell you what to do.  
 Don't quit, because you know what you want to do.  
 Don't quit, the Lord knows what your aims are.

Namibian Youth!!! Don't quit when the system get tough.  
 Through your prayers, the Lord on your side will get tougher against the system.  
 DON'T QUIT!!  
 NAMIBIANS.

A thought and prayer of a suffering ... NAMIBIAN ...

Petrus Tsu-iKha Coetzee  
 Katutura

Bricks, July/August 1987, p.8

### CHIEF HOSEA KUTAKO'S PRAYER

You are the great God of the earth and the heavens.  
 We are so insignificant.  
 In us there are many defects.  
 But the power is yours,  
 to make and to do what we cannot do.

You know all about us.  
 For coming down to earth you were despised and mocked and brutally treated,  
 because of those same defects in men of those days.

And for those men you prayed because they did not understand what they were doing,  
 and that you came only for what is right.  
 Give us the courage to struggle in that way for what is right.

Help us who have been placed in Africa and have no dwelling place of our own.  
 Give us back a dwelling place, O God.  
 All power is yours in heaven and earth.

Amen.

CCN Information Oct. 1985, p.6

# CASSINGA SONG

When a man, woman or child  
suspiciously dies,  
then an entire clan vengefully  
cries  
When hundreds of nationals are  
cold-bloodedly murdered  
then an entire nation is violently  
mobilised  
Cassinga is an open wound oozing  
endless pain.

When a man, woman or child pain-  
fully dies,  
then an entire clan naturally  
realises  
When hundreds of nationals are  
brutally killed,  
then an entire nation is wrath-  
fully organised  
Cassinga is an open wound oozing  
endless pain.

When a man, woman or child  
suspiciously dies,  
then an entire clan provokedly  
cries,  
When hundreds of nationals are  
mercilessly put to death  
then an entire nation's sword is  
pulled out of its sheath  
Cassinga remains an open wound  
oozing endless pain.

Mvula ya Nangolo

SUN April/May 1986, p.5

## Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have everything I need.  
He lets me see a country of justice and  
peace and directs my steps towards this  
land.

He gives me new power.  
He guides me in the paths of victory,  
as he has promised.

Even if a full scale violent confrontation  
breaks out

I will not be afraid, Lord,  
for you are with me.

Your shepherd's power and love protect  
me.

You prepare for me my freedom,  
where all my enemies can see it;  
you welcome me as an honoured guest  
and fill my cup with righteousness and  
peace.

I know that your goodness and love will  
be with me all my life;  
and your liberating love will be my home  
as long as I live.

Kameeta

# WHO ARE THEY?

Moving in the park I saw  
a notice nailed to the bench  
"Europeans only"

Who are these Europeans  
so fortunate to have seats  
reserved for them in  
Africa?

Walt oyi Sipho ka Mterwa  
Bricks, July/August  
1987, p.8

COME ON!

There is a land  
You have to liberate

There is a nation  
Suffering from oppression  
Your hand is needed  
Your contribution required  
Come on comrades  
And lead the nation

Do not hide your face  
Do not hide your knowledge  
Where is your strength?

The people need  
And want to see  
Your commitment now  
Come on, come on, come on!

by nw

Speaks Out, April 1986, p.12

## The Fugitive

I'm a fugitive  
A fugitive in my home land  
My ancestors all died  
They were fighters for tomorrow  
I'm a fugitive  
A fugitive in my home land  
What have I done to run  
My land is being eaten out  
This is the only thing I claim  
I'm a fugitive  
A fugitive in my home land  
I don't even know where's my  
mother  
Last I saw her, she was captured  
What have I done to run Oh Lord!  
I'm a fugitive  
A fugitive in my home land  
I'm not supposed to keep on run-  
ning  
My tears are running deep the  
earth  
I'm a fugitive running no more  
I'm a fugitive  
People let's keep on fighting  
Let's think about the comrades  
'out  
Let's think about the fighters 'out  
We are the children of Namibia

ACCOTTY  
Speak Out July 1987, p.7

# Workers in Namibia

Bricks July/August 1987, p.8

Ons, die werkers van  
Namibia  
Ons is die vlam van die  
rewolusie  
Ons is die Vryheidstryd  
LAAT SAAMSTAAN!!

stryd môre van hulle  
verwag  
LAAT SAAMSTAAN!!

Ons, die werkers van  
Namibia  
Wat nou die hoon en  
onderdrukking moet dra  
Dis ons wat die land môre  
kan bevry  
LAAT SAAMSTAAN!!

Ons, die werkers van  
Namibia  
Dis ons wat hierdie land  
opbou vir 'n beter môre  
Dis op ons skouers wat die  
Vryheidstryd rus

Laat ons dus saamstaan  
En veg vir onafhanklikheid  
van ons geliefde land  
NAMIBIA

Ons, die werkers van  
Namibia  
Dis ons wat vandag se kin-  
ders moet leer oor wat die

Want saam sal ons kan  
oorwin  
RENETTA

# A POEM

## Almost

COMRADE

Conscientise yourself for a new society — where humans are important and profits and greed less so — be conscientized by the people creating the wealth of this land yet living in poverty and squalor — you will be amazed by their wisdom.

Organize the people on a grassroots level to become really critical, self-sustaining and proud. Use the skills you gained from the colonial masters and institutions not to enrich yourself but to expose corruption, evil, selfishness, greed, opportunism and power for the sake of power.

Mobilize on all levels — overcoming the all pervading fear deliberately created by Apartheid ideologues. Mobilise not for your own image but for Namibia to be really free and independent. Shake off the shackles of the lime-light, of petty jealousy, of unfounded rumours — think scientifically.

Read, read, read — for words contain knowledge to get rid of ignorance, tribalism and backwardness. Read critically, for ideas are also used to enslave. Practice also, because reading without practise is nothing. When you read and practise you will become a full human being — bearing the torch of freedom of the peoples' struggle.

Attack the enemy of the people of the land at all times. It is and has been proven as the best way of defense. Attack when it is productive, be superior to the enemy in your strategy, planning and execution.

Defend all the gains of the struggle. Never romanticize over the losses, but acknowledge it and rectify as speedily as possible. Demand and defend all basic rights without relent. Rights like clothes to wear, a roof over the head, food to eat, to work, to speak, to assemble, to write, to freedom...

Endure even, and especially, when the going gets tough. Never give up to fight those threatening the very basis of your human existence. Only a fool smiles when his humanity is mocked, when she is treated like an animal, when he is trampled underfoot as inferior, when she becomes a thing to be exploited or to be used to divide, exploit and to kill, when he becomes a laughing fool (clown, puppet) of an evil and mentally debased superior barbarian. Endure and never stop fighting — the battle for humans to become human cannot be lost — all else become nothing.

ONCE AGAIN A FIGHTERS

## CHORUS.

No matter what  
No matter how  
In repulsing persistant,  
In all kinds of pursuits  
Loudly again sounds our chorus  
The fighter's hymn when in action  
And here once more in repetition.

All my thoughts to the liberation  
All my deeds to the revolution  
All my commitment to the nation  
My skillful action to the victory  
All my movement to the emancipation  
My steps of efforts to the genuine solution  
Dedicate to myself to the bitter struggle.

Trodding alongside the narrow winding paths  
Through the massive waves of deaths  
All for my people  
All for my land  
All for mankind's sovereignty  
And for prosperity  
For you my soil  
I sing again  
the chorus of act  
And once again  
Only the barrel  
The last say.

By M. G. Angula

SUN March/April 1989, p.7

CHIEF HOSEA KUTAKO

Once upon a time, there lived a grand old man, old the skin, but young the wisdom, this was Hosea the son of Kutako.

Leader, freedom fighter he was, a grand old man, governed by wisdom, a calibre money can never buy.

Hosea faced German Imperialism with spear, bow and arrow, the Drum, his haller, the African Horn his telex.

Through him Namibia knew the UN. Nujoma wears his mantle, a grand old man, the root of our liberation struggle.

Yes, they were there with him, the Marengos, the Witbools, the Mandumes, the old Guards of our present Namibia.

Yea, Compranyeros, gallows or no gallows, justice shall triumph, Aluta continual

Cde. Johannes P.S.K. Tji!jo.

SUN Sept. 1989, p.3

## Ongulumbashe

a piece of deserted land  
a community of almost forgotten people  
but so much to remember and relate

nineteen sixty six  
an hour struck  
where no compromises were to be made

where a new nation was born  
where a new culture emerged  
the culture of armed resistance

with ak in one hand  
bazooka in the other  
hey colonizer - you've pushed us too far....

guerilla man  
solid as a rock you stood  
a symbol of courage and hope

Ongulumbashe -  
mother of plan  
our pillar of resistance  
Jora Jochem

SUN Dec. 1989, p.6