Civil Supremacy of the Military in Namibia: An Evolutionary Perspective

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The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be contrary to common sense, for policy has declared the war; it is the intelligent faculty, war only the instrument, and not the reverse. The subordination of the military point of view to the political is, therefore, the only thing which is possible.

Carl Von Clausewitz

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the phenomenon of civil supremacy, and in particular how it evolves and is sustained over time. A theoretical case study of Namibia will be undertaken to achieve this objective, with three traditions of civil supremacy, namely colonial, revolutionary/insurgent and democratic (as well as the relevant mechanisms and techniques), being the focus. This dissertation seeks to determine how these traditions emerge and develop over time.

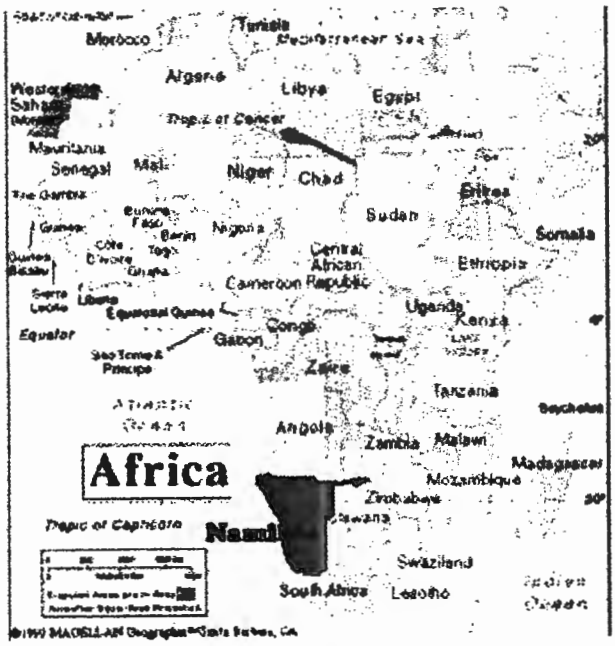
Basically, civil supremacy rests on a set of ideas, institutions and behaviours. Together these practices limit the possibility of excessive military intervention in political affairs and provide a system that endows civilian officials with the authority and the machinery to exercise supremacy in military affairs.

The structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter one identifies a theoretical framework in which the various concepts, issues and terms of reference are identified and defined. Chapter two provides an historical account of the Namibian people and territory prior to the formation of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). Chapter three analyses the period between 1960 and 1974, which saw SWAPO become established as a liberation movement with an armed wing. Chapter four addresses the period between 1974 and 1988. Chapter five provides an analysis of the transition period (1988 –1992) when the peace agreement was secured between SWAPO and the South African government. Chapter six assesses the current state of civil-military relations Namibia.

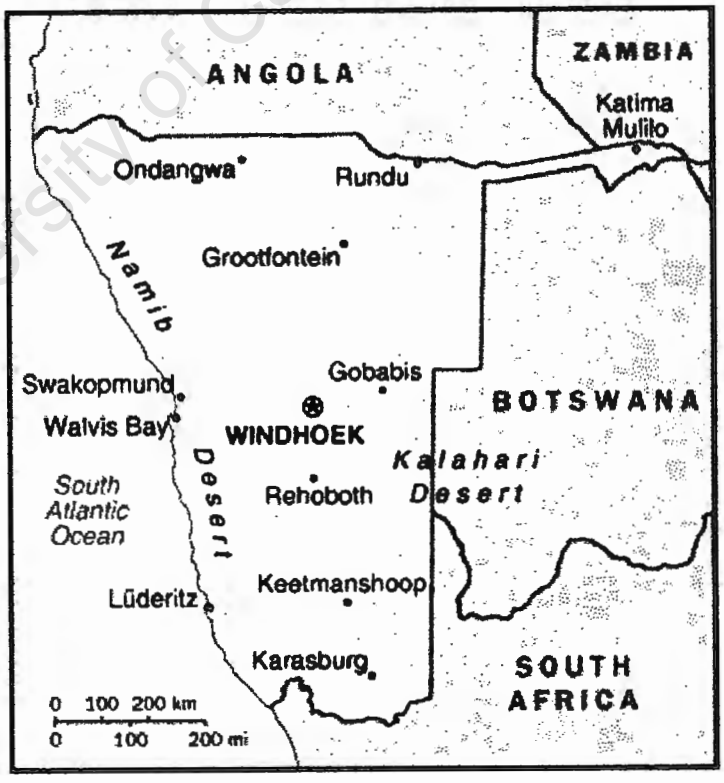
This dissertation generates five conclusions about how civil supremacy evolves and is sustained.

First, civil supremacy is not a static. It involves a set of fluid relationships, a perpetual contest between the strengths of civilian political institutions and political strengths of the military. It is a phenomenon that evolves (and devolves) over a period of time. Second, there is a gap between enforcing and maintaining civil supremacy in theory and what happens in reality. The Namibian case study reveals that internal and external factors impact on civil supremacy. Third, the internationalisation of the Namibian conflict, namely the interference of powerful international actors, had a critical impact on the evolution of civil supremacy in Namibia. This state of affairs impeded the natural emergence of the classical or "pure" traditions of civil supremacy. Fourth, state-centric mechanisms of civil supremacy can at times be ineffective. Non-state actors and civil society have been involved in the civil supremacy's evolutionary process and can play a meaningful role in enhancing and maintaining it. Fifth, there is an ongoing debate in historical circles between structuralism and agency. Structuralism is a mode of thinking and a method of analysis that values deep structures over surface phenomena. Individuals have a negligible impact on the greater scheme of things. Agency, on the other hand, maintains that individuals, not structures, are largely responsible for the way events unfold. This dissertation strikes a balance between these two extremes.



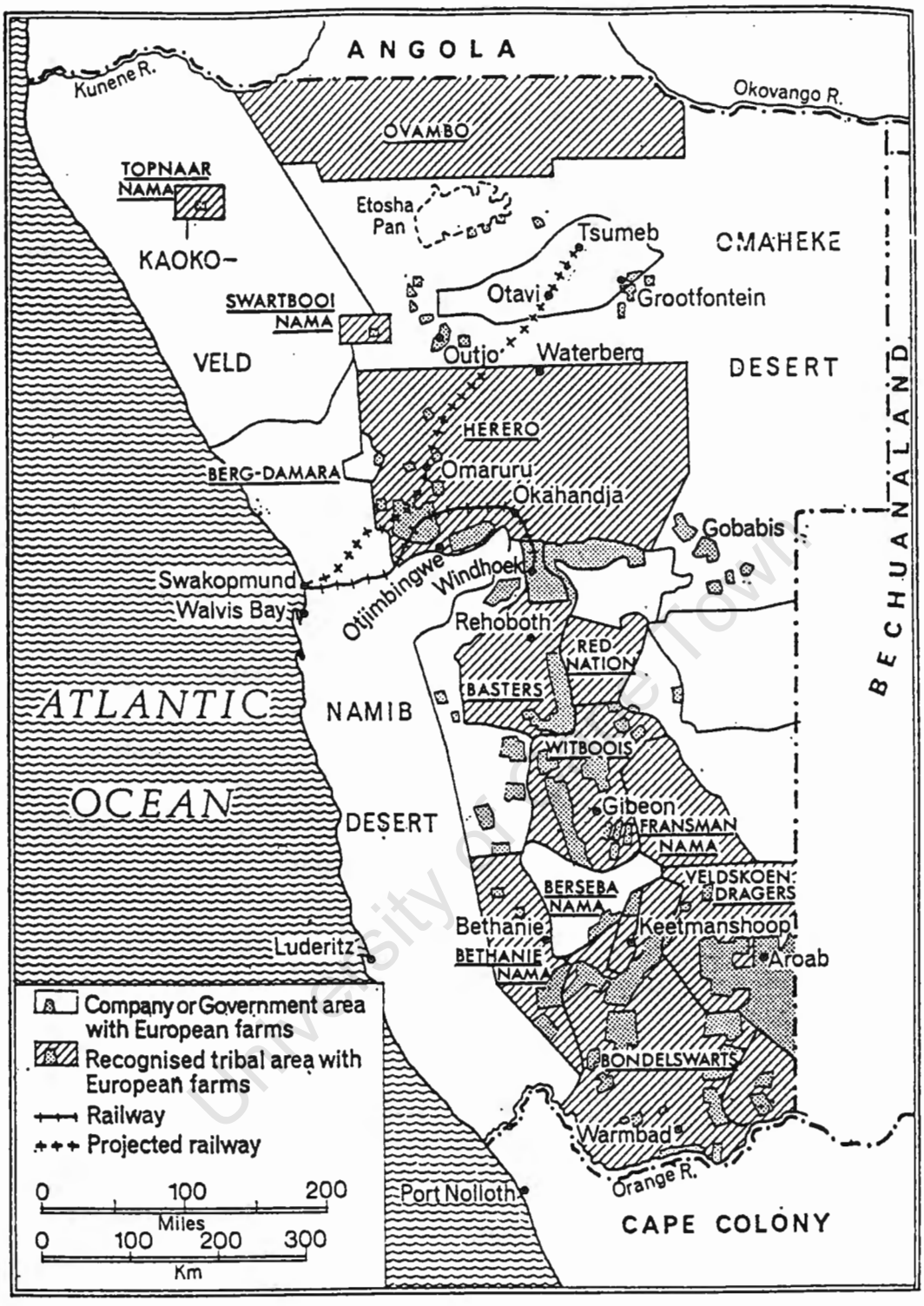
Map 1: Namibia's Geographical Location in Africa

Source: Internet resource (http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/africa/Namibia.GIF)

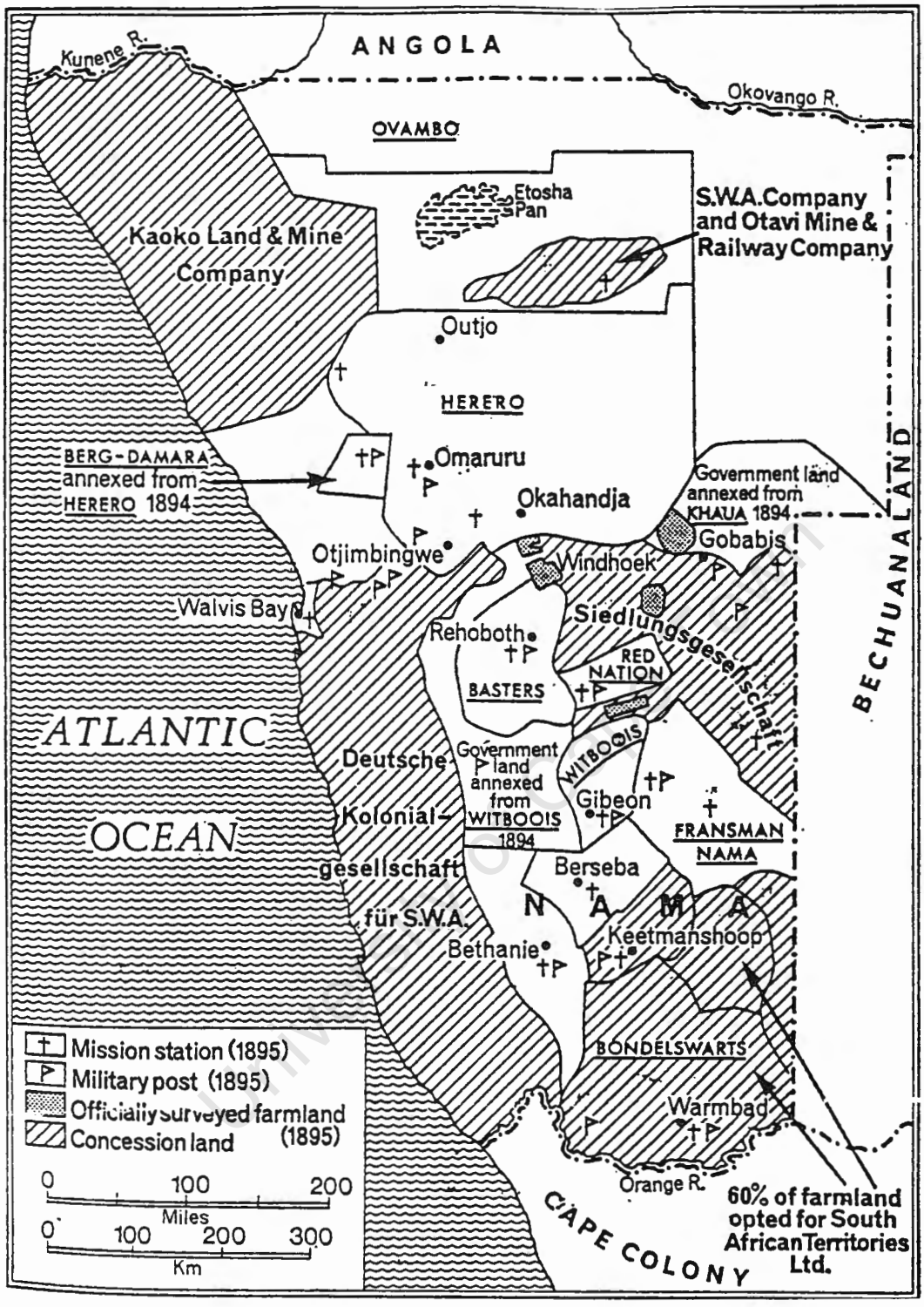


Map 2: Urban Areas in Contemporary Namibia

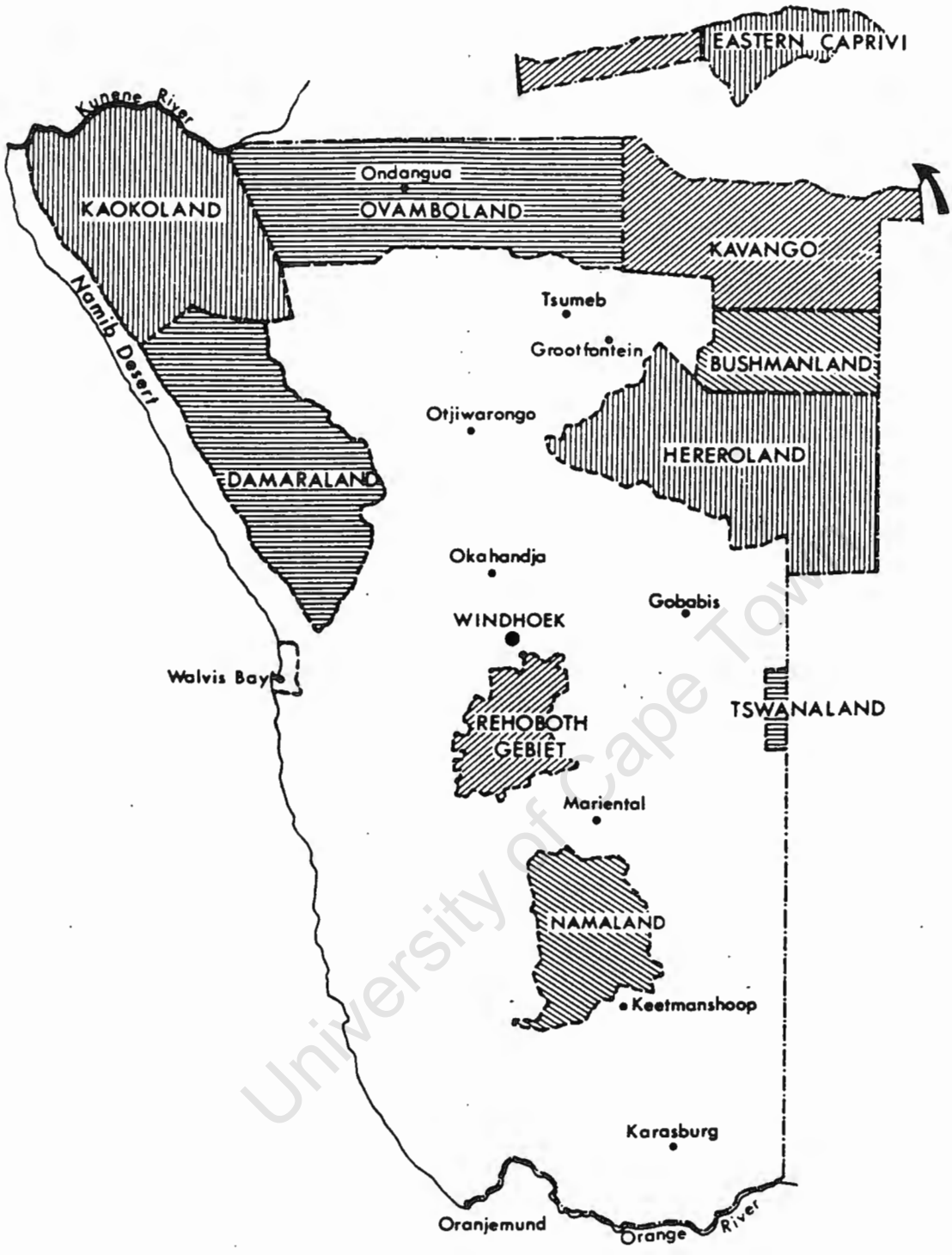
Source: *CIA Factbook* (Internet Edition), 1998. http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/country-frame.html



Map 3: "South-West Africa Before the Herero Revolt (1902)", [Bley,1971:xxiii]



Map 4: "South-West Africa After the Submission of the Khaua and Witbooi Tribes", [Bley,1971:xxiv]



Map 5: Regional Map of Namibia During South African Occupation, [Totemeyer, G. et al, (eds.), 1987:12]

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Last, but not least my family, Roger, Carol and Robyn, without their ongoing encouragement this dissertation would not have been possible.

List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BMATT	British Military Advisory and Training Team
CANU	Caprivi African National Union
DEMKOP	Democratic Co-operative Party
DoD	Department of Defence
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
FAPLA	People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Union
JMMC	Joint Military Monitoring Committee
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NDF	Namibian Defence Force
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPC	Ovamboland People's Congress
OPO	Ovamboland People's Organisation
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PC	Parents Committee
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SWALA	South West African Liberation Army
SWALF	South West African Liberation Front
SWANU	South West African National Union
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
SWAPOL	South West African Police
SWATF	South West African Territorial Force
SYL	SWAPO Youth League
UK	United Kingdom
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations Commission for Refugees
UNMD	United Nations Mission on Detainees
UNTAG	United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Introduction

An armed disciplined body is in its essence dangerous to Liberty: undisciplined it is ruinous to society.

Edmund Burke, 1815

The objective of this dissertation is to describe and explain the process by which civil supremacy of the military evolved in Namibia. This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter one identifies a theoretical framework in which the various concepts, issues and terms of reference are identified and defined. Chapter two provides an historical account of the Namibian people and territory prior to the formation of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). Chapter three analyses the period between 1960 and 1974, which saw SWAPO become established as a liberation movement capable of engaging in guerrilla warfare against the South African security forces. Chapter four addresses the period between 1974 and 1988 when SWAPO was afflicted by a series of internal crises, which threatened to cripple the liberation movement. Chapter five provides an analysis of the transition period (1988 –1992) when the peace agreement, under international supervision, was secured between SWAPO and the South African government. Chapter six assesses the state of civil-military relations in contemporary Namibia.

Civil Supremacy in Namibia: An Evolution?

Robert Griffiths [1996:474], in an analysis of current trends in democratisation and civil-military relations in Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique, argues that in societies undergoing transition from

authoritarian rule to a democratic dispensation, civil supremacy of the military is the product of four factors. These include: the past pattern of civil-military relations, threats to the armed forces' institutional interests, ethnic political fragmentation, and the impact of military restructuring on reconciliation, reconstruction and development. Griffiths concludes that post-conflict civil-military relations and democratic consolidation in these countries are largely determined by the nature of transition, namely the latter three factors, while he gives scant attention to historical traditions.

This dissertation seeks to further advance this analysis, and argue that in terms of Griffiths' framework, previous patterns of civil-military relations are significant. Arising from this, the central question of this dissertation, which has two parts, is as follows: How did civil supremacy evolve in Namibia, and how was it sustained over time? Is there a distinct evolutionary process or is it simply a state of affairs that emerges during a relatively short transition period to democracy?

Civil Supremacy and its Importance

No regime sustains itself purely on the basis of political legitimacy or administrative efficiency. All systems of rule are based on the exercise of coercive power through institutions such as the military. The reason for this is that the military has the ability to exert coercive power. As the military has the capacity to prop up or topple a regime, its loyalty is essential to regime survival.

Generally, civilian forms of government exercise authoritative power, which has been established according to regular, known and accepted procedures. Military rule, on the other had is considered undesirable because it brought about and maintained through the exercise of coercive power.

Therefore one of the fundamental dilemmas of human governance has been that of securing the subordination of military forces to political authority [Kohn,1997:140]. For example, civil control of the military has been a concern of democracies like the United States and France, of communist regimes such as the former Soviet Union and China, of fascist dictatorships such as in Germany and Italy prior to 1945, as well as many states in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Civil supremacy, which is also referred to as civilian or, at times, political supremacy evades a simple definition. Traditionally, civil supremacy of the armed forces entails a clear separation between civilian and military powers and responsibilities; the accountability of the armed forces to government, the party or political movement; and the practice of transparency in the conduct of defence and security matters [Edmonds,1988:70-92]. In short, it means civilians formulate policy and the military implements it.

This does not suggest that the armed forces are excluded from politics. On the contrary, the armed forces cannot be precluded from the political arena given their organisational identity, autonomy and functional specialisation. In reality, the military exercises political influence through regularised and accepted channels [Welch,1976:3-4]. In societies where the idea of civil supremacy is accepted, the military is content to exert its bureaucratic bargaining and accept advice, but it stands ready to accept overall policy direction from government officials [Danopoulos,1992:3].

There are various traditions of civil-military relations that strive for civil supremacy of the military. However, in the analysis of the Namibian case, this dissertation will only consider the colonial, revolutionary/insurgent and democratic traditions.

Focus on Namibia

The Republic of Namibia (formerly South West Africa), occupies an area of 824,268 sq km, and is situated in south-western Africa, bounded on the north by Angola and Zambia, on the east by Botswana and South Africa and on the south by South Africa. Namibia's current population is estimated to be 1,7 million. Namibia gained its independence on 21 March 1990. It is, according to its Constitution, a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State, founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all. Namibia's president is the executive and is elected by the voters. Legislative authority is vested in the National Assembly, a body comprised of 72 elected members and up to 6 appointed representatives. The National Council, made up of 2 representatives of Namibia's 13 regional councils, acts as an advisory body.

Prior to independence, Namibia was subjected to successive waves of foreign intervention, which culminated in the formation of organised resistance against colonial occupation. At the forefront of the resistance movement was SWAPO, an organisation that was to conduct a struggle for national liberation over three decades.

Since independence Namibia's fragile fledgling democratic dispensation has matured into a fairly robust representative system of government. Namibia's liberal Constitution, which was held up by the international community as an African model at its inception, still stands unviolated as the supreme law of the land. However, in recent years, there have been a number of severe criticisms levelled at the SWAPO-led government. It has been accused of failing to deliver the much needed socio-economic reforms and of tolerating an arrogation of power by the newly emergent political elite [*Africa*

Confidential 4/8/95]. Certain critics have even made claims that Namibia is "increasingly displaying patterns that have characterised autocratic, neo-colonial states elsewhere on the continent" and in the face of a weak political opposition is drifting towards a "*de facto* one party state" [Tapscott,1997:3]. Despite these criticisms, Namibia's mechanisms of securing and maintaining civilian supremacy of the military remain resolute and are, in fact, stronger than ever.

Why Namibia?

The methodological approach of this dissertation is that of a theoretical case study. The reason for this is three-fold. First, Namibia is one of Africa's newly-established democracies which, by all accounts, boasts comprehensive civil supremacy of the military. Second, there is an over-abundance of case study analyses concerning Namibia, the majority of which are descriptive and/or prescriptive in nature. This dissertation intends to move beyond mere description and provide a theoretical interpretation of events from a civil-military relations perspective. In addition, in the general literature the role of non-state actors and their armed forces, such as insurgent or liberation movements and their armed wings, has rarely being considered. Only the cases of China, Vietnam and to a lesser degree Cuba and Algeria have been studied to any significant degree.[1] Very limited research has been undertaken to analyse situations where a non-state actor captured the state, either through military victory or negotiated settlement. Finally, an evaluation of the Namibian case illuminates an older problem; namely, that there is a distinct difference between the theory and practice of civil supremacy. Civil supremacy of the military is a constant struggle between civilians and the armed forces.

[1] Studies have also been conducted of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe to name but a few, but this literature still remains underdeveloped.

Chapter 1

The Historical Evolution of Civil Supremacy: A Conceptual and Analytical Approach

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1.1) Introducing the Problem

A fundamental paradox exists between civilians and armed forces. Out of a fear for others, an institution of violence is created for the purposes of protection, but once this has been achieved, this very institution becomes a source of fear for those who created it [Feaver,1996:150]. As armed forces possess the monopoly of arms, are expert managers of violence, and tend to be highly organised, they have the potential to replace the civilian government at will.

Thus, one of the greatest challenges facing any society is to reconcile a military strong enough to defend the society's interests, with one which is subordinate enough to adhere to the wishes of civilians, and thus not conduct its affairs so that the society it was created to protect, is undermined.

This dissertation seeks to analyse one of the methods that societies have developed to address this paradox, namely civil supremacy of the military. This thesis will consider the methods of maintaining and enforcing civil control of the military, however, the process by which such an outcome is eventually achieved will be the focus. The case study analysis of Namibia will illustrate this point.

The objective of this chapter is threefold. First, to provide a survey of the discipline and a general review of the civil-military relations literature, particularly that literature which has been concerned with civil supremacy of the military. Second, identify the three traditions of civil supremacy of the military, namely, the colonial, revolutionary/insurgent and democratic. Third, outline the means by which this theoretical case study will be undertaken.

1.2) Civil-Military Relations: Survey of the Discipline and Review of Literature

1.2.1) Civil-Military Relations as a Field of Study

The distinct academic field of civil-military relations originated during the Second World War when the United States government contracted academics to study certain aspects of the American war effort, particularly the combat performance of servicemen.[2] However, studies of the relationship between armed forces and society can be traced back as far as Thucydides' account of the Peleponnesian Wars [Seegers,1995:9]. In addition, an analysis of many major political theorists since the 16th century reveals that either war, or the consequence of violent conflict, inspired their argued prescriptions for good governance. These prescriptions generally emphasised strict political control of the armed forces [Edmonds,1988:10].[3] Among the early political theorists, Niccolo Machiavelli stands out. His recognition that the relationship between those with political authority and those with control over coercive force (the military) is fundamental to any prescription for a well-ordered and effectively

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[2] The critical study was Samuel A Stouffer et al, *The American Soldier and Combat and its Aftermath* (1949).

[3] For instance, Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* discusses a "social contract", a situation that leads to the formation of government in order to overcome the perils of the "state of nature". Embodied in this social contract is the authorisation of a sovereign that will uphold the laws chosen by the people and provide protection. Should the military not be brought under civilian control, then the whole "social contract" would be undermined.

governed state. Machiavelli ascertained that the only successful way to retain political authority, even when a ruler had popular support was to keep a firm control over the armed forces.

In the immediate period following the World War II the rapid expansion of the social sciences, and more specifically the acceptance of sociology as a legitimate and potentially fruitful field of study of the military, provided the impetus for the field of civil-military relations to be expanded. In addition, the financial burden of armed forces, their performance in large numbers and the continued threat of violent conflict with the onset of the Cold War all ensured that civil-military relations became a focus of investigation, interest and concern [Edmonds,1988:13].

The study of civil-military issues received a major boast in the mid-1960s with the establishment of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, founded by Morris Janowitz. This institution pioneered and sponsored the study of the relationship between armed forces and society. In addition it encouraged further scholarly endeavours through its journal, *Armed Forces and Society*, which was established in 1976. Up until now scholarly interest with respect to civil-military relations has manifested itself in the publication of numerous books and monographs. The majority of publications consists of single case studies or edited volumes consisting of case studies of several nation-states.

1.2.2) Review of the Civil-Military Relations Literature

An analysis of civil-military relations literature reveals a wide variety of issues and debates. Despite the eclectic nature of the literature, three conceptual themes standout: the cause of military coups, military

professionalism, and comparisons of governmental performance between civilian and military regimes [Kennedy & Louscher,1991:1-2].

Research into military intervention in political affairs was inspired by the frequent incidents of coup d'etats instigated by members of the armed services in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in Africa, Latin America and south-east Asia [Edmonds,1988:73].[4] Numerous approaches to studying such military coup d'etats emerged. For example, one approach saw the military as a vehicle of progress and development,[5] while another held that militaries perform much like interest groups, so that when their interests are negatively affected, military officers tend to intervene in politics.[6]

In terms of the military professionalism literature, arguably the most influential book is Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Practice of Civil-Military Relations* (1957). Huntington emphasises the importance of adequate political control over the armed forces and the need for healthy, open and stable civil-military relationships. Central

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[4] Most of this research was influenced by the likes of Harold Lasswell and Stanislav Andreski. Lasswell is renowned for his Garrison State hypothesis, which was first published as an article in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1941. His concern was with the role of specialists in society, more specifically those that specialised in the use of violence. He argued that these specialist groups represented powerful interests and exercised immense influence within society. He concluded that the intensity of security crises and the threat of war would affect the interests of these specialist elites and motivate them, and in particular those with security interests, to become increasingly involved in the policy making process as well as the government. Stanislav Andreski in his book *Military Organisation and Society* (1952) addressed the issue of the influence of military organisations on the structure and development of society, which was largely attributed to their ability to use violence. Probably one of the more prominent coup scholars is Samuel E. Finer with his influential book *The Man on Horseback*. Given the common occurrence of military coup d'etat he asked the question why it was that armed forces did not intervene in politics, thereby recognising what had been the case throughout history, that individuals with access to, and control over, physical force have influence and immense potential political power. The critical question for him was clearly why those who are in such a position choose not to use it. For Finer the answer lay with political culture.

[5] Advocates of this approach included: Morris Janowitz (1964); Manfred Halpern (1963); and Lucian Pye 1962).

[6] Examples of scholars who have adopted this approach include Eric Nordlinger (1970), Ruth First and William Thompson (1973).

to political control is the professional soldier, a military ideal that embraces expertise, corporateness and responsibility.[7] As an expert in the management of violence the military professional is unique in society, as he is loyal to the state, obedient to civilians, and dedicated to using his expertise for the protection of the state. As such, the professional soldier is politically neutral. Other scholars concerned with military professionalism include, amongst others, Morris Janowitz *(The Professional Soldier*, 1960), Bengt Abrahamsson (*Military Professionalism and Political Power,* 1972) and Amos Perlmutter (*Political Roles and Military Rulers,* 1981).

In terms of the governmental performance literature there are three contrasting views. The first viewpoint regards military regimes as progressive forces that promote social change and positively affect economic growth.[8] The second approach holds the military as averse to development, claiming that when the military is in power it favours its own corporate interests at the expense of the rest of society.[9] The third approach adopts a more informed analysis, with scholars arguing that there is a degree of diversity within military regimes determined by a number of variables [Kennedy & Louscher,1991:7]. [10] For instance, Huntington (1968) argues that the performance of the military is dependent upon the level of economic development of the respective state: in underdeveloped states military governments tend to be progressive and reformist, while in more wealthy countries the role of the military tends to be conservative and/or reactionary.

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[7] Huntington asserts that the military officer in Western societies, particularly the United States military, meets the ideal characteristics of professionalism.
[8] See Manfred Halpern (1963); John Johnson (1962).
[9] See Eric Nordlinger (1970; 1976), and Henry Bienin (1971).
[10] See R. D. McKinlay and A. S. Cohen (1975) and Robert Jackman (1976).

1.2.3) Focus on Civil Supremacy

The question of civil supremacy is a common thread in all three of the above conceptual themes. Military professionalism is regarded as a subjective means of securing civil supremacy. The coup literature is concerned with the shortcomings or failure of civil supremacy. And, in terms the governmental performance literature, given the numerous perspectives on the relationship between governance and the armed forces, the utility of civil supremacy is a matter of debate.

In essence, the civil supremacy literature is preoccupied with the mechanics of civil supremacy or control, such as legislative provisions and military professionalism. Detailed case analyses of the factors and processes contributing to civil supremacy (or the lack thereof) over extended periods of time are in short supply, particularly those that consider factors that contribute to its maintenance, as well as how this phenomenon adjusts and changes over time. Edited volumes by Claude Welch (1976)[11] and Constantine Danopoulos (1992)[12] seem to be the exception to the rule. This dissertation attempts to make a modest contribution to this gap in the literature by undertaking an historical case study analysis of the phenomenon of civil supremacy of the military in Namibia.

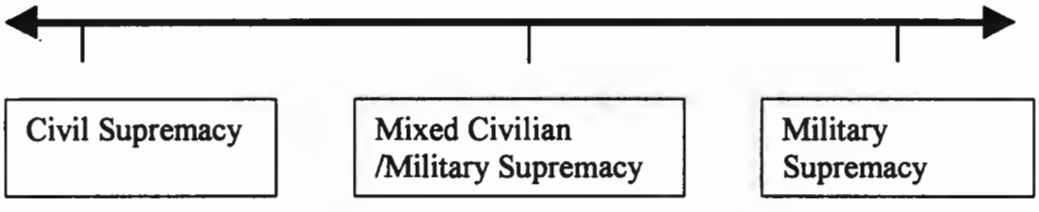
[11] Welch's edited volume includes the following case studies: India, the Philippines, China, Guyana, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Finland and Chile.
[12] Danopoulos' edited volume incorporates studies of Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia.

1.3) What is Civil Supremacy?

1.3.1) An Overview of Civil Supremacy

To reiterate what been presented in the introduction: civil supremacy (or civilian supremacy or political supremacy) is a phenomenon that exists when there is a distinct separation between civilian and military powers and responsibilities; the accountability of armed forces to government, the party of political movement; and the practice of transparency in the conduct of defence matters [Edmonds,1988:70-92].

Civil supremacy exists when the military is content to exert its influence through bureaucratic bargaining, lobbying and expert advice, but is willing to accept overall policy direction from government officials [Welch,1987:9-14]. The central issue of civil supremacy is one of setting limits within which members of the armed forces, and the military as an institution, accept the government's definition of appropriate areas of responsibility [Welch,1976:2]. In simplistic terms, civilian supremacy is a matter of degree. A continuum of relationships exists between the power of the armed forces and the power of civilian institutions. Schematically this continuum can be illustrated as follows (adaptation of Welch's [1976:3] continuum):



When the armed forces question the legitimacy and judgement of civilian authorities and insist on direct participation in the decision-making process, the principle of civilian supremacy is violated. The result is a mixed system of civilian military government, where political decisions are made by a combination of civilian and military leaders. [Danopoulos,1992:3]. This might be the result of political leaders who, confronted by conflicting demands, turn to the armed forces as props for their power. Senior military personnel may be co-opted, placed in cabinet positions, to provide the tottering regime a veneer of stability and support [Welch,1976:4].

Finally, when military officers step in and occupy the top governmental posts and civilian officials are relegated to minor roles, military supremacy or praetorianism exists. In the end, the key indicator that distinguishes civilian-led versus praetorian regimes comes down to personnel. A military regime is a form of government in which executive power rests within a military junta using the army as its main power base [Danopoulos,1992:3].

1.3.2) A Question of Bias

With few exceptions the civil-military relations literature, civil supremacy is interpreted in a state-centric manner. This dissertation will continue this tradition. However, the question is raised: are state institutions consistent with the political aspiration and cultural habits of the citizenry,

An analysis of the concept of civil supremacy is not complete without an analysis of the traditions of civil supremacy, as well as the various techniques that have been developed to encourage and enforce civil supremacy.

1.4) Civil Supremacy Traditions

Namibia encountered three traditions of civil supremacy namely, colonial occupation, insurgent or revolutionary response, and finally a democracy. What follows is an analysis of how these three broad traditions dealt with the issue of civil supremacy:

1.4.1) Colonial

Numerous variations of this tradition have existed. Each variation was dependent on the national characteristics of the particular colonial power, the sophistication of the colonial administration and the resources that had been devoted to maintaining the colony. British, French, and German colonialism, for example, had their own unique characteristics of civil supremacy. However, certain basic commonalties can be identified. The more advanced colonial regimes made use of ascriptive methods of civil supremacy.

In terms of British colonial Africa and India civil supremacy was facilitated through the recruitment to the rank and file of politically reliable and pliable individuals and the staffing of the officer corps by expatriates or a relatively small proportion of carefully selected indigenous personnel who had imbibed British norms. Stephen Cohen [1976:46], in his analysis of civil control of the military in India, observed that,

> "[t]he British were interested in seeing that the prospective Indian officer conformed to their notion of the "right type" of officer. The man was quite conservative, but not outspoken; he was obedient; he came from a wealthy, landed, aristocratic background, which eased his adjustment to the semi-feudal Indian army; he came from a "martial" community, such as Sikhs, Jats, Punjabi Muslims or Rajputs; he was a "gentleman".

In other British colonies the indigenous populations were relatively small, which enabled the armed forces to subdue them with relative ease. Consequently, the military establishments could remain relatively small. Similar circumstances existed in German colonies. Germany, a late-comer to the colonial club, had to make do with the less desirable territories, such as Togo, German East Africa (now Tanzania), Cameroon and South West Africa (now Namibia). Germany had less resources than Britain and France to devote to their foreign land acquisitions. Similarly to British colonies, the indigenous populations involved were relatively small, which enabled Germany to post small garrison forces in these colonies. In the case of German East Africa, small contingents of *Askaris* and mercenaries, reinforced the military might of the German garrisons [Pakenham,1991:617-618].

1.4.2) Revolutionary/Insurgent

This tradition consists of attempts to engender civil supremacy through direct party surveillance of the military establishment, as well as party dominance of decision-making. In the case of insurgencies[13] the instruments of violence are subordinated to the civilian-oriented party regime, where the movement/party dominates the machinery for political mobilisation, and imposes a hierarchy of political overseers or commissars on the military.

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[13] Insurgency is one of the broader terms often used to describe a wide variety of forms of internal political violence. Academically it is useful given its relative neutrality. It does not inspire connotations and emotions that terms like "revolutionary warfare", "civil war" and "terrorism" have the tendency to do. Insurgency can be defined as "a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources (organisational skills, propaganda, and/or demonstrations) and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system it considers illegitimate. Legitimacy and illegitimacy refer to whether or not existing aspects of politics are considered moral or immoral by the population or selected elements therein. In short, insurgency is essentially a political illegitimacy crisis of some sort [O'Neill,1980:1-2]. Insurgency can also include political, economic, social, psychological, cultural and ideological aspects of conflict.

There has, however, been limited research concerning the civil supremacy of the armed forces with respect to insurgent movements. What does exist usually consists of a chapter of a book or a short journal article.[14] The two exceptions are the writings of Mao Tse-tung (and subsequent scholars of insurgent warfare) and Amos Perlmutter's "Revolutionary Soldier" model *(The Military and Politics in Modern Times*, 1977).

1.4.2.1) The Influence of Mao Tse-tung

In Maoist writings the relationship between politics and war is strongly emphasised, a relationship in which military operations must be subordinated to political objectives and direction, and enforced through particular infrastructure considerations. Mao emphasises the need for a dual structure in which the cell system will provide the necessary political direction of the insurgent movement [Baylis,1975:135]. According to Mao [1963:97-98],

> War cannot for a single moment be separated from politics...politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed.

[14] See Annette Seegers (1986) and James D. Jordan (1980).

1.4.2.2) The "Revolutionary Soldier" [15]

Perlmutter's "revolutionary soldier" ideal, an analysis of an armed faction of a revolutionary movement, provides a rough guide in identifying certain key components that are crucial to understanding the civil-military dynamics of insurgent movements. Perlmutter [1977:211] distinguishes four types of revolutionary soldier: romantic revolutionaries (e.g. SS Stormtroopers); Marxist national liberation army; the Maoist Chinese Peoples Liberation Army; Zionist Israel Defence Force. However, only the Marxist national liberation army will be considered, as it is the model that most closely approximates an insurgent movement, as was the case with SWAPO.

Perlmutter [1977:207] points out that no insurgent movement conceives of its army as an independent, autonomous organisation or as an end in itself. The revolutionary soldier is integrated within the revolutionary movement. His role is to participate in, and serve the movement, simultaneously. Typically, the revolutionary soldier is subordinate to the movement, but perceives himself to be a senior partner in the revolutionary movement, a "defender of the revolutionary order" [Perlmutter,1977:207].

The revolutionary soldier has two functions; to mobilise the masses for political action, and act as the revolutionary instrument of violence [Perlmutter,1977:215]. In terms of violence, the revolutionary soldier must

[15] The "Revolutionary Soldier" is one aspect of a three-part comparative model focusing on military professionalism. The other two component types are the professional and praetorian soldiers. The professional soldier is a military force that is an outgrowth of the state. Its duty is to serve the state and consequently remains loyal to the state regardless of what political party or group is in power. Examples include the militaries in many of the developed, Western democratic nations, such as the United States and Great Britain. The praetorian soldier, a military group that functions as a militarised police force, is usually associated with a relatively weak state and disrupted society. As such, the praetorian soldier is prone to intervene in the political process and challenge the state. Societies with praetorian militaries have typically been located in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and South-East Asia, and are easily detected by the regular occurrence of military coup d'etats.

either eliminate the professional army of the "old regime" or integrate it into a new army, thereby helping to replace one regime with another through the reform and change of both regime and the military organisation. Consequently, the revolutionary soldier is not a permanent type [Perlmutter,1977:209; Seegers,1986:54].

The revolutionary soldier has a dislike of ceremonial and hierarchical relations among military personnel, preferring more egalitarian or informal styles of clothing and forms of address. Egalitarianism also tends to inform such matters as recruitment and training, and revolutionary soldiers rarely represent/perceive themselves as a single class or group. Recruitment tends to cut across social groupings, and promotions and training are determined according to the criteria of merit and political dedication. Cohesion does not come from fear of commanders but belief in the political cause [Seegers,1986:53].

In the post-insurgency period, the symbiotic relationship between the party and the army in theory precludes efforts by the military to replace the civilian leadership, as the orientation of the revolutionary soldier is to maintain the revolution and to protect the territorial integrity of the revolutionary state. Given this state of affairs, the revolutionary army starts to accept the properties of the professional soldier, an independent and coequal part of government. However this represents an idealised description of the professional revolutionary soldier's self-image and of his interaction with the civilian leadership, and in reality there are tensions that develop both within the military and between soldiers and civilians [Perlmutter,1977:217].

1.4.2.3) Insurgent Strategies

Strategy has a fundamental impact on civil supremacy of the military, as it specifies both the nature and characteristics of political and military organisation of the insurgent movement, how they relate to each other, and the process by which the insurgency will be conducted. The three most common insurgent strategies are Leninist, Maoist and Cuban.

1.4.2.3.1) Leninist

Those who follow this strategy believe that a secretive, disciplined and highly organised group of professional revolutionaries that is supported from major discontented social groups, such as the military or the working class, provides the most effective means of bringing about revolution [Lenin,1961:13-24; Lenin,1988:186-187].

For the most part, insurgent activity takes place in urban centres where the major concentration of political and economic power is located. The insurgency will then spread to the rural areas [Lenin,1964:415-420]. This approach assumes a government that is alienated from its population; hence it will capitulate when confronted by low-level terrorism, subversion of the military and police, and the seizure of radio stations, government offices and other state institutions.

1.4.2.3.2) Maoist

Maoist theoreticians ascribe great significance to popular support, extensive organisational efforts and the environment as resources necessary for a protracted conflict with an enemy perceived as being in a superior position prior to the hostilities. It is a sequential strategy, that is, it unfolds in distinct

stages, each of which is designed to partially achieve the revolutionary goal and is dependent on the outcome of the previous step [Tse-tung,1965:201]. Both scholars and practitioners of Maoist strategy have identified three distinct steps: political organisation and terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and mobile-conventional warfare.

In the first stage, clandestine cellular guerrilla networks are created in the country-side and supported by the establishment of political-propaganda groups, which generate popular support amongst the rural inhabitants [Tse-tung,1965:165-166]. Teams of guerrillas are trained to engage in selective intimidation of recalcitrant individuals. At this point, fronts may be organised along with pressure groups and parties in order to facilitate the acquisition of popular support. Simultaneously, insurgents usually try to infiltrate enemy institutions; foment strikes, demonstrations, riots and even sabotage. Terrorism during this period serves many functions, including acquisition of both popular and external support. It may be very significant where the insurgent population and/or terrain are insufficient for guerrilla warfare [Tse-tung,1963:349-350; O'Neill et al,1980:28-29].

Guerrilla warfare is the second stage in the Maoist scheme. The earliest part of this stage is characterised by armed resistance carried out by small highly mobile bands operating in rural terrain which is generally rugged with government control weak [Tse-tung,1963:349-350] . If guerrillas face significant government opposition, they have the option of reverting to stage one. During the second stage, the insurgent's aim is to isolate the people from the government. The organisational apparatus established in stage one begins to supply small guerrilla units and full- and part-time personnel play a more prominent role. However, organisation remains localised with groups operating from shifting and remote bases. Military actions are hit-and-run attacks against convoys, military and economic installations, and isolated

outposts. These scattered attacks are intended to provoke the enemy into adopting a static defensive posture that stresses the dispersal of forces in order to protect many potential targets. If military successes occur, expansion of the guerrilla movement and its organisational structure usually follow. In the military realm, recruitment of full-time guerrillas, establishment of extensive reserve system, and creation and training of regular army units are emphasised [O'Neill et al,1980:29-30; Scott, 1970:8-9].

The third and final stage is civil war, characterised by the regularisation of guerrilla forces and mobile-conventional warfare. The objective at this point is displacement of the regime and authorities. Regular units conduct conventional operations, heavier weapons are used, and periods of combat become extended. Small bands support the main effort in an ancillary role [Rice,1988:80].

1.4.2.3.3) Cuban Strategy

The Cuban strategy is seen as an alternative to the Maoist strategy of protracted warfare. Its central point, as expressed by Che Guevara, its greatest advocate, is not necessary to wait until the conditions for making revolution exist; rather popular insurrection can catalyse existing grievances and inequalities into positive action, thereby creating the requisite conditions [Guevara,1961]. Whereas Mao stressed the leading role of the party and the need for political preparation before military struggle, scholars like Regis Debray argued that the Cuban case made it clear that military priorities must take precedence over politics [Debray,1967]. Rather than wait for the emergence of an organisation, it is necessary to proceed from what he calls the guerrilla *foco*, the nucleus of the popular army. Critically, the *foco* idea stresses the importance of strategic mobile forces constantly changing their location to avoid detection and surprise the enemy [Baylis,1975:139].

Irrespective of what strategy an insurgent movement adopts, in insurgencies geared towards national liberation, the movement will seek to raise the cost to the occupying power of retaining the colony. The cost can be measured in money, human lives, loss of international prestige and loss of domestic political support. At some point, the insurgents hope, the occupying power will conclude that the colony is not worth the maintenance cost and withdraw. Pursuit of military victory is a possible technique for the insurgent. In view of the probable disparity in military strength between insurgent and the government, however, a strategy aimed at the opponent's will to resist is usually more realistic than one aimed at direct military victory [Scott,1970:25]. A struggle for national liberation may also incorporate diplomatic elements into the overall strategy. It is usually not very difficult for an insurgent movement to muster diplomatic support from nations that are anticolonial in orientation.

1.4.3) Democratic

Civil supremacy of the armed forces in a democracy focuses on the idea of the will of the people, where the military is subordinate to civilian officials who are elected by the people. This ensures that the nation in question is in a position to base its values, institutions, and practices on popular will rather than on the choices of military leaders, whose outlook by definition focuses on the need for internal order and external security [Kohn,1997:141].

Under a democratic tradition several methods of civil supremacy are utilised. First, civilian elites exercise control over the military through numerous constitutional and legal mechanisms, which specify the functions of the military and the conditions under which the military may exercise its power. In particular, these mechanisms exclude the military from involvement in

politics. Second, military personnel are professionals in the employment of the state. Military leaders obey the government because they accept the basic national and political goals of a democracy and because it is their duty and profession to fight [Janowitz, 1964:79].

Democracies, depending on their physical, strategic, economic and demographic characteristics have also been known to employ other means of civil supremacy, such as ascriptive and geographic techniques. In terms of ascriptive techniques, Danopoulos [1992:7], states that in a multi-ethnic society, in which no ethnic group is dominant, it is essential that all ethnic groups are represented in the military. This prevents social and military fragmentation that may lead to praetorianism.

One of the unique aspects of civil supremacy in a democracy is the indirect public oversight through open debate, media scrutiny, academic debate, and independent research around issues of force design, defence policy and threat perceptions [Nathan,1996:64].

1.5) Mechanisms of Civil Supremacy

Five broad categories of mechanisms of civil supremacy can be identified in the civil-military relations literature. They are as follows:

1.5.1) Constitutional Constraints

This category involves the enforcement of civil supremacy through legislation and legal provisions, where military obedience to the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government is enforced by law. For instance, the definition of the military powers, mission, role, organisation and composition is usually outlined through an act of Parliament (i.e. Defence Act). Executive

control usually involves making the President the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, with the power to appoint top military leadership.

There tends to be two complementary methods of legislative control of the military. First, legislative control includes the creation of a civilian dominated department of defence (DoD) or ministry of defence, which is accountable to government. A DoD is an entity instilled with civilian expertise in defence matters and exercises political authority over the armed forces [Nathan,1994:65]. It assists the minister of defence to prepare the defence budget and acts as a formulator and interpreter of defence policy for the armed forces.

Second, the legislative possess oversight and investigative powers, which includes the enactment of legislation to prevent excessive secrecy. In order for this to function effectively legislators must have the relevant capacity, that is, a special knowledge of defence issues. In the case of a democracy, this capacity can be achieved through multi-party parliamentary committees.[16] These committees are devoted exclusively to the overseeing and monitoring of their countries' armed forces, and have professional staff that specialises in matters of military budgeting and strategy [Stepan,1988:133]. Fourth, the authority to declare war or a state of emergency is vested in legislature.

1.5.2) Budgetary Control

Civil supremacy, particularly in a democracy, can be effectively maintained through the legislature's monopoly of the "purse-strings", that is, its

[16] Defence committees are known as standing committees, that is they function on a permanent basis. When members of both houses of the legislature are represented on one committee, it is known as a joint standing committee.

determination of the military's budget allocation and procurement expenditure.

This mechanism is reinforced through ensuring that the minister of defence, a civilian member of Cabinet, is responsible for preparation of the defence budget. This is a process by which the military is both consulted as well as being able to make proposals. The military budget must however, be approved by legislature.

1.5.3) Ascriptive Factors

This category of civil supremacy methods focuses on issues of class and ethnicity that affect the relationship between civilians and the armed forces. Such methods can be divided into two schools of thought. First, civil supremacy based on ethnic and/or class congruence between civilian and military leadership. Second, civil supremacy that is enforced through the intentional isolation of the armed forces from the rest of society [Welch,1976:10].

Methods of civil supremacy involving ethnic and class congruency form part of a broader grouping known as "penetrative" (Nordlinger, 1977) or "subjective" (Huntington, 1957) civilian control. According to Huntington [1957:80-85], subjective civilian control, "the product of identity of thought and outlook between civilian and military groups," is derived from the close co-ordination existing between political and military ways of thought. Such subjective techniques were extensively utilised in Western Europe in the period leading up to the late nineteenth century, where the "ruling class" combined political and military responsibilities, and in many cases command positions were held by family members of political leaders [Welch,1976:11].

Deliberately isolating the armed forces from the society they defend, was a common method of civil supremacy of colonialism, particularly British colonial activities. British recruitment of colonial soldiers often centred on "pliable" and so-called martial peoples, at times drawn from other British colonial territories. The Indian army under the British Raj predominantly recruited Pathans (from Afghanistan) and Gurkhas (from Nepal). Consequently, certain groups became closely linked with the maintenance of British power, thereby becoming isolated from the general oppressed populace [Cohen,1976:47]. In many African situations, indigenous soldiers under the authority of colonial masters, acted with typically mercenary behaviour, conquering and subjugating their fellow Africans, usually from other ethnic groups. Consequently members of such armies were despised by their neighbours.

However, in a situation outside of the colonial environment, the isolation of the armed forces might not run counter to civil supremacy, if officers interests are recognised and protected. If this is the case, civil supremacy may well require shared sentiments of class or nationality affecting the behaviour of the officer corps and the rank and file alike [Welch,1976:16].

Ascriptive techniques have also been used on a broader scale, through the use of universal conscription. Conscription may be used as a means of civil supremacy in two instances. First, the establishment of a conscript army precludes the problems and political hazards associated with standing armies. Second, conscription is a means to civilianise existing standing armies, with substantial numbers of civilians being introduced into the military to prevent the over-development of corporate interests.

Welch [1976:17] concludes that ascriptive ties provide an flimsy foundation upon which to erect a structure of civil supremacy, and such techniques must be reinforced by other means of control.

1.5.4) Party/Political Movement Controls

In revolutionary regimes or one-party states, such as China and the former Soviet Union, civil supremacy tends to be enshrined through a myriad of party controls of the armed forces. These party controls can be divided into the following two sub-sections:

The first sub-section is that of organisation. Party/political movement control can be realised through the establishment of a hierarchy of politically reliable officials parallel to the existing military chain of command [Welch,1976:19]. This includes the appointment of political commissars during the period of revolutionary combat with powers equal to, or superior to military officers. These commissars play a "watchdog" role, approving military plans and other military activity at each level of the military's organisation. There essential functions can be summed up as follows: to observe activities in the units and to pass the information to higher levels of the apparatus; to politicise military personnel through intensive indoctrination and political education; to regulate the advancement of officers so that only those who are desirable from the party's point of view are promoted to positions of authority; to supervise and control military as well as political activities within the unit [Colton,1979:3-4].

In addition party control can be achieved through the creation of organised and omnipresent security networks to ensure the loyalty of the armed forces and eliminate possible praetorian activities [Janowitz,1964:80].

The second sub-section is that of recruitment and promotion. Civil supremacy can be enhanced in the following ways: making it a prerequisite for military officers to meet certain party or ideological criteria for appointment and promotion, or even insisting that officers join the ruling party; recruitment of the rank and file from socially dispossessed groups; and the election of military officers by rank and file soldiers on certain occasions.

1.5.5) Geographic Factors

Civil supremacy of the armed forces can be enhanced by geographic factors in two respects.

In the first instance, the physical geographical location and qualities of a country have a significant influence on the perception of security threats. States boarded by friendly neighbours, or those states whose security is guaranteed by powerful allies or geographic barriers, may be able to maintain relatively small standing forces, over which civilian control may be more effectively exercised [Welch,1976:24].

In the second instance, geography may be intentionally exploited by a government or party. For example, a government may insist on armed forces that are divided, by maintaining separate and even competing command structures in the different services, and to keep the military dispersed around the countryside and metropolitan areas. This unleashes competition with regard to weapons, resources, turf and responsibility. This undermines the military's ability to intervene and establish praetorian regimes [Danopoulos,1992:17].

1.5.6) Professional Responsibility and Objective Control

In general, the greater the sphere of responsibilities that are apportioned to the armed forces, the greater the possibility of active military involvement in politics. Conversely, the more limited their responsibilities, the greater the potential for their subordination to civilian control [Welch,1976:32]. Therefore a clear distinction should exist between the duties of the armed forces and civilian government, as well as those responsibilities of the armed forces, the police and para-military units.

"Professionalising" the military, has the effect, according to Huntington, of improving "objective" civilian control, as such a process renders the armed forces "politically sterile and neutral" [Huntington,1957:84]. The "professionalisation" of the military is a process whereby the professional characteristics of the armed forces are encouraged through enhancing the military's specialisation and expertise in the management of violence, increasing the educational opportunities available to the officer corps, and boosting the corporate nature of the military. Such a state of affairs results in clear areas of responsibility being assigned to the military [Huntington,1957:11-18].

Each of these techniques have been beneficial in facilitating and administering civil supremacy of the military, however, their effectiveness has often tended to be constrained to particular historical and socio-political circumstances or civil supremacy traditions. In many instances certain techniques and methods are more potent when used in combination with other techniques and methods.

1.6) The Way Forward

This chapter has provided an analysis of civil supremacy; an examination of the colonial, revolutionary/insurgent and democratic traditions; as well as an assessment of its various methods and techniques. This has been done to provide a starting point, a rough travel guide that defines the basic layout of the territory and points this dissertation in the direction of interesting and otherwise lesser trodden pathways, in order to answer two interrelated questions. First, how does civil supremacy evolve? Second, how is civil supremacy sustained over time?

In analysing the evolution of civil supremacy, its various traditions (and the mechanisms and techniques involved) will be the focus. This dissertation will be concerned with how these traditions emerge (or fail to emerge), develop, overlap, and are transposed by other traditions over time. In addition, comparisons will be made between these classical or "pure" traditions and the Namibian experience.

What follows is an historical case study analysis of Namibia, viewed through the lens of civil supremacy of the military. A chronological approach will be adopted. Chapter two covers Namibia's history of colonial occupation up until 1960. Chapters three and four survey the insurgent response to foreign occupation. Chapters five and six consider the transition to, and the consolidation of, the Namibian democratic regime, respectively.

Chapter 2

Legacy of Resistance: Namibian History Prior to the Formation of SWAPO

This chapter describes Namibia's history prior to the formation of SWAPO. Three broad historical periods, each corresponding to the occupation of the Namibian territory by a foreign power, will be considered namely, *Oorlam* hegemony, German rule and South African occupation. The foci of this chapter are the traditions of civil supremacy that emerged during these episodes of foreign occupation.

2.1) The *Oorlam* Hegemony

Prior to European colonial intervention, Namibia[17] was home to a variety of indigenous ethnic groups, such as the nomadic Khoi, the pastoralist Nama tribes, the Hereros, Wambo, the Damaras, and a number of Tswana groups [Totemeyer,1977:3; Lau,1987:3]. However, given the semi-arid/arid nature of Namibia, population numbers remained small.

2.1.1) The Migration

Between the late 1700s and early 1800s, a group of people of Khoi or mixed descent known as *Oorlams*, or "hat-wearers"[18] entered Namibia from the south and established settlements. They had formerly served as guides, scouts,

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[17] The term Namibia only came into general use in 1968. Before that the territory was referred to as South West Africa, derived from its geographical position, and before that, during the German occupation, it was known as German South West Africa. However, for the purpose of consistency, the territory in question will be referred to as Namibia throughout this paper.

herders, domestic servants and agricultural labourers for the Dutch farmers. These *Oorlams* were a product of colonialism in the Cape, as they were Christians, spoke Dutch and wore European clothing. They survived through hunting and trading, as well as stealing livestock and supplies from the local indigenous people.

Oorlams were a militaristic people, with each political community being dominated by a para-military group, known as a commando.[19] The most famous *Oorlam* family was the Afrikaners, under Jager, who settled in southern Namibia in the 1790s [Lau,1983:25].[20]

Initially, the relationship between the Nama inhabitants and the *Oorlam* intruders was characterised by hostile tolerance on the part of the Nama population, with trade and the occasional skirmish being the only interaction between these two groups. However, relations between these two groups became increasingly strained as the *Oorlams* became more expansionist. The *Oorlam* groups, seeking to cement their presence in Namibia, utilised their superior firepower to secure further access to land, water and livestock.

The decade from 1820 to 1830 was one of intense turmoil, with Namas being driven from areas of land by force, their cattle herds raided and much of their property destroyed. Relative peace was achieved in the early 1830s with an alliance being brokered between Jonker Afrikaner, third son of Jager, and Oasib, head of the most senior Nama lineage of Gai-//khaun. It was agreed that

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[18] This was the term used by the Nama people.
[19] The commandos usually consisted of 10-20 armed men on horseback, but were known to be larger in number if the situation demanded it.
[20] For a more in-depth analysis of the *Oorlams*, their social organization, activities and conquests see: Lau, B. 1983. "The Kommando in Southern Namibia 1800-1870" in: C. Saunders (ed.), Perspectives on Namibia, Occasional Papers No.4. (University of Cape Town: Centre for African Studies); Lau, B. 1987. Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time (Windhoek: Windhoek Archives). Other families/groups included: the Khauas people, the Berseba people, the Witboois, the Swartboois, the Veldskoendraers, to name but a few.

Namas and *Oorlams* shared equal rights in Namibia, however, the Namas had been significantly weakened, both militarily and economically, by the decade of war, and so the Afrikaners gained control over the entire area east of Windhoek and north of Kuiseb. This enabled the *Oorlams* to control the trade route to the Cape (via Walvis Bay) and have the monopoly of access to labour and cattle from Hereros living in those areas [Lau,1983:28-29].

2.1.2) The Emergence of the Afrikaner Regime

Settled regional communities began to emerge, which were governed by constitutions or *Ryksbeks*. Churches were built and a system of roads constructed. The commando became the dominant institution for political organisation and identification, with leadership primarily determined by military skill and expertise. Jonker Afrikaner emerged as the sovereign over much of southern and central Namibia. Due to a system of alliances, mixing and intermarrying, old tribal structures, as well as social differences between *Oorlam* and Nama were discarded [Lau,1987:41-52].[21]

From the 1840s, the *Oorlams*/Namas, due to their superior military strength, were able to establish and maintain feudal and tributary relations with the Herero and Damara people. Herero chiefs had to take care of large numbers of Afrikaner cattle, provide manpower support (servants) for commandos, and extract tax revenue from their dependants for the *Oorlams*/Namas. In return, Herero chiefs were issued with guns, their own cattle posts were not taxed, and they were allowed to enrich themselves when accompanying Afrikaners on various raids. In order to maintain control over the Herero people, foreigners, especially traders and missionaries, were prevented from gaining access to Hereroland [Lau,1987:107-110].

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[21] This is particularly evident in primary and secondary documentation when all references to historical distinctions between Nama and *Oorlam* ceased.

2.1.3) The Demise of the Afrikaners

By the early 1860s other *Oorlam*/Nama groups, backed by European traders, entrepreneurs and missionaries, began to challenge the Afrikaners' monopoly over the extraction of tribute and labour from the Herero. This involved sporadic clashes and complex political manoeuvring, which, combined with a scarcity of resources (surface water, fertile pastures and game reserves), the outbreak of disease (smallpox and cattle lung sickness) and the death of Jonker Afrikaner in 1861, significantly weakened the Afrikaner hegemony.

In 1863 full-scale war erupted. British and German traders, with the support of indigenous mercenaries and Nama groups clashed with the Afrikaners and their allies (e.g. the Swartboois, Rehobothers and Witboois [First,1963:66]. In 1970 a peace agreement was brokered. The war had impoverished the Afrikaner regime to the point of collapse, and thus the Europeans were able to almost exclusively exploit the resources of the northern and eastern territories [Lau,1987:111-141]. This marked the beginning of the European colonial epoch for Namibia.

In summary, the period of *Oorlam* hegemony was characterised by deep ingrained militarism, where the reliance on force to settle disputes was the order of the day. Individual leaders used their political and military skill to gain control over a territorial area. Economic and material resources, including private armies, were employed to enlarge their domain of effective influence. It was a situation where the gun dictated power, a period characterised by a complete lack of political relations of consent. It was a time of warlords.[22]

[22] According to Sheridan [1966:1] a warlord "exercise[s] effective governmental control over a fairly well-defined region by means of a military organisation that obeyed no higher authority than himself."

2.2) The Establishment of a German Colony

2.2.1) The Germans Arrive

The "scramble for Africa" in the nineteenth century between the European powers, driven by imperial greed for colonies, transformed any unclaimed area on the African continent into a desired commodity. Following the missionary incursions into Namibia, Britain and Germany competed with each other to gain control of this territory. In 1883 Adolph Luderitz purchased land from the Nama/*Oorlam* chief, Josef Fredericks of Bethanie for R200 and 200 rifles, and established trading posts at Angra Pequena (now Luderitz) and Bethanie [Mason,1995:248]. In August 1884, Germany annexed western Namibia and installed a very basic colonial administration.

The formal colonial status of Namibia, like that of many African countries was eventually determined by the European powers at the Conference of Berlin in 1884. Namibia was allocated to Germany, with the exception of Walvis Bay, which remained under British control.

As Germany was the last European power to acquire colonies,[23] the necessary administrative experience and colonial policy was undeveloped. Perceiving economics to be the primary rationale for the acquisition of a colony (that is, to secure a market for German infant industries), and not wanting to overburden the German taxpayer, Chancellor Bismarck endowed German industrialists with the responsibility for colonial development in Namibia. In order to accomplish this the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft fur Deutsch Sudwest-Afrika*

[23] Most of Germany's colonial empire was the product of one year: Togoland and the Cameroons in July 1884, South West Africa in August, New Guinea in December and German East Africa in May 1885 [First,1963:69].

was established in 1885. Its primary focus was mining, but the company hoped that this industry would stimulate development in other sectors such as agriculture and trade [Esterhuyse,1968:121, 237-38]. However, these developments were slow to take effect and the area was scornfully referred to as *sandpotjie* (little pot of sand) in Germany [Esterhuyse,1968:66].

As with other African colonies, many of the governors of German colonial territories were men of military background, retired soldiers looking to acquire a professional reputation in the colonies. This was the case with the Governor of German South West Africa, Col. Theodor Leutwein. However, as the era of German conquest drew to a close, an increasing number of senior colonial positions were taken up by civilians. The Governors office supervised the entire administration, including armed forces and police. The Governor was also responsible for drawing up the territory's budget, but the *Reichstag*, the German legislature had to approve it. The *Schutztruppen* (colonial military) high command in Berlin was attached to the colonial ministry rather than to the army high command, an illustration of the low priority of colonial forces within the German military hierarchy. [Gann,1978:469-471].

German colonisation mimicked the model pioneered by the English and the French. Charted companies were granted concessions in exchange for capital, and the merchant missionaries replaced professional traders [First,1963:72]. With Bismarck being succeeded by Graf von Caprivi as Imperial Chancellor, alternative means were sought to make the colony more economically viable, as well as to establish and enforce German sovereignty and authority [Bley,1971:36]. To achieve this, the colonial authorities saw it necessary to extend German influence and control further east.

The German settlers had not attempted to occupy the northern areas, particularly Ovamboland, as they were perceived to be economically

unproductive, and the Ovambo inhabitants were heavily armed. Colonial officials relied on "protection treaties" instead, which facilitated the flow of migrant labour to the southern mines. Communication with Ovambo leaders was mainly through sympathetic missionaries [Hayes,1993:90].

The Berlin Conference led to the signing of the General Act of Berlin (1885), which stipulated that in order for a European power to effectively occupy a territory in Africa, it had to govern it [Pakenham,1991:253]. Consequently, the German administration encouraged colonists to move into areas that were not yet under German control. Armed colonists moved into the southern and central areas, depriving the indigenous inhabitants of their land. This encroachment was met with minimal resistance due to the hostile rivalry between the Herero and the Nama[24] as well as their constant feuding over land and cattle [Werner,1993:138-139].

2.2.2) The Indigenous Response

Hendrik Witbooi, leader of the Witbooi clan, was able to mobilise significant Nama resistance colonial expansion, however, it was relatively short-lived as the Witbooi were forced to surrender at the Battle of Naukluft (1894) [First,1963:75]. This led to the Witbooi's collaboration[25] with, and military allegiance to, the German colonial authorities, especially with respect to the pacifying of any anti-colonial insurgencies and assisting in the subjection of the Herero people to conditions of semi-serfdom [Alexander, 1983:53-56;

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[24] Tensions between these two parties erupted in 1880 with the outbreak of the second Herero-Nama war, which was eventually brought to an end with the Peace of Rehoboth (1882) [Esterhuyse,1968:36]. This, however, did not prevent further hostilities between the two parties.

[25] Historically there has been much debate as to why the Witbooi collaborated with the German authorities. Currently, the generally accepted explanation is that Hendrik Witbooi adopted this strategy so that his people could retain their firearms, cattle and land, as well as their continued autonomy [Alexander,1983:62].

Bley,1971:33].[26] The Khoua rebellion of 1896, for instance, was brough to an end by a combination of German military power and Witbooi commando force. The result was that the Khoua were interned in forced labour camps [Bley,1971:13].

There was a duality in terms of German policy towards the Herero. First, the Herero, not willing to co-operate with the colonial authorities as the Witbooi and Nama groups had, were perceived as a threat to German sovereignty and supremacy in southern and central Namibia. Second, the Herero, due to their accumulation of cattle and their opposition to "trading" in livestock, were viewed as impeding the prosperity of the colony, which at the time was in financial difficulty. Cheap labour was required for the colony to become economically viable, and the Herero were earmarked to provide it [Bley,1971:113]. In order to achieve this the German Colonial Administration attempted to fragment the Herero people by restricting the power of the chiefs through "protection treaties", and undermined the Herero social system by exploiting intra-tribal rivalries [Bley,1971:117].

By 1903 these divide-and-rule policies, in conjunction with unscrupulous trading deals, resulted in more than half of the Herero's cattle wealth being transferred into German hands [First,1963:76].

The Hereros, fearing for their survival, rebelled against the colonial administration in January 1904.[27] Settlers and soldiers were attacked, colonial infrastructure and farms were destroyed. The Herero regained complete control

[26] Other indigenous groups, such as the Swartboois and Rehoboth Basters were also conscripted to serve under German military authority.
[27] Herero Chief Maharero wrote to Hendrik Witbooi appealing for him to assist the Herero in their campaign: "Rather let us die together and not die as a result of ill-treatment, prison or all the other ways." However, his letter did not reach Witbooi, as the Rehoboth captain who was supposed to deliver it handed it to the German governor instead [First,1963:78].

of Hereroland. With the aid of German military reinforcements, the rebellion was eventually crushed in August of that year at the Battle of Waterberg.

German dealings with the Herero did not end here. General von Trotha, the German Chief of Staff issued a *Vernichtungsbefehl* (extermination order) for the entire Herero population. This genocide was not purely for reasons of revenge, it had a more pragmatic end. Von Trotha, under increasing pressure from the German settlers, wanted to eliminate the Herero threat once and for all [Dedering,1993:84]. Thousands of Herero men, women and children were massacred by the German *Schutztruppe* (colonial military). The genocide order, however, was reversed before completion for economic reasons. A labour force for the period of post-war reconstruction was required [Soggot,1986:11].

Following the Herero defeat, and fearing the end to their autonomy (especially their access to arms) and even extermination, the Nama people under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi and Jacob Marenga, revolted in October 1904 [Alexander,1983:63]. They embarked on a guerrilla warfare campaign that lasted two years. However, organised resistance in the face of superior firepower of the colonists could not be sustained indefinitely, and the Nama were eventually defeated in 1906. The German Supreme General Command (1907) put the number of military encounters between the German forces and the rebels at 295 over this period. The final statistics of the war: sixteen thousand Hereros survived out of a population of eighty thousand. Amongst the Nama's the death tool was 10,000 in a population estimated at 20,000[28] [Soggot,1986:11].

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[28] Amongst scholars of Namibian history there has been much confusion and debate with respect to the casualty figures following the genocide. Statistics from that particular period are not reliable, as they were largely incomplete and inaccurate estimates of the Herero and Nama populations made by German officials and missionaries. Recently, Brigitte Lau (1989), in an article, "Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904", which appeared in *Mibagus* 2, argued that the extermination order was a means of psychological warfare, which was never physically realised. Lau claimed Horst Drechsler's authoritative work, *Let Us Die*

Survivors were interned in prison labour camps on the coast, where thousands died from starvation and disease. Leaders who were not killed were sent into exiled. By 1907, the Nama were divided politically, fragmented socially, and destroyed economically [Mason,1995:256].[29]

2.2.3) The Consolidation of the Colony

In the wake of the uprisings, central and southern Namibia became reserved for colonial settlement, and this was enforced through effective political and military control. This area became known as the Police Zone.

In 1907 legislation was introduced to address the labour supply shortage which the genocide had brought about. This legislation sought to undermine tribal society by prohibiting Africans in the Police Zone from owning land or cattle, in order to force Africans to provide labour for the colonial administration [Soggot,1985:x; Katjavivi,1988:11]. Nevertheless, this legislation failed to release the necessary labour for colonial expansion, and the German authorities were forced to rely on migrant labourers from the north.

No administrative inroads were made into Ovamboland, the area to the north of the Police Zone, as the inhabitants were armed and coherently organised. It

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Fighting (London,1980) is ideologically biased and distorts statistical figures and historical facts. Randolph Vigne and Henning Melber responded to Lau's allegations in the *Southern African Review of Books* (February/March and August/September 1990), by implying that Lau misunderstood some statements concerning the statistics of surviving Hereros and Namas by Drechsler.

[29] In May 1906 Jacob Marenga, fearing extermination by the Germans surrendered to the British in the Cape, where he was interned in Tokai Prison. He was released in June 1907, and made his way back to Namibia where he was re-united with some of his followers. The German authorities anxious that Marenga might return to arms, and provoke another war, pressurised the British to hunt him down and kill him. On the 20 September 1907 a British armed force of about a hundred men caught up with Marenga's party at Eensaamheidpan in Botswana and massacred them [Mason,1995:247-256].

was too much of a military obstacle to be overcome with the limited resources at the German Governor's disposal. Consequently, the colonial authorities entered into an official treaty with Ovambo tribal heads: in exchange for recruiting rights for labour, German protection would be guaranteed [Soggot,1986:19].

In the Police Zone, Africans had either been forced to work on white-owned farms or were being settled into impoverished "reserves". All in all the indigenous people of Namibia had very few political or social rights from birth, and the valuable resources of land, cattle and minerals were in the hands of the white elite. The basic features of this colonial system were to remain fairly constant in the following decades.

The growth of the copper mining industry and the discovery of diamonds in the Namib coastal belt near Luderitzbucht in 1908 stimulated industrial development leading to an increased demand for labour. The demand for labour was mostly met by Ovambos from the north of Namibia on fixed term contracts [Katjavivi,1988:12]. The harbour at Swakopmund was developed, and by 1912 exports exceeded imports for the first time, as a result of diamond production [First,1963:87].

In 1913 the colonial regime began to establish "reserves" on government-owned farms in order to restrict Namibians to small areas, to exert political and economic control and ensure a steady supply of labour. The system also acted to fragment any indigenous political leadership that might pose a threat to the status quo. [IDAF,1989:13] By the time the First World War broke out, the basic structure of what would become the apartheid system in Namibia was already well established.

2.2.4) The Final Days of German South West Africa

In much of the literature, the post-war period (1907-1915) has commonly been described as a time of African anguish and torment, devoid of anti-colonial resistance. Nevertheless, there were isolated incidents of indigenous defiance against the colonial regime, but lack of lack of military capacity and ideological unity precluded any coherent opposition [Prein,1994:99-101]. This defiance took many forms, such as the obstinacy to provide labour, and the formation of armed gangs that resorted to banditry[30] [Prein,1994:103-107]. However, these acts of resistance did not have a significant impact on the maintenance of German sovereignty.

In July 1915, following the outbreak of World War I, South Africa invaded Namibia at the request of the Allied powers.[31] Fifty to sixty thousand South African troops easily overwhelmed the German garrison, who almost immediately surrendered. Martial law was declared and the territory was placed under the control of a South African military governor for the duration of the War [Cooper,1991:33].

2.2.5) Summary

Civil-military relations within German South West Africa were influenced by five factors. First, even though Germany was not a democracy, constitutional techniques of civil supremacy were in existence, in that the colony's annual

[30] The most notorious group was the 'Rolf Gang', comprised of Bondelswarts who attacked farms owned by Germans and stole cattle. The members of this gang were hunted down and hanged in October 1909 by the German authorities.

[31] Namibia lay along the sea route between Europe and the East, and consequently could hinder the Allied transport of troops. Of equal importance, the German-built radio transmitter in Namibia, which allowed Berlin to communicate with the German naval fleet in the South Atlantic needed to be neutralised.

budget, including military expenditure, had to be approved by the German legislature in Berlin.

Second, the colonial military, the *Schutztruppen*, resembled a small professional force that was located within the colonial ministry rather than to the German Army High Command, further reinforcing civil control of the armed forces.

Third, as Germany was late to the colonial game, German South West Africa did not experience the depth of colonial penetration that the British, French and Portuguese had in their colonies. Assimilation of local populations into German cultural traditions was virtually non-existent. Consequently, the military did not recruit from the indigenous population. The only exception was that armed indigenous groups that had been temporarily subdued by the colonial military, such as the Witbooi, were co-opted into assisting the colonial authorities in clamping down on local insurrections.

Fourth, even though the military was relatively small, it was still able to wield significant influence in times of crisis, as was indicated by General von Trotha's extermination order.

Fifth, the military was unable to penetrate the Ovambo areas in the North beyond the Police Zone. This meant that these areas remained relatively free from direct colonial involvement.

2.3) The South African Occupation

2.3.1) South Africa's Mandate

At the Treaty of Versailles, the colonies of the defeated Germany became the responsibility of Britain, France or their allies, under a mandate system administered by the League of Nations. On the 17 December 1920, Namibia was entrusted to South Africa on the behalf of Britain as a mandated territory. This brought an end to the period of martial law in Namibia. Under the mandate system, South Africa's obligation was to govern the territory and to promote to the best of her ability the moral and material welfare of the inhabitants [Katjavivi,1988:14]. South Africa would have preferred to annex the territory and rule it as part of the Union, but international and domestic pressures prevented this from happening [IDAF,1989:14].

The relationship between the League of Nations and South Africa deteriorated during the 1920s as a result of South Africa's discriminatory policies and actions. The Mandates Commission formally deplored the absence of "social progress" of indigenous Namibians, and the disparity of wealth between blacks and whites [Soggot,1986:20]. Consequently, South Africa became the target of much international criticism.

With the demise of the League of Nations in April 1946 and its reformation as the United Nations Organisation (UN), the South African government lobbied for Namibia to be incorporated into South Africa. The South African government motivations for this request. First, the legal justification that South Africa's mandate had lapsed with the demise of the League. Second, South Africa claimed that, on the basis of a "referendum" amongst the

indigenous population, that Namibians favoured incorporation into South Africa[32] [Soggot,1986:21].

The United Nations rejected this request, stating that the former League of Nations mandate remained valid. This refusal was also motivated by the Scott Papers (documents presented before the UN by Reverend Michael Scott) that exposed the suspicious nature of the referendum, in which various chiefs had been deceived or misinformed. The UN requested South Africa to place Namibia under Trusteeship,[33] as had been done with other mandated territories [du Pisani.1987:20].

After the election of the National Party Government in South Africa in 1948, the said government refused to place Namibia under the UN Trusteeship system. In 1949 South Africa discontinued its annual reports to the UN on the administration of the territory [Cooper,1991:73]. In 1950, after much legal wrangling, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that the international status of Namibia could not be unilaterally altered by South Africa; in short South Africa's obligation as mandatory power prevailed [Soggot,1986:23].

Throughout the 1950s, international action concerning Namibia was depicted by a series of complex, but ineffectual attempts to negotiate with South Africa over the status of the Territory. In the face of this international pressure, South Africa merely strengthened her resolve, and claimed that the international community had no right to interfere with South Africa's administration of Namibia [Sparks & Green,1992:28].

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[32] This so-called referendum was highly dubious. Individual votes were not required, instead pre-printed petitions appealing for Namibia's incorporation into South Africa were distributed by Native Commissioners to be signed by chiefs, headmen and counsellors on behalf of their followers. There was no official voters role, and the wording of the petition was vague and obscure. The South African Report on the outcome of the referendum revealed a poll of 208,850 in favour of incorporation; 33,520 voted against; 56,870 were not consulted.

2.3.2) Discrimination and the Imposition of Apartheid

At first many black Namibians hailed the South Africans as "liberators". Some Herero and Rehobothers even offered the South Africans' military assistance against the Germans. A proclamation by General Louis Botha at the Versailles Conference raised Namibian expectations that land confiscated by the Germans would be returned to the original owners. In addition, Lord Buxton, Governor General of the Union of South Africa at the time, pledged the restoration of Herero "freedom, cattle and land" [du Pisani,1987:18].[34] However, these promises did not materialise, as the South African government proceeded to settle white farmers, in large numbers, on Namibian soil [First,1963:106]. This was followed by the territory's incorporation into South Africa's monetary zone and customs union [Gottschalk,1983:72].

By 1926 it was evident that the South African administration held the white population's interests to be paramount, and viewed the non-white community as a potential pool of cheap labour. White settlers from South Africa and Angola, encouraged by incentives such as cheap loans, streamed into Namibia, where they were allocated farms on the fertile grazing lands of central Namibia [First,1963:107-108]. Black Namibians, on the other hand, were forced live in the marginal "reserve" areas, endure inferior education, low wages and poor working conditions, relative to what was offered to whites. Segregation was also enforced in the urban areas, where Africans were compelled to live on the

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[33] Amongst other issues, the Trusteeship system paved the way for self-government in the respective territory.

[34] Added to this, the South African authorities established special criminal courts which tried cases of inhuman treatment and murder of Africans by Germans. A Special Commission of Inquiry was also appointed to investigate conditions under German rule. The Commission's findings were published in 1918 (the Blue Book), depicting the gruesome details of German colonial regime. These actions were not really for the benefit of the indigenous people of Namibia, but rather to undermine Germany's reputation as a colonial power [First,1963:92-93].

fringes of towns in "locations" [IDAF,1989:14]. In short, all the South African occupation represented was a substitution of one colonial master for another.

The importation of the South African constitution and laws intensified the discriminatory practices. This legislation prohibited Africans from owning land, and restricted livestock ownership. Hunting was limited by taxes on the dogs which were used to track game. As the South African Administration became more entrenched in Namibia, so more apartheid legislation was introduced to the detriment of the indigenous inhabitants.[35]

A measure of self-government was introduced to the territory in 1925, but for whites only. The South West Africa Constitution Act No. 42 of 1925 established a Legislative Assembly of which six were appointed and eighteen elected by the white constituency. The Assembly was endowed with limited legislative capacity, however, Native Affairs, Justice, Defence and a number of other legislative fields were reserved for the South African Parliament [Soggot,1986:20].

2.3.3) Civil-Military Relations

2.3.3.1) Civil Control: Constitutional and Professional Military Issues

With Namibia being governed as an integral part of South Africa, and the South African constitution and legislation being effective in Namibia, there were some important implications for civil-military relations in the territory.

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[35] Curfews were imposed on Africans in urban areas. Under the *Masters and Servants Proclamation* No. 34 of 1920 corporal punishment could be imposed on workers for desertion or disobedience; the *Vagrancy Proclamation* of the same year entitled the authorities to imprison or fine Africans not in officially approved housing or employment. The 1922 *Pass Laws* (No.11)

The Defence Act of 1912 granted Parliament supreme legislative supremacy in defence matters relating to South Africa's territorial integrity. A civilian Secretariat was created in the Department of Defence, which was based in Pretoria and had a financial oversight function [Seegers,1996:20-35].

In addition, the composition of the Union (South African) Defence Force facilitated greater civil supremacy. It was comprised of a small Permanent Force component of professional soldiers and an Active Citizen Force made up of conscripted white males.

2.3.3.2) The Military and Domestic Insurrections

The military had an important role to play in Namibia, particularly in the pacification of the regions to the north of the Police Zone and in suppressing domestic insurrections.

In 1917, in an attempt to extend South African control over Ovamboland, a joint South African-Portuguese military force was dispatched against Chief Mandume of the Kwanyama, the second largest tribe in Ovamboland. Mandume had, up until that time, resisted both South African colonialism to the south and Portuguese rule to the north (in Angola). The military foray was successful and Mandume and a hundred of his followers were killed. The head of Chief Mandume was then taken to Windhoek and displayed in public as a visual testimony to what would become of those who resisted South African rule [Katjavivi,1988:18; First,1963:98-99]. This was the beginning of what was to become strong military involvement in the region.

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restricted the movement of Africans and compelled them to carry identity documents in the Police Zone [Soggot,1986:18].

In 1922 the Bondelswart Namas rebelled against the South African authorities. This was in response to their living conditions,[36] debilitating stock controls and the increased taxation (especially taxes on their dogs, which were vital for their survival as hunters) that had been imposed on them. Without hesitation the South African security forces bombed and machine-gunned the Bondelswarts into submission, indiscriminately killing over one hundred men, women and children [Cooper,1991:39].

In 1924 the army was once again used to subdue a further indigenous uprising, namely the Rehoboth Baster rebellion. This community had negotiated limited self-government for a small republic in central Namibia during the German colonial period. In response to the Rehoboth agitation against full incorporation into the South African Administration, the Rehoboth capital was surrounded, and over 600 Rehobothers, together with Herero and Nama supporters were arrested. The result was that the Rehoboth Council was stripped of all its powers [First,1963:104-105].

In all three instances the message by South African security forces was clear. Opposition to the South African regime, particularly armed resistance would not be tolerated.

2.3.3.3) <u>World War II and Recruitment</u>

During World War II, some 7000 black Namibians where recruited into South Africa's Union Defence Force to assist the Allied war effort. This was almost twice the number of black recruits that signed up from Rhodesia and South Africa combined. In terms of the League of Nations Mandate, it was illegal to recruit indigenous Namibians into military service, however, the South African administration, by only utilising Namibians as guards, drivers,

[36] The Bondleswarts had been confined to a small arid reserve.

stretcher-bearers and medical and hygiene personnel, was able to avoid the legal implications. The Union Defence Force targeted the Herero speaking men primarily, as they were seen to embody a particular martial spirit. [Gordon,1993:147-148].

This military service lasted from December 1941 to January 1944. The recruits did not experience much of battlefront action, as the majority of the Namibian soldiers were used as labourers in South Africa [Gordon,1993:148-154].

Even though Namibia had been captured through military venture, and the armed focus remained the primary tool for securing effective South African governance in Namibia, active steps had been taken to ensure civil supremacy of the military. Constitutional arrangements and the presence of a small professional armed force supported by conscript battalions made up of civilians facilitated civilian control. In addition when the need arose, indigenous recruits were incorporated into the armed forces with ascriptive methods being applied.

2.4 The Formation of National-Based Resistance

2.4.1) The Emergence of Politically-Based Movements

In the face of large-scale white immigration, pressures over land, highly exploitative labour practices, and a constitution that effectively ignored a vast majority of the population, black Namibians adopted a more organised and coherent response to the South African Administration through the formation of political organisations. Many of the earliest political parties in South West Africa began as non-political associations, which tended to focus on religious, cultural, economic or social matters. By the 1920s many of these organisations turned their attention to political issues.

Branches of the Universal Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey were established in Windhoek and Luderitz in the 1920s and several hundred members were signed up. A branch of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) was also established in Luderitz at roughly the same time. Ovambo contract workers on the diamond fields formed a benefit society whose primary objective was to compensate striking workers for the fines they incurred in the Labour Courts[37] [SWAPO,1987:164].

In the wake of large scale dispossession of the Herero people's land, the Herero Chief's Council, a traditional organisation, was established. Apart from providing leadership for the Herero, the Council acted primarily to observe, publicise and protest against discriminatory policies of the South African Administration. The Herero Chief's Council became very active in petitioning the UN about the conditions in Namibia [Katjavivi,1988:39].

These first political associations were small, elitist and dominated by strong personalities. They were fraught with ideological divisions, ethnic tensions, as well as organisational and financial problems, and as a result many of these political associations were unable to sustain themselves [Sparks & Green,1992:24].

These political groupings crucial as that they gave workers a means of expressing themselves collectively, and played co-ordinating with respect to protest action. This led to strikes on the Luderitz (1923), Oranjemund (1937), Tsumbe (1939) and Nageib (1939) mines [Katjavivi,1988:21].

[37] In terms of the labour legislation (Labour Code), a striking worker would be fined R60 (a year's worth of wages, on average), or three months imprisonment.

2.4.2) The Rise of Trade Unionism

Organisers of the Cape Town-based Food and Canning Workers Union introduced trade-unionism to Luderitz, the fish canning centre of Namibia, in the early 1950s. The Union began to lobby the South African Administration and the Legislative Assembly to bring about labour reform legislation. In 1952, the Union resorted to strike action, which achieved limited success, as workers gained an incremental increase in wages and an improvement in working conditions. This success contributed to the momentum for further campaigns, including a more prolonged strike in 1953 that nearly paralysed the Luderitz crayfish industry.

The South Africa regime responded by declaring war on labour activism, with extensive efforts being made to crush the movement through physical and legislative repression[38] [Sparks & Green,1992:25-26]. Labour leaders were constantly harassed, and many were imprisoned [Sparks & Green, 1992:26].

2.4.3) The Formation of the Ovamboland People's Organisation

One of the most significant events of the 1950s was the creation of the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC)[39] (1957). The OPC grew out of the combined efforts of a group of some 200 Namibian workers and students based in Cape Town, who had been influenced and supported by the African National Congress (ANC), the Communist Party and the Liberal Party. These Namibians desired to improve the working conditions of Namibians, and

[38] For instance, the Terrorism Act was broadened to include activities that prejudiced industry or caused financial loss to any person or the state. Thus workers campaigning for higher wages and/or better working conditions were classified as terrorists. The penalties for contravening this law were severe, with the maximum sentence being death.
[39] Despite the name, the OPC was not made up of exclusively Ovambos, but it was largely the Ovambo people who were negatively affected by the contract labour system.

ultimately eradicate the discriminatory contract labour system in their country [SWAPO,1987:172].

Among the founding members of OPC were Andimba Toivo Ja Toivo, Peter Mueshihange, Solomon Mifima, Andreas Shipanga, Jackson Kashikuka, Jacob Kuhangua and Joseph Mutongolume. A group of Namibian students studying in Cape Town were also associated with the OPC, including Emil Appolus, Jariretundu Kozonguizi and Ottilie Schimming Abrahams [Katjavivi,1988:20].

At some point in 1958 the OPC was reconstituted as the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO).

In April 1959 the OPO opened an office in Windhoek, and later Walvis Bay (as well as a number of branches in various locations throughout the country, including worker compounds). Its membership was open to all Namibians who subscribed to the OPO's objectives, namely, the abolition of the contract labour system and the achievement of national independence for Namibia [SWAPO,1987:173]. At this time Sam Nujoma was elected President; Louis Nelengani, Vice-President, while Lucas Nepela and Jacob Kuhangua were other prominent leaders.

The OPO attracted substantial support, with a membership of several thousand. Although the OPO focused primarily on the position and welfare of contract workers from the north, it did however, attract people from other walks of life [Katjavivi,1988:22-23].

The leadership structure of the OPO was robust, in that it effectively withstood constant harassment from the South African Police (SAP) and employers, without collapsing. Ja Toivo, after smuggling a tape containing oral evidence of South African oppression to the UN in a hollowed out copy of *Treasure Island*

was deported to Namibia (from South Africa), where he was placed under house arrest [SWAPO,1987:172].

2.4.4) The Creation of SWANU

In May 1959 the South West African National Union (SWANU) was created. It was an organisation that sought to provide a united front against South African occupation. SWANU was primarily comprised of an alliance between urban youth, intellectuals[40] and the Herero Chief's Council. In September, several leaders from the OPO and other organisations joined the SWANU executive, thereby broadening its national character [Soggot,1986:25].

SWANU, the Herero Chiefs Council and the OPO went on to facilitate protest action, including a defiance campaign which involved the boycott of municipal services in Windhoek. This campaign was launched in response to the City Counsel's decision to forcibly remove the entire black population from the "Old Location" to a township called Katatura, situated on the outskirts of Windhoek. This meant increased rent and transport costs for the already poverty stricken people. This protest action culminated in a march by mainly women from the "Old Location" in early December 1959 to the South African Administrator's residence [First,1963:200-201]. The Police refused to negotiate with the protestors, and attempted to arrest the leaders. Tensions flared and the police opened fire on the crowd. Thirteen people were killed and fifty-two were injured.

[40] These Namibians, who had studied in South Africa (as the secondary education system in Namibia was virtually non-existent), and influenced by the Defiance Campaign, formed an organisation called the South West African Student Body (SWASB). On returning to Namibia, these youths spearheaded the formation of the South West African Progressive Association (SWAPA), an educational and cultural organisation.

In the aftermath of the massacre, police clamped down on the nationalist leadership. Kuhangua was deported to Angola, and Nujoma to Ovamboland, but the latter escaped to lead the liberation movement in exile.[41] Louis Nelengani, Nathanill Mbaeva and many other leaders of the emerging nationalist organisation were imprisoned, banned or restricted [SWAPO,1987:174-175].

Given intense police repression, ethnic tensions within the movement (SWANU was dominated by Herero, while the OPO had mainly Ovambo membership) and rivalry between the youth and the traditional leaders of the Herero Chief's Council, the fragile national alliance collapsed [Sparks and Green,1992:26]. In the years that followed SWANU increasingly found itself unable to fulfil its objective of establishing a national liberation movement based on mass support. This was to be the OPO's role, which reconstituted itself as SWAPO in 1960, in order to broaden its support base.

2.4.5) Summary

Ironically, the early period of South African occupation, from 1915 to 1960, saw more effective (democratic) methods of civil supremacy being employed. This was due to Namibia being regarded by the South Africa government as part of the Union. The South African system of civil supremacy, which had certain democratic characteristics, was extended to Namibia.

It was also a period marked by the extensive use of the armed forces to pacify previously untouched areas and subdue domestic insurrections.

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[41] Nujoma fled through Botswana, Zimbabwe, and settled in Dar es Salaam where he was accommodated by Julius Nyerere. After a few weeks Nujoma travelled to Nairobi, Kenya and caught a plane to Kartoum, Sudan. From there he travelled to New York.

The nationalist-based resistance to South African occupation that emerged during this period was to provide a solid foundation for the period of insurgency that was to follow. It is significant that after several unsuccessful attempts at military-inspired resistance, it was civilian oriented, socio-economic protest and opposition that ultimately led to the formation of SWAPO, the organisation that was to lead the liberation struggle for the next thirty years.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that a tradition of civil supremacy, colonial in nature, emerged over three distinct phases in Namibia. Each phase corresponded to the intervention of a different colonial power, namely *Oorlam*, German and South African. The common trend running throughout all three phases was that there was almost a complete absence of political relations of consent. The coercive exercise of power was the order of the day.

Each colonial power gained control of the territory through the use of armed force. The amount of military power at their disposal determined the extent of their territorial influence. The warlord-like *Oorlams*, who had fairly limited military strength, were only able to secure control of certain regions in the south of Namibia. The Germans, with more firepower at their disposal, but limited manpower and a lack of political will in Berlin, were prevented from pacifying areas to the north of the Police Zone. South Africa's military capacity was greater than that of the Germans. The South African security forces were able to cease control areas to the north, and draw on much needed labour in those areas for the development of the Namibian mining and fisheries industry.

Despite the dominance of coercive political relations during this period, three contradictions can be identified.

First, the Germans introduced constitutional mechanisms of civilian control, and utilised a small professional colonial force, a hallmark of the democratic civil supremacy tradition. Second, South Africa introduced more rigorous methods of civil supremacy, such as parliamentary oversight and budgetary control, as well as a professional military supported by conscripts. Third, from the 1950s, through the influence of trade unions, the OPO and other political associations, democratic demands began to emerge in the workplace.

These contradictions are, in all probability, due to the absence of a dominant tradition. There was always a rival tradition to the established one. As a result the civil supremacy did not remain static. Namibia was constantly invaded, thus preventing a single tradition from taking root.

Chapter 3

SWAPO: Development of a Nationalist Resistance Movement (1960-1974)

In SWAPO we don't divorce military matters from political matters – it is always politics which leads the gun.

Andreas Shipanga, 1972

Namibia's struggle for independence and liberation from South African occupation spanned a period of approximately thirty years. Starting with the emergence of small resistance organisations the struggle quickly escalated with SWAPO taking the lead and driving this resistance to greater heights. The struggle eventually culminated in a negotiated settlement with SWAPO being installed in government through democratic elections. The historical analysis of this liberation struggle period will be divided into two fairly equal time periods, namely, 1960-1974 and 1974-1988. The dividing point is the Portuguese coup d'etat, an event that had a fundamental impact on southern African regional dynamics.

The objective of this chapter is to provide an analysis of SWAPO during the period 1960 to 1974. The traditions of civil supremacy that emerged during this time will constitute the focal point of this chapter.

3.1) SWAPO: A Movement Born Out of Necessity

3.1.1) The Formation of SWAPO

By early 1960 the OPO had reached a crossroads. A large number of its influential leaders were either in exile, imprisoned, or confined to remote regions in Namibia by banning orders. Its development as an organisation was limited due to its narrow ethnic and political appeal. OPO still co-operated with SWANU and Herero Chiefs Council, but its role in the national liberation movement was uncertain. Tensions between the young nationalists in SWANU and OPO members on the one hand and the Chief's Council on the other undermined its effectiveness. In addition, a personal rivalries between two of Namibia's key international lobbyists, Kozonguizi and Kerina, possibly contributed to an increasing rift between the OPO and SWANU.

In early June 1960 Kozonguizi met with Nujoma in Monrovia to discuss a possible merger between SWANU and the OPO. The merger was opposed by Kerina and the Chief's Council, and therefore never materialised. In the immediate aftermath of this aborted merger, OPO leaders reconstituted the OPO as the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). This was an attempt to transform an ethnically and regionally based organisation into one non-ethnic and national in character that would have broader populist appeal [Soggot,1986:28].

It is often erroneously held that SWAPO was established on 19 April 1960. In fact, it was not until June 1960 that SWAPO was officially inaugurated. This confusion arises as SWAPO consistently celebrates its birthday on the 19 April, which actually coincides with the formation of the OPO [Katjavivi,1987:45]. This is not surprising, as all SWAPO was at its inception was the OPO by another name, with most of the OPO leadership retaining

their original political positions. Sam Nujoma became President; Mburumba Kerina, Chairman; Ismail Fortune, Secretary General; and Jacob Kuhangua, Assistant Secretary General.

The interests' of the contract workers remained close to the SWAPO's leadership heart. This was indicated by SWAPO's motto: "Work in Solidarity for Justice and Freedom". The only significant change with respect to the OPO was the broadening of its aims and objectives. According to its Constitution, SWAPO's aims and objectives were as follows:

- ... to establish a free, democratic government in South West Africa founded upon the will and participation of all the people of our country and co-operate to the fullest extent with all our African brothers and sisters to rid our continent of all forms of foreign domination and to rebuild it according to the desires of the African peoples.
- To work for the unification of all the people of South West Africa into a cohesive representative, national political organisation, irrespective of their race, ethnic origin, religion or creed.
- To work for the achievement of a complete independence for South West Africa and the removal of all forms of oppression such as Apartheid laws, contract system, Bantu education, and the introduction of universal adult suffrage and direct democratic representation of all inhabitants of South West Africa in all organs of the government.
- To work for a speedy reconstruction of a better South West Africa in which the people and their Chiefs shall have the right to live and govern themselves as free people.
- Reconstruction of the economy, educational and social foundations which will support and maintain the real African independence which our people desire for themselves.

- Maintenance of contact, exchange of views and information and co-operation with organisations and individuals dedicated with us to the total emancipation and reconstruction of our continent [Katjavivi,1988:45-46]. [42]

3.1.2) The Establishment of an International Diplomatic Campaign

As with the more established Namibian resistance movements, like the Herero Chief's Council, international diplomacy was the principal strategy of the SWAPO leadership. The United Nations, especially the UN South West Africa Committee, was the prime target.

Like many other anti-colonial movements of the time, SWAPO established its political headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1962.[43] Lacking sufficient financial and human resources the SWAPO exile leadership had to make do with modest arrangements. Their offices were small, cramped and located in the back streets of Dar es Salaam. SWAPO's military camp, once established, was also modest, and was situated among the camps of other anti-colonial movements at Kongwa, in central Tanzania [Leys & Saul,1995:41]. At this time a small group of SWAPO members were sent back to Namibia to assist in the development of organisational structures of the internal wing of the Party [Putz et al,1989:254].

Numerous attempts to reconcile SWAPO and SWANU, in order to establish a united front against South African occupation, were attempted, but without

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[42] These aims and objectives were only formally framed some years after the formation of SWAPO. In the interim the OPO constitution remained the guiding document for this liberation movement.

[43] Other liberation movements included the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-African Congress, and the South African Unity Movement (APDUSA).

much success.[44] Kerina campaigned so strongly for this unity, that he alienated himself from the rest of the SWAPO leadership. He eventually left the organisation in 1962.[45]

SWAPO established offices in New York, London, Moscow, Helsinki, Stockholm, Dakar, Algiers, Cairo, Francistown, and later Lusaka [Soggot,1986:28]. SWAPO representatives in these offices were able to establish support networks in their host countries. Over time they became increasingly effective in facilitating the isolation of South Africa in diplomatic circles [Saul & Leys,1995:41].

3.2) Recourse to Arms: The Launching of the Armed Struggle

3.2.1) The Decision

From the 1950s the idea of armed struggle had been actively debated in Namibian resistance circles, but was always dismissed as the necessary organisational and resource capacity was lacking.[46] In addition, early forms

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[44] A joint initiative by SWAPO and SWANU executives, with the co-operation of the South West African United National Independent Organisation, the Burgher Association of Rehoboth Council and the Volks-Organisasie van Suidwse-Afrika, in October 1963, in Windhoek saw the formation of the South West African National Liberation Front (SWANLF). It aimed to: solicit aid for the liberation movement in Namibia; inform the world at large about South West Africa; to represent the people of South West Africa in the councils of the world; to acquaint the people of South West Africa of the developments in the world at large. This initiative did not achieve all that much. The Herero Chief's Council did not join it, and the SWAPO leadership abroad did not endorse it. Consequently, the SWANLF was short-lived, with the result being that SWAPO and SWANU went their separate ways, and continued to be rivals even today [Katjavivi,1987:51].

[45] Kerina claimed he resigned, but SWAPO stated that he had been expelled.

[46] In fact before the formation of SWAPO, a small clandestine military study group, the *Yu Chi Chen* (Chinese for "guerrilla warfare") was established in South Africa. It was made up of South Africans and Namibians, many of which would become members of SWAPO. The group studied Marxism-Leninism and the writings of Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara [Shipanga(a),1972:7].

of indigenous armed uprising had been met with a ruthless response from the colonial power.

It was not until the early 1960s, with the formation of SWAPO, that an armed struggle option began to be taken seriously. There was the increasing realisation that diplomatic solution could not unilaterally achieve the desired results. This strategy needed to be supplemented with more diversified action, and given the experiences of other liberation movements the most obvious choice seemed to be the armed struggle.

From SWAPO's inception, there was a major dispute within the organisation over how the armed struggle should manifest itself. The younger more militant members advocated a full-scale guerrilla war, while the older, more established leadership wanted this strategy to take the form of "armed propaganda"[47] [Saul & Leys,1995:42]. Due to the powerful influence of the latter group, the "armed propaganda" version was initially embraced, and would be actively pursued for the first decade of the struggle. This debate, however, was to continue throughout the duration of the armed struggle, and at times would even lead to open conflict within the SWAPO structures.

From 1962 onwards, six developments made the recourse to armed struggle attractive for SWAPO.

First, the advent of an anti-colonial war in Angola led to a co-operation agreement being brokered between SWAPO and the liberation movements in Angola in 1962.

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[47] Activists like Kenneth Abrahams advocated the "people's war" strategy arguing for the rooting of military action in the mobilisation of popular resistance within Namibian itself. Nujoma, and others seemed more inclined to see military activity as being primarily a matter of "armed propaganda", that is a cosmetic military wing, largely ineffective, but designed to push the United Nations into more assertive action.

Second, in the same year, SWAPO's external wing established a military training programme and dispatched a group of volunteers to Egypt, the only independent African country with a capacity for training prospective guerrilla insurgents [Soggot,1986:29].[48] A year later a group of SWAPO members were sent to Ghana and Algeria for military training [Brown,1995:20].

Third, the Organisation of African Unity, which was to provide financial support and political recognition of liberation movements, was also established in 1963.[49]

Fourth, in 1964 SWAPO was included among the movements receiving Soviet aid, including military hardware.

Fifth, Zambia gained independence, which opened up the possibility for SWAPO to move its headquarters from Dar es Salaam to Lusaka so that it could be closer to the Namibian border.[50]

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[48] In terms of the literature there is a lack of consensus as to how many SWAPO recruits received military training abroad. David Soggot [1986:29] estimates the number at around 200. This is confirmed by Shipanga(a) [1972:6]. Susan Brown [1995:20], in a more recent analysis estimates number of cadres undergoing military training as "tens rather than hundreds". As SWAPO in exile was still very much in the embryonic stages, with limited funding, it would have been highly unlikely that they could have effectively maintained several hundred cadres in training, thus the latter authors estimations are probably closer to the truth.

[49] The April 1963 SWAPO Congress confirmed the party's commitment to the armed struggle, and discussed many of the practical and logistical problems of preparing for armed struggle. Arrangements were made to accommodate the return of trained SWAPO insurgents, such as improved communication and the creation of reception centres [Shipanga(a),1972:6].

[50] According to Helao Shityuwete [1990:99], there were less than a 100 trained guerrillas when he arrived in Tanzania for training, however during the course of 1964, the numbers of recruits increased to approximately 300, with more awaiting training. SWAPO was not the only Namibian liberation movement to send cadres abroad for military training. The National Unity Democratic Movement (NUDO), primarily a traditional Herero political party spearheaded by Mburumba Kerina, is also believed to have sent several hundred cadres out of Namibia in the mid-1960s for military training. Helao Shityuwete [1990:78], a SWAPO

Finally, SWAPO merged with the Caprivi African National Union (CANU), which operated in the Caprivi strip. This allowed for the much needed material support and assistance for SWAPO cadres when they infiltrated the Caprivi area.

The official launching of the armed struggle was a matter of precise timing. The SWAPO leadership did not want to derail the delicate diplomatic successes they had achieved, nor negatively deflect the highly valued international opinion away from SWAPO. In addition, such a declaration, given the appropriate situation, could generate significant political and diplomatic leverage. In essence it was a situation that had to show that SWAPO was not "trigger-happy", and that the resort to armed force was morally justifiable. The 1966 International Court of Justice's ruling presented the perfect circumstances.

Between 1960 and 1961 Ethiopia and Liberia, with the support of the United Nations General Assembly and the Second Conference of Independent African States[51] initiated proceedings against South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). These two countries asked the ICJ to force South Africa to: fulfil its obligations and cease violations of the Mandate; to abolish apartheid in South West Africa; and to report to the United Nations concerning its administration [UN Office of Public Information,1971:22]. On the 18 July 1966, after some six years of deliberations, the ICJ made what was to become a highly controversial decision. The Court claimed that it could not rule on the substance of the case

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activist at the time, encountered a group of 150 NUDO members in April 1964, who were in the process of crossing over into Botswana with the ultimate objective of obtaining military training in a sympathetic African country. What became of these NUDO members, and their subsequent role in the armed struggle is only known to those who were involved.

as Ethiopia and Liberia had not established any legal right or interest to bring the case before the ICJ.[52]

SWAPO was disappointed by this decision, but was able to turn this diplomatic defeat to their advantage, using this date to officially launch the armed struggle.

Apart from the diplomatic kudos that the launching of the armed struggle brought about, there were two other major reasons for the SWAPO leadership making such a decision, namely financial and political considerations as well as mobilisation potential.

3.2.2) Financial and Political Considerations

In May 1963 the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was founded to promote organised and coherent policies among the non-aligned African nations, and to assist in the eradication of the remaining vestiges of colonialism in Africa [Robertson,1993:358]. An influential organ of the OAU was the Co-ordination Committee for the Liberation of Africa which was situated in Dar es Salaam. This Committee administered the Special Liberation Committee Fund made up of contributions from each member state. This Committee's function was to facilitate assistance to the nationalist movements in African countries where independence had not yet been achieved. Unity was encouraged where there was more than one liberation

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[51] This conference held in Addis Ababa was the forerunner to the Organisation of African Unity.

[52] The Court declared that the League Covenant made no provision for individual League Members to institute actions in regard to the administration of a Mandate. The Mandatories, it said were to be "agents of the League" and not of the individual countries in the League; and the interest of individual States in regard to the Mandates could be exercised only through the appropriate organs of the international body. Therefore Ethiopia and Liberia were not entitled to the pronouncements they had asked of the Court, even if the various

movement, and those movements engaged in armed struggle received preferable treatment. Armed struggle was perceived to be the only indication that a liberation movement possessed the capacity to actively resist the colonial regime.

The OAU endorsement also provided the bridge to obtaining funding from other sources. For instance, following its recognition by the OAU, SWAPO began to receive material support from the Soviet Union [Brown,1995:20].

Initially, both SWAPO and SWANU were recognised by the OAU, despite the competition between the two movements. By mid-1965, SWAPO acquired formal political recognition from the OAU as the exclusive Namibian liberation movement in its eyes. This was due to intensive lobbying and diplomatic skill by the SWAPO exile leadership, as well as SWAPO's alleged willingness to initiate an armed struggle against the South African occupation regime [Brown,1995:20].[53] SWANU, on the other hand, committed itself to the armed struggle option much later, and consequently found themselves out in the cold. [Putz et al,1989:255].

In reality, the designated liberation movements received very little financial assistance from the OAU, as it tended to spend more money on its operating budget than on aid to liberation struggles. This led Charles Chaliand [1969:108-109] to contend that the OAU was nothing more than a highly conservative organisation, with "all sorts of contradictory ambitions." This organisational ineptness combined with the fall of Nkrumah, the driving force behind the liberation struggle in Africa, led to the limited logistic and financial support almost drying up completely. Thus SWAPO was forced to

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allegations of the Mandate violations had been established. The "moral ideal" must not be confused with the legal rules, the Court declared [UN Office of Public Information,1971:30].

[53] SWAPO at this time already had members undergoing military training in various African countries.

make appeals to the international community for financial support. Petitions to Western countries fell on deaf ears and SWAPO had to turn to Cuba, East Germany and the Soviet Union for assistance.

3.2.3) Mobilisation of Support

The fundamental advantage of SWAPO's late entry into the liberation structure was the benefit of hindsight. SWAPO could learn from the successes and failures of the more established organisations. The fundamental guideline to be closely adhered to was that the masses had to be drawn into actively supporting and participating in the liberation struggle.

During the mid-1960s the exile leadership came under increasing criticism within its own ranks. Accusations were being made about the leadership's lack of accountability and absence of commitment to the military solution. Its representativeness within Namibia was shrinking, and the SWAPO leadership was losing touch with its membership. Armed struggle was seen as the means by which support could be mobilised.

In summary, for SWAPO, the decision to engage in armed struggle was by no means based purely on military considerations, but rather involved more intricate motivations, determined by the framework within which insurgent movements had to operate that was well beyond their power to influence and change. It was a question of "adapt or die". The only reprieve for these organisations was to manipulate the circumstances to their best advantage. Financial considerations were at the heart of decision, as armed struggle was an effective means of achieving international political recognition and access to resources, such as funding. Armed struggle could also be used as a valuable strategy to mobilise greater support for SWAPO's cause within Namibia, and reinforce cohesion and control within the exile body. However,

the fact that SWAPO legitimately desired to bring about its own liberation, on its own terms, and by its own means, cannot be underscored.

3.3) Early SWAPO Military Operations within Namibia

3.3.1) Teething Problems

3.3.1.1) Omgulumbashe and Other Incidents

By the end of 1965 small guerrilla groups, part of the South West African Liberation Army (SWALA), were dispatched from Tanzania to positions inside the Namibian border in anticipation of the official launching of the armed struggle. Helao Shityuwete who was in the second group of ten insurgents, left Tanzania in February 1966 and moved south through Zambia and then west through Angola before entering Namibia. Shityuwete [1990:101] described the objective of the "G2" mission as follows:[54]

> *Our mission was not to engage in military activity but rather to organise and prepare for the time when it would become necessary.*

The mission did not go according to plan as five of the guerrillas were captured by the South African Police (SAP) in Kavango in March 1966. Other guerrilla groups managed to evade police detection.

Six SWAPO guerrillas under the leadership of John Nankuthu infiltrated northern Namibia and constructed a training and recruitment camp at

[54] The code name of this mission was G2. The members of this unit were "Castro" Awala (second in command of the SWAPO armed forces), Lazarus Haidula Zacharia (chief of the Military Police), Helao Shityuwete (Defence Secretariat), Elia Nduma (Medical Corps), Julius Shilongo (Reconnaissance unit), Eino Kamati Ekandyo (Demolition Squad), Jonas

Omgulumbashe, which was between the village of Okayoko and the Finnish mission settlement at Okwaludhi.

The sudden arrival of this insurgent group caused considerable anxiety for the internal SWAPO political leaders, both in Windhoek and the north. The internal leadership had wanted more time to educate the local population in preparation for guerrilla warfare. This indicated a lack of consensus, if not communication, in terms of the type of insurgent strategy that SWAPO should adopt.

The external leadership, divorced from the realties in the north of Namibia, were pursuing the romantic strategies of Che Guevara which postulated that the mere appearance of guerrillas would lead to mobilisation of the local population. The internal SWAPO, more mindful of the conditions in the operational areas, realised that the more pragmatic, Maoist strategy was required.

The Omgulumbashe base attracted about forty recruits, but was soon discovered and destroyed by a SAP helicopter-borne offensive. Two guerrillas were killed, nine were captured together with the forty recruits from the surrounding area. For the SWAPO leadership this defeat hammered home the reality that conducting a military campaign from Tanzania was a logistical nightmare.

3.3.1.2) Post-Omgulumbashe

Following the Omgulumbashe incident there were further guerrilla attacks in central Ovamboland against pro-South African chiefs and some white

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Shimweefelini, Festus Nehare, Nghidipo Jessaja Haufiku and David Hamunime (all from the "Gunners") [Shiyuwete, 1990:101].

farmers near Grootfontein. An escalation of these actions, however, was prevented by the SAP sealing off SWAPO infiltration routes through Angola and Kavango. From this point onwards guerrilla action was restricted to the eastern half of the Caprivi Strip until the Portuguese Coup in 1974 [Brown,1995:21].

The relative military inactivity that followed the Omgulumbashe ensured that the military effort remained loosely organised. However, in 1973 SWAPO's armed wing re-organised and was re-named the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN).

3.3.2) Tactics and Strategy

Military operations conducted between 1966 and 1974 were Maoist in character. SWALA, unable to launch a direct assault against the South African forces, deployed small, armed groups who used hit-and-run tactics. The objective was to harass the SAP and SADF in an attempt to wear down their resolve. SWAPO's military operations were, however, restricted by one crucial factor, namely demographics. Namibia's sparse population meant that SWAPO could not survive the loss of more than a few thousand troops.

Tactics consisted of mainly small-unit sabotage, ambush and harassment of enemy posts. South African patrol boats and police convoys were frequent targets of ambushes. South African military installations were also attacked, in which the SWAPO guerrillas used bazookas, rifles, machine guns and hand grenades.

SWAPO did not have sufficient funds or supplies to equip all its cadres with modern weaponry. Some units had to make use of rifles of World War II vintage, while other fighters had no arms at all. Therefore, the capturing of

arms from the South Africans was an important objective in SWALA operations.

SWAPO's base areas within Namibia did not consist of fixed structures, but rather a combination of tunnels or sheltered areas. Some of these bases were used for the storage of arms and other material, while the others, located separately from the arms caches for security reasons, served as temporary base camps for SWAPO guerrilla units. Both were frequently relocated, due to the strength and prevalence of the South African security forces [Nganjone,1976:41].

In summary, SWAPO's early military activities were mediocre at best. They were characterised by humiliating setbacks, an extended period of inactivity and high profile insubordination. However, a basic revolutionary/insurgent tradition of civil supremacy had started to emerge.

3.4) SWAPO: An Assessment of the Organisation Dynamics

The first five years of SWAPO's organisational life were fairly stormy. It had inherited its original structure from the OPO, but SWAPO's new role and mission, as well as the logistical, organisational, and communication problems of conducting a liberation struggle both from within Namibia and from exile meant that many changes had to be made to the organisation. The situation became more complicated with the advent of the armed struggle and increased popular support. It was only from the mid-1960s that SWAPO took on a more coherent organisational form.

What follows is an analysis of SWAPO and its armed wing.

3.4.1) The Basic Structure of the Organisation

The supreme organ and central policy-making body of SWAPO was the National Congress. It included delegates from all sections of the party, including those mass bodies aligned to the party such as the Elders' Council, Women's Council (later Women's League), Youth League, SWAPO Branch of Journalists, and the Association of Democratic Lawyers of Namibia. It was the National Congress' responsibility to elect, and where necessary suspend, members of SWAPO's two other national organs - the National Executive and the Central Committee.

The National Executive (which later became known as the Politburo) was composed of 11 members selected from the Central Committee, and was responsible for the day-to-day implementation of SWAPO policy. It was also the Executive's responsibility to ensure that the resolutions of the Congress were carried out by all the organs of SWAPO.

The Central Committee consisted of 35 members. It was the "watchdog" of the National Executive, overseeing the Executive's work, and often making recommendations to it. All major decisions of the Executive had to have the approval of the Central Committee. Between Congresses the Central Committee acted as the policy-making body [Shipanga(a),1973:7-8].

Those bodies aligned to SWAPO proved to be crucial, especially in their ability to mobilise support. The Youth League was effective at the grassroots level, the Elders Council provided for consultation with traditional leaders, and the Women's Council sought to unite women in the struggle against colonialism domination [SWAPO(a),1986:179].

Departments were established to provide for the efficient running of specific areas of the organisation. For example, there were Departments of Health, Education, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Legal Affairs, Labour, Transport, as well as Information and Publicity [Nujoma(a),1976:28].

The system of national branches constituted the basic units of SWAPO, each representing between 200 to 600 members. Their purpose was to carry out political education, agitation and recruit new members. Branches would organise public meetings, rallies and demonstrations. After the clampdown in 1966, the national branches, in order to overcome these restrictions were converted into cells, which were much smaller units that operated underground.

The cells co-ordinated their activities either directly among themselves at the district level or by meeting with SWAPO regional leadership. It was the regional leadership's responsibility to co-ordinate the work of SWAPO activists throughout the seven regions of Namibia and was directly responsible to national leadership. These organisations also recruited potential guerrilla insurgents and supplied fighting units in the field with food and shelter, and where possible transport. However, the effectiveness of early military operations into Namibia was hindered by weak or non-existent cell structures in northern Namibia and the presence of the South African security forces. See Appendix 1 for organisational diagram of SWAPO.

The National Congress was supposed to meet on an annual basis inside Namibia, however, this became unworkable due to the security clampdown following the announcement of the armed struggle and the fact that most of SWAPO's leadership was in exile. From 1963 until 1989 the Congress only

met a few times on an *ad hoc* basis outside Namibia.[55] As most of the members of the Central Committee were often in different parts of the world campaigning and lobbying for the liberation of Namibia, the Central Committee did not meet as regularly as it should have. This state of affairs led to the movement being dominated by the Executive, with many important decisions being made without consulting the Central Committee.

3.4.2) SWAPO's Armed Wing and its Military Program

The actual date of the creation of SWAPO's armed wing is unclear, but at the 1961 SWAPO National Congress it was decided to send a group of individuals abroad for military training. They received eight months basic instruction in small arms, explosives, mines, radio communications and politics [Herbstein & Evenson,1989:14]. It was anticipated that on their return they would constitute the core of what would become a national liberation army [SWAPO(b),1977:14].

As the number of military-trained cadres increased, and with more recruits awaiting training, it became necessary to create a body capable of organising and co-ordinating military activities in a coherent fashion. In addition, as these cadres had been trained in a number of different countries with different weaponry, it was crucial that an organised structure be created to

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[55] One of the most significant Congresses was held in Tanga, Tanzania (December 26, 1969 to January 3, 1970), where the progress of the struggle was assessed, and the SWAPO's commitment to it strengthened. Also at this Congress policy, organisational and certain leadership changes were made, and the leadership was criticised and in certain instances replaced. The resolutions of this Congress set the principles and policies of the organisation that would guide the work of all SWAPO members in the future [SWAPO(a),1986:179]. It was attended by 30 people, including the external leadership, military wing, students, women, SWAPO diplomats, where the SWAPO external leadership claimed to be acting on the behalf of the internal leadership. There was much unfinished business, such as the drafting of a new constitution. A task group was created to draw up proposals for a new constitution for the next meeting in late 1974, and a special organising committee would be appointed, at least a year in advance of that date, to make preparations for it. However, no such draft constitution or congress was forthcoming.

facilitate unified training and retraining. As a result the South West African Liberation Army (SWALA) was born. With the advent of material support from the OAU and foreign donors, SWALA grew in size and stature. By the late seventies it become a fairly effective insurgent organisation.

3.4.2.1) Military Structure (see Appendix 2)

SWALA was hierarchical in nature. At the top of the hierarchy, and responsible for political leadership, was the Commander-in Chief (President of SWAPO). Directly under the Commander-in-Chief was the Deputy Commander-in Chief who was responsible for all military operations. There was also the Secretaries of Defence and Transport, who were in charge of all logistical operations, and reported to and advised the National Executive [Nganjone,1976:40]. The armed wing was initially divided into various sections: Demolition Squad, Military Police, "Gunners", Reconnaissance Squad, and the Medical Corps [Shityuwete,1990:101].

In the various operational areas SWAPO guerrillas were organised into platoons, or smaller groups if the situation demanded it. In the case of large-scale offensives, several platoons were often amalgamated into one fighting force.

Each unit was led by a political commissar and a commander. The political commissar was responsible for maintaining morale and discipline, as well as conducting political education within the unit. It was his responsibility to ensure that the fighters acted in accordance with SWAPO's basic political principles, especially in relation to the local population. Moreover, the most important task performed by the political commissar was political oversight of military decision-making.

The commander was primarily responsible for military issues, such as logistics, tactics, the conduct of operations, and discipline. The platoon leaders were assisted by a deputy commander, deputy political commissar and other officers who were responsible for tasks such as first aid and reconnaissance [Shipanga(a),1972:14].

Within each operational zone the platoon leaders co-ordinated their work through the regional leadership headed by a political commissar and a commander. At the national level there was the SWAPO Military Commission, comprised of military commanders, as well as leaders from the non-military spheres of the struggle, such as the Secretaries of Defence and Transport. The Military Commission was responsible for determining overall military strategy. The Commission travelled throughout the operational areas and met with the platoon and smaller unit leaders, who advised the Commission about conditions in their areas [Shipanga(a),1972:14].

3.4.2.2) Military Programme

Up until 1973 SWALA had four operational zones within Namibia, areas where SWAPO guerrillas were active on a regular basis. These operational zones were as follows: Kaokoveld, Ovamboland, Okovango and Grootfontein District, and the Caprivi Strip.[56]

The most of the inhabitants of these zones were African peasants. At certain points, especially in the Okovango, they were evicted from their traditional

[56] Kaokoveld, which is situated in the north-west of Namibia, below the Cunene River is a dry and mountainous area with forests and grasslands further to the north near the Cuene. Ovamboland is essentially flatland with some semi-tropical areas near the Angolan border. The Okovango was the so-called "native reservation" where there are thick forests and grasslands. Grootfontein is a farming area that was occupied by mainly white settlers. The Caprivi Strip is situated between the Zambezi River in the east and the Okovango River to

areas and relocated to "strategic hamlets" where they were surrounded by South African security forces and were only permitted to leave the camp with special passes.[57] Outside these villages most Africans were engaged in subsistence agriculture and cattle-raising.

The geographical position of the Namibian border area made the conduct of guerrilla warfare difficult for SWAPO insurgents. In addition, the South Africa security forces compounded this problem by attempting to close off Namibia's northern borders. They even went so far as to erect a barbed wire fences along the borders with Angola and Zambia.

SWAPO guerrillas derived most of their food, clothing and medicine from the local Namibian people, with SWAPO cells being tasked to co-ordinate these logistics. The platoon's political commissar would arrange with local cell leaders to supply his unit. Sometimes the units would pay for supplies, but if funds were lacking, then other items of value, such as tobacco, salt or even an overcoat could be traded for an ox or goat. In some places the insurgents grew their own food, such as tomatoes, or even maize - but generally only crops that would ripen quickly.

In summary, the manner in which SWAPO and its armed wing were structured indicated that civil supremacy was a priority for the leadership. Political control of the armed forces, from the executive right down to the local level (including a system of political commissars), was envisaged. However, these systems still had to be put to the test.

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the west and south. It is a lush area criss-crossed by many streams and thick vegetation. Large expanses of land were cleared to make way for South African military bases.

[57] This in the true tradition of counter-insurgency warfare, that had been employed by the South African security forces.

3.5) "Between a Rock and a Hard Place": Conditions in Exile

During the 1960s SWAPO's external leadership naively perceived life in exile to be a temporary arrangement, simply to be tolerated until their diplomatic efforts in combination with external factors, such as international pressure, could create conditions favourable for their victorious return to Namibia. However, as months turned into years, coupled with limited successes on the domestic and international fronts, SWAPO was forced to confront the reality of a prolonged period of exile. In order to survive, the SWAPO leadership embarked on a number of strategies to secure long term financial and material support.

The leadership sought to project an image of SWAPO as an effective and unified organisation campaigning against the evils of colonial oppression. There was no room for dissenting voices or signs of weakness within the movement. Any competition to SWAPO was not to be tolerated, with the demise of SWANU bearing testimony to this. It was a situation that demanded strong, competent leadership that could make decisions on the spur of the moment and not have to consult its entire constituency on a regular basis. There was limited room for the luxuries of democratic process.

3.5.1) Strategies for Survival

3.5.1.1) The United Nations

During the 1950s the majority of African liberation movements sought to utilise the United Nations, and its concepts of trusteeship, in their campaigns to bring an end to colonialism. After much lobbying they were eventually able

to secure a broad moral condemnation of colonialism and racism. In essence the UN was able to offer a symbolic legitimisation of liberation movements' aims, and in certain cases tacit acceptance of guerrilla/revolutionary action. However, as time progressed the absence of support from its more powerful members (namely the Western powers), the UN was unable to support such aims with any real conviction, and rather became an arena for the non-state actors to relieve psychological tensions and frustrations through rhetoric. For SWAPO, excessive dependence on the United Nations' political and legal processes became demoralising.

3.5.1.2) Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

SWAPO's second port-of-call was the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Initially, African backing for revolutionary action was provided by the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (1958-63), and its co-ordinating Freedom Council. Even though this organisation only contributed on average $3000 a year to a given exile movement, it did, however, manage to establish the principle of collective African responsibility for the liberation of Southern Africa.

This body was superseded by the formation of the OAU (1963), a political compromise between two factions of African leaders, namely the Casablanca Group and the Monrovia Group.[58] The OAU adopted principles that envisaged harmony, co-operation, nonalignment with respect to the Cold War

[58] Despite the overwhelming agreement among African leaders that the promotion of pan-Africanism required the creation of a transcontinental organisation, major disagreement existed over the proper structure and goals of such an organisation. According to Nkrumah and other African leaders who belonged to the Casablanca Group, the success of pan-Africanism required a political union of all independent African countries patterned after the federal model of the United States. The Monrovia Group rejected the idea of political union as both undesirable and unfeasible, primarily due to the assumption that African leaders would jealously guard their new-found independence. Led by Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa

ideological blocs, as well as the emancipation of all colonial territories in Africa. The OAU Liberation Committee assumed the function of translating unity, solidarity and the need for anti-colonial revolution into endorsement of particular Southern African movements. This Committee provided funding for these movements. Consequently, the Liberation Committee became an important arbiter and conciliator of revolutionary exile politics.

For SWAPO, being a small liberation movement with limited resources and a very low international profile, OAU recognition was critical to its survival. In most cases OAU endorsement of a liberation movement operating beyond the borders of their native country was key to guaranteeing asylum, securing additional financial and logistic support, and ensuring safe passage through neighbouring countries. This was the primary motivation behind SWAPO's attempts (which were successful) to sideline its immediate competition, namely SWANU, politically. Without OAU recognition SWAPO would not have been able establish its headquarters in Tanzania, then Zambia, and later Angola.

The OAU Liberation Committee, however, was unable to acquire the necessary professional proficiency and generate sufficient funding to realise its objectives. Liberation movements, and especially SWAPO, had to look elsewhere for external assistance.

3.5.1.3) East Vs West Support

As most anti-colonial revolutionary struggles were perceived by the United States and many European states to be the preserve of the Communist powers, such as the Soviet Union and China, significant Western support,

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Belewa, prime minister of Nigeria, the Monrovia Group, instead called for the creation of a looser organisation of African states.

except in the case of certain non-military related training, was not forthcoming. In fact, United States (US) endorsement or even presumed assistance became a liability for many exile groups. It got to the point where allegations of covert US assistance became a convenient weapon with which to discredit a rival.

Initially, SWAPO was able to secure both Chinese and Soviet assistance but with conflict increasingly characterising the relationship between these two powers, SWAPO became increasingly reliant on Soviet support [Shultz,1988:120]. The increasing reliance on Soviet support was to have a significant impact on the way SWAPO conducted its military operations, as they were to become more conventional in nature, with the military victory as the ultimate objective. The Chinese model, on the other hand, advocated a protracted war of attrition.

3.5.2) Dissatisfaction and Insubordination

For most SWAPO members life in exile was difficult. Namibians had to endure gruelling conditions just to reach SWAPO's external head quarters. Most individuals lacked adequate funding, food, water, transportation, and often had to travel long distances on foot. There was always the constant threat of being captured and imprisoned by the South African security forces and their allies. Once under the protection of SWAPO living conditions were equally difficult. At times there was insufficient food, clothing and weapons. For many Namibians, this was the first time away from home from their families and they had difficulty adapting to these trying circumstances.

These conditions were exacerbated by SWAPO's defeat at the hands of the South African security forces at Omgulumbashe. This led to a relatively prolonged period of military inactivity. As result SWAPO cadres began to

display dysfunctional behaviour, such as personal aggression, in-fighting, ill-discipline, alcohol abuse and desertions.[59] John Marcum [1972: 270-273] identifies this behaviour as typical to exile condition of liberation movements.

These difficult conditions of exile were intensified by the advent of two other phenomena.

3.5.2.1) The "Castro" Incident

The commander of SWAPO's armed wing, Leonard Phillemon (combat name "Castro") was suspected of being in collaboration with the South African regime, especially after his capture and subsequent release. He was believed to have alerted the police to the Omgulumbashe base, informed on SWAPO leaders within Namibia, which lead to their arrest and directing SWAPO cadres into South African security force ambushes [Shityuwete,1990:167-168]. The SWAPO leadership were loath to take these accusations seriously, and as a result combatants felt their lives were endangered by passive attitude towards him [Saul & Leys,1995:43-44].

Castro was eventually imprisoned by the SWAPO leadership in 1970.

3.5.2.2) The "China-men" Incident

In the latter part of the 1960s, a group of seven SWAPO cadres, who had received rigorous military training in China, returned to SWAPO's military

[59] These phenomena did not only plague the rank-and-file SWAPO members, but were also evident among the SWAPO leadership. For instance, in December 1965 Louis Nelengani, then SWAPO Vice-President was involved in a knife-fight with Jacob Kuhangua, SWAPO Secretary-General. During the fight Nelegani stabbed Kuhangua, permanently paralysing him from the waist down. A local court in Dar es Salaam found Nelengani not guilty of any charge because of the provocation from Kihangua. However, Nelengani soon returned to Namibia a disillusioned man [Katjavivi,1988:62].

headquarters in Kongwa, Tanzania. This group criticised the SWAPO leadership's understanding of military strategy and tactics. These cadres perceived the inadequate supply of weapons and other essentials as signs of mismanagement and corruption. These observations and critiques were summed-up in a memorandum which was read to officials in the camp. It demanded Castro's dismissal, the end to "Ovambo-rooted tribalist behaviour", and for a party Congress to be held [Saul & Leys,1995:44].

This memorandum was not well received by the SWAPO leadership. The "China-men" fearing arrest, attempted to resign from the movement, but were prevented from doing so. The camp commanders detained the seven and handed them over to the Tanzanian Army. They were later arrested and held for 6 months in Dar es Salaam Central Police Station, followed by 18 months in Keko prison, before they were moved to a low-level security Ndabaro camp in a remote region of Tanzania. After some time they were able to escape to Kenya [Saul & Leys,1995:44].

John Saul and Colin Leys [1995:44-45] attribute the SWAPO leadership's draconian response to the criticisms and protests by the "China-men" as a manifestation of a strong authoritarian culture that had evolved within SWAPO's corridors of power. Any challenge to the leadership's entrenched position of power was severely dealt with. There is no doubt that authoritarian tendencies had begun to take root. Given this fairly fragile stage of the struggle, it was inevitable that a democratic culture had been suppressed within SWAPO.

There was more to the SWAPO leadership's knee-jerk reaction than mere political insecurity. The fact that the "China-men" were highly skilled guerrilla fighters, who had rejected SWAPO's "soft" utilisation of the armed struggle and accused the leadership of being inept in the area of military

strategy was critical. They were also capable of mobilising significant numbers of SWAPO cadres to their cause. There had been a potential threat of military intervention or coup d'etat, which would have brought about the demise of SWAPO's civilian leadership. Consequently, it can be argued, that one of the motivating factors behind the SWAPO leadership's reaction was a desire to maintain civil supremacy over the military wing.

3.5.3) The Tanga Congress

The SWAPO Executive Committee, in the face of a certain degree of internal dissent organised a Consultative Congress in Tanga, Tanzania in late December 1969. This was an attempt to pre-empt further crises, as well as deal with issues of organisational management and constitutional amendments. Organisation issues to be attended to included the system of financial accounting, and communication between external and internal components [SWAPO,1965]. The armed struggle still had to be constitutionally ratified.

Thirty participants attended the Congress, with all elements of the organisation being represented except for the internal body, whose delegates could not leave Namibia for security reasons. At this Congress several leadership changes were made. Vice-President Louis Nelengani was expelled for turning state witness in the 1967/8 "treason" trial. In order to reinforce the strategic alliance with CANU, former-CANU President, Brendan Simbwaye was elected as SWAPO Vice-President.[60] Moses Garoeb and Toivo Ja Toivo were elected as Administrative and Secretary General respectively [Katjavivi,1988:105]. At the end of the Congress a number of issues were still

[60] As Simbwaye was in detention in Namibia at the time, his immediate former subordinate, Mishake Muyongo was elected as Acting Vice-President.

outstanding, particularly communication between the external and internal bodies.

3.5.4) Summary

The late 1960s and early 1970s severely tested the SWAPO leadership's ability to enforce civil supremacy. South African security force crackdowns, a lack of funding and a desire not to undermine diplomatic successes, forced SWAPO's armed wing into a state of relative inactivity. The SWAPO leadership, inexperienced in dealing with military concerns, did not maintain its military wing adequately. Weapons, food, clothing, as well as combat action, were in short supply. This inevitably led to insubordination, which could have developed into a coup d'etat, if it had not been rapidly contained. As shall be seen in later chapters, this was simply a taste of things to come.

3.6) SWAPO Inside Namibia

Unlike the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in South Africa, SWAPO was never formally banned during the course of the liberation struggle. South African authorities, however, made it illegal to endorse or openly support armed struggle. This allowed some form of visible party apparatus within Namibia, but also enabled the security forces to monitor SWAPO's activities with greater ease [Cliffe,1994:20]. As a result, up until mid-1960s SWAPO was able to function openly with regional and local branches, as well as public meetings with minimal disruption by the security forces. However, as SWAPO's struggle for independence intensified, especially after the launching of the armed struggle, SWAPO's activities became increasingly restricted and in certain areas (particularly in the north) outlawed completely, thereby forcing SWAPO to operate increasingly underground.

Between 1960 and 1974 SWAPO's domestic activities were dominated by three events: the Treason Trial (1967), the General Strike (1971-1972) and the boycott of local elections in Ovamboland (1973) [Katjavivi,1988:65].

3.6.1) The Treason Trial

Following the declaration of armed struggle between 100 and 250 SWAPO activists were arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act, including Nathaniel Mahuilili (Acting President), John Ya Otto (Acting Secretary General), Andimba Ja Toivo (Regional Secretary for Ovamboland) and Jason Mulumbulua (Secretary for External Relations). They were taken to Pretoria and detained.

In an attempt to crush SWAPO, the South African regime introduced new legislation in the form of the Terrorism Act in July 1967. This act was made retroactive to 1962 to cover many SWAPO activities, and extended the period of detention without trial indefinitely and introduced the death penalty for certain crimes. Thirty-seven Namibians were formally charged under the Terrorism Act [Katjavivi,1988:61].

The case was held in late 1967 and early 1968. During the trial one of SWAPO's founders and former SWAPO Vice-President, Louis Nelengani, after intense torture and interrogation by the Security Police, turned state witness. The defence team realising that prosecutions against the SWAPO activists in an partial apartheid court was a forgone conclusion, concentrated on minimising their clients' final sentences. However, the accused, not wanting to be perceived as collaborating with the South African regime, took a defiant stand. Ja Toivo acting on the behalf of all the 37 accused condemned

the judge and the system, which had put them on trial in his final statement [Ya Otto,1982:129].

The outcome of the trial was as follows: twenty of the detainees were sentenced to life imprisonment. Nine, including Ja Toivo got twenty years hard labour; Jonas Nashwela and Nathaniel Lot Hamateni got 5 years; Ya Otto, Mutumbulua and Mahuilili were sentenced under the Suppression of Communism Act to five years with four years and eleven months suspended. Matheus Joseph was discharged; Simeon Ipinge Iputa was acquitted (Ephrain Kaparo died during the trial). In addition eighty-one other SWAPO activists had been named as co-conspirators, who included the SWAPO leadership abroad and certain members within Namibia, but in the end they were never brought to trial [Katjavivi,1988:63-64].

3.6.2) The General Strike

In 1971 protests took place throughout Namibia. By late December a nation-wide strike was in effect, which according to Ya Otto [1982:141], had been strategically planned many months before. Approximately 20 000 workers (over half of the total Namibian work force) participated in the strike action, and an ad hoc strike committee led by Johannes Nanutuuala was established to represent their workers, direct strike activity and formulate a manifesto that outlined their grievances. The objective of this strike was to incapacitate Namibia economically, which was to be achieved by having contract workers return to Ovamboland until the contract labour system had been abolished [Soggot,1986:48-49].

Some 18 000 returned to Ovamboland, 13 500 of which were deported by the South African regime in an attempt to break the strike. Other measures such

as intimidation and arresting prominent strike leaders, were attempted, but without much success [Katjavivi,1988:68-69].

Eventually, through the series of promised concessions, and some underhand tactics by the South African authorities, the strike was brought to an end.[61] However, with the new labour dispensation workers came to realise that in fact no significant changes had materialised, and labour unrest and acts of violence began to increase, with the Namibia/Angolan border fence being broken down [Soggot,1986:49]. White women and children in the northern regions were evacuated to areas in the south of the country. The South African Defence Force (SADF) was sent in for the first time and Portuguese troops moved south across the border with Angola to assist them. Strike meetings were broken up, and people were rounded up *en mass*.

On 4 February 1972 a state of emergency was declared in Ovamboland under Proclamation R17. Proclamation R17 remained in force until 1977 when other security legislation affecting the whole country replaced it [Katjavivi,1988:69].

3.6.3) The Ovamboland Election Boycott

In 1973 the South African regime introduced the *Self-Government for Native Nations in South West Africa Amendment Act*, which provided the basis for elections to be held for legislative assemblies in Ovamboland and Okavango, leading to their attainment of "self-governing" status. Through such moves the South African government hoped to deflect national and international pressure on it to withdraw from Namibia [Katjavivi,1988:74]. However, in Ovamboland, the Legislative Council ruled that only approved parties could

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[61] For instance, Johannes Nangutuuala was persuaded to endorse the government's new scheme on Radio Ovambo.

participate in the elections. All SWAPO aligned political parties were disbarred in terms of Proclamation R17. Only one party was permitted to contest the elections: the Ovamboland Independence Party (OIP) largely comprised of traditionalists and government supporters, which controlled the Legislative Council [Soggot,1986:56].

A campaign of mass meetings and rallies spearheaded by the SWAPO Youth League and the Democratic Co-operative Party (DEMKOP) agitated for the boycott these elections. The South African Police, with the assistance of tribal authorities, reacted by arresting the boycott leaders, disrupting protest meetings and physically assaulting demonstrators. These actions hardly had any impact on the effect of the boycott as there was a very low turn out for the August 1973 elections in Ovamboland [Katjavivi,1988:74-75].

3.6.4) The Suffocation of Internal Resistance

In addition to the arrest and imprisonment of prominent resistance leaders by the South African authorities, the South African Special Branch developed an extensive system of informers that reported on most SWAPO rallies and meetings. There was heavy surveillance, and as a result, correspondence and communication between those within Namibia and those in exile, had to be conducted through the use of couriers, mainly church officials. Repression of the internal movement, led to a further dynamic in which the internal leadership gradually came to cede all authority to the leadership abroad. The façade was maintained that, apart from the SWAPO President and Vice-President, the leaders in exile were acting on the behalf of the leadership inside the country.

In July 1973 the SADF became responsible for security within the operational zone, an indication that the South African government began to view SWAPO as a serious threat to South African occupation of Namibia.

In summary, SWAPO's actions of resistance and defiance within the borders of Namibia had mixed results. However, due to the repressive actions of the South African Police, no momentum was ever able to develop. SWAPO merely scored isolated victories. This had implications for civil supremacy, as there were no areas free from police intervention the local population to actively support SWAPO's guerrilla actions in the north.

3.7) Conclusion

From 1960 to 1974 SWAPO's primary strategy was the petitioning and lobbying international organisations, such as the UN. The reason being that the military option, up until the mid-1960s, was both logistically impossible and politically unattractive. This strategy proved to be relatively successful in isolating South Africa internationally, however, severe financial constraints prevented it from being more effective. In addition, such actions brought SWAPO no closer to its goal of national liberation and independence for Namibia. Consequently, an armed wing was envisaged and created in the mid-1960s.

At its inception SWAPO's armed wing was based on the classical Maoist guerrilla model, which meant that the armed wing would be unconventional in character, with its military objective being attrition, rather than conquest. There were deviations from this model in terms of the strategy and tactics the armed wing employed. SWAPO's armed wing was unable to secure the necessary popular support for insurgents to survive in rural areas in northern Namibia. SWAPO's defeat at Omgulumbashe was a case in point.

This can be attributed to three factors: the South African security forces' ability to subdue any significant resistance within Namibia; arid nature of the terrain, and the substantial distance between Dar es Salaam and the Namibian border.

As SWAPO became increasing reliant on Soviet patronage, the armed wing's character outlook changed, with it becoming more conventional in nature and the idea of military victory over the SADF being seriously considered. This development was to become more pronounced from the mid-1970s.

As the military grew in size and influence so did tensions develop between civilian leadership and the armed wing. The SWAPO leadership, concerned about being usurped by the military, implemented measures of civil supremacy. Party controls, such as the Commissar system and political indoctrination of cadres were introduced. Geographical methods of civil supremacy were employed, as the armed wing was stationed in isolated camps in Tanzania, and kept in a state of relative inactivity. However, neglecting the interests of the armed wing had certain drawbacks, as was illustrated by the "China-men" incident.

In the first fourteen years of its political life SWAPO developed from a labour movement into an anti-colonial political party/movement. This process was to have important implications for future civil-military relations in Namibia, as both the labour movement and anti-colonialism were primarily concerned with equality, a central pillar of any democracy.[62] Of equal significance was the tolerance of SWAPO within Namibia by the South African authorities. It was not banned like the ANC and the PAC in South Africa. Consequently, a

[62] Anti-colonialism strove for the equality of nations and the labour movement was concerned with equality in the marketplace.

limited civilian political experience, free from military intervention, was sustained.

Chapter 4

1974-1988: The Road to Negotiated Liberation

We [SWAPO] prefer to rely on our own strength, but when there is assistance available which can bring about the desired results much quicker, we are not going to sleep in the bush for hundreds of years.

Andreas Shipanga, 1976

This chapter provides an overview of SWAPO, its activities, successes, failures and crises, over the years 1974 to 1988. As in the previous chapter, the focus is on the process by which civil supremacy developed, and in particular how it is enforced and maintained in a revolutionary or insurgency context.

4.1) The Implications of Portuguese Decolonisation

4.1.1) The Coup d'etat

In April 1974 a military coup d'etat took place in Portugal which resulted in the Caetano Regime being ousted. The military had intervened because they perceived the colonies to be a burden on the domestic economy and they felt that the military risks and casualties involved in maintaining the colonial empire was unwarranted.

Arrangements were made for the colonial administrations to be withdrawn from Angola and Mozambique and independence to be granted these to these countries. In Mozambique, the dominant insurgent movement, *Frente de*

Libertaçao de Moçambique (FRELIMO) was installed in power. In Angola the situation was more complex.

In January 1975 the three Angolan liberation movements, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA), and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) signed the Alvor Accords that set 11 November 1975 as the date for independence. Before formal independence could be achieved, UNITA and FNLA withdrew from the Accords, which led to the outbreak of civil war. Despite this state of affairs, Agostinho Neto, MPLA leader, unilaterally declared Angolan independence from Portugal in November 1975. In order to consolidate their position the MPLA requested financial and military assistance from Cuba. In a short space of time an estimated 40,000 Cuban troops arrived in Luanda.

4.1.2) SWAPO Reacts

The coup in Portugal and the subsequent move towards independence in Angola had three critical implications for SWAPO's exile organisation and its operations.

First, the risks associated with deploying cadres from Tanzania were reduced, and the common border between Angola and northern Namibia, fundamental to the effectiveness of PLAN operations in the Namibian interior, was opened up. Such actions were facilitated by SWAPO's strategic alliance with UNITA who permitted SWAPO to establish several camps in southern Angola.[63]

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[63] There was only one obstacle to making this change in SWAPO's military strategy which was the movement's association with UNITA. A co-operation agreement had been forged between these two liberation movements out of necessity in the late 1960s, as UNITA occupied south-eastern Angola, an area which was essential to the success of SWAPO cadres'

Second, there was an increased exodus of political refugees from Namibia sympathetic to the SWAPO cause. By the end of 1974 several thousand Namibians had fled the occupied territory in the wake of extreme military and police repression in the North and joined the liberation movement in Zambia [Brown,1995:23].[64]

Third, as a result of the latter two implications, conditions for the conduct of armed struggle had dramatically improved. There was a major shift in SWAPO's military strategy and tactics. Previously, PLAN units had embarked on "hit-and-run" operations limited to north-eastern Namibia (mainly in Caprivi). From the mid-1970s SWAPO's military objective changed, with a PLAN infiltration of Namibia beyond the "Red Line" becoming the focal point. The "Red Line" was a tightly controlled stock fence system, dividing the Ovambo, Kavango and Caprivi regions along the northern border from the white farming areas. Up until this time the "Red Line" had separated the war zone from the rest of the Namibia.

The aim of these operations was to attack white farming areas. Military operations involved larger PLAN units than before, numbering between 40-60 cadres, which were divided into smaller squads all under the same platoon commander. More conventional methods of warfare were employed focusing on sabotage, abduction and assassination [Brown,1995:27]. This was largely the result of SWAPO becoming more dependent on Soviet military and financial support, which advocated a more conventional approach to warfare.

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infiltration of the Caprivi region. However, due to UNITA's defeat at the hands of the MPLA in the pre-independence civil war and UNITA's relationship with the South African security forces, SWAPO broke off the association with UNITA and entered into an relationship with the MPLA.

[64] No accurate figures exist as to the number of Namibian exiles that left their country of birth. South African authorities estimated that some 3000 individuals departed for exile, while SWAPO puts the figure at 6000.

This change in military tactics became evident in August 1975 when Chief Philemon Elifas, the "Chief Minister" of Ovamboland, was assassinated.[65] In the months that followed Ovambo headmen, white farmers and their families, as well as construction workers[66] were shot at, abducted or killed. Several local businesses were looted and burnt [Brown,1995:25]. Notwithstanding a number of defensive precautions, the South African security forces seemed unable to contain or restrict these attacks.

Despite the intensification of SWAPO's military activities, its successes in the martial field were hampered by communication problems, as the planning of military operations remained the responsibility of SWAPO headquarters in Zambia. In addition, PLAN cadres still had to be deployed from bases in Tanzania.

4.1.3) The SADF Invasion of Angola

In August 1975, following the breakdown in the Alvor Accords, the SADF invaded Angola "covertly" via northern Namibia and engaged the MPLA's armed wing FAPLA (People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola). The operation was code-named Savannah. After a number of military encounters the SADF was able to create a demilitarised zone of ten kilometres in width north of the border, and cleared a one-kilometre strip of land in the south, which made it easier for SADF patrols to detect SWAPO insurgents [Seegers,1996:222].

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[65] Up until his death Elifas was an important motivator of the planned Turnhalle talks, an ethnically oriented alternative to SWAPO.
[66] The South African authorities began tarring the roads in order prevent the laying of landmines, and in addition, as part of its counterinsurgency campaign, water towers,

As South Africa had committed most of its forces deep into Angola's interior, PLAN was able to operate in shallow Angola (the area near the Namibian border) with relative impunity [Brown,1995:25]. The SADF invasion made the Namibian situation more complex as it led to an intermingling of the two conflicts. The SADF invasion and South African support for UNITA meant that SWAPO was obliged to align itself with South Africa's immediate rival, MPLA and became involved in regular clashes with UNITA and the FNLA [Katjavivi,1988:87].

The SADF invasion was short-lived. The material assistance promised by the United States, who wanted to prevent the Soviet Union, via an MPLA victory, from establishing a zone of influence in southern Africa never materialised. By January 1976 Operation Savannah was terminated [Seegers,1996:220]. This was followed by the withdrawal of the SADF's main force from Angola.

For the next two years, due to the restraints of the domestic political situation in South Africa, SADF operations into Angola where limited to cross-border "hot-pursuit". Consequently, Ovamboland became the main area of the war with PLAN troops operating from bases close to the border. The effectiveness of these units was hindered by weak logistical support, such as a lack of combat food, uniforms, arms and ammunition. Despite these shortages, SWAPO still held the advantage over the SADF, in that they had the support of the local population (due to major politicising work by its cadres) in the areas in which they operated [Brown,1995:27].

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pipelines and canals were also constructed. Therefore SWAPO perceived contract workers to be legitimate targets.

4.1.4) Summary

The effect of the coup d'etat in Portugal had very important implications for the Southern African region, and SWAPO in particular. The decolonisation of Angola enabled SWAPO to use the Angolan territory as springboard for guerrilla activities, which led to a intensification of PLAN's operations in northern Namibia. It also resulted in a South African invasion of Angola via Namibia, and the replacement of the SAP by the SADF as the agency chiefly responsible for security concerns in Namibia. In basic terms, these developments led to a heightened militarisation of the Namibian conflict.

4.2 The Zambian Experience and the Crisis of 1974-1976

4.2.1) The Move to Zambia

SWAPO, relative to other southern African liberation movements, was a small and fairly unsophisticated organisation when it moved its political headquarters from Dar es Salaam to Lusaka, Zambia in 1972. A reception centre for new SWAPO recruits was established at the Old Farm on the outskirts of Lusaka. A military complex called Central Base was constructed in south-western Zambia. A series of smaller bases near the Caprivi frontier were also erected.

From 1974, with the increase in exiles and access to greater funding, SWAPO's infrastructure expanded. The Old Farm was replaced by the Nyango settlement, situated several hundred kilometres west of Lusaka. Central Base was complemented by the creation of an additional reception and training facility called Oshatotwa [Leys & Saul,1994:125-129].

SWAPO's expansion was also facilitated by Zambia's formal sanction for liberation movements to conduct military training on its soil, but services in these camps remained rudimentary.

4.2.2) The Role of Zambian Policy

SWAPO's activities within Zambia were severely constrained by Zambian government policy, which existed for two reasons. First, the Zambian government had to supervise and regulate the actions of the liberation movements so that they did not destabilise the Zambian state. Second, up until 1974, Zambia bordered on five areas of major guerrilla activity: Tete province in Mozambique, the Zambezi, Caprivi and Eastern Angola. Zambia was also encircled by target regimes, namely South Africa and Rhodesia, and was therefore vulnerable to attack [Anglin & Shaw,1979:234-236]. As a result, Zambia sought to strictly monitor the activities of the liberation movements in order to minimise the internal and external security implications.

4.2.2.1) Mechanisms of Supervision and Regulation

The Zambian government made use of four mechanisms for the supervision and regulation of the liberation movements under its jurisdiction. Formal (official) recognition of a liberation movement was the government's primary tool. Recognition entitled liberation groups to utilise the administrative facilities of the African Liberation Centre in Lusaka and make use of Zambian travel documents. Recognition also permitted these movements to gain access to limited financial resources and use Radio Zambia for external broadcasting. The threat of withdrawing such recognition was a means of bringing dissident movements to heel [Anglin & Shaw,1979:240-242].

Second, in order to prevent the almost inevitable faction fighting, the Zambian government constantly policed the resident liberation movements. Whenever there was internal conflict, as was the case with the PAC, ZAPU, MPLA and later SWAPO, the Zambian security forces were deployed, with the disruptive parties being arrested, imprisoned or deported [Anglin & Shaw,1979:253-255].[67]

Third, the Zambian government sought to isolate foreign nationalist parties from close contact with Zambian society, especially members of their own communities resident in Zambia. This was to prevent liberation movements from developing the kinds of domestic political bases that had given the Palestine liberation organisations powerful leverage with the governments of Lebanon and Jordan. It was inconceivable that SWAPO could have achieved such leverage as the Namibia community was relatively small, approximately 2000, compared to the 40 000 strong Angolan community (1970 figures) [Anglin & Shaw,1979:256].

4.2.3.2) A Time for Relocation

In 1976 SWAPO's asylum within Zambia came to an abrupt end, the consequence of several factors. The major geopolitical changes in Southern Africa prompted SWAPO to look westwards for a new patron and to begin to cultivate stronger ties with the MPLA government in Angola. In addition, SWAPO had just scored a major diplomatic victory with it being declared the

[67] Following constant in-fighting over personal and ideological differences, as well as an alleged plot to assassinate certain Zambian ministers, the PAC was banned and 45 of its members were deported to Tanzania. Between 1970 and 1971, a ZAPU faction under the leadership of Chikerema attempted to assassinate and/or kidnap rival ZAPU leaders. The Zambian military was called in, and after a gun battle, the dissidents were arrested and restricted to a remote bush camp. Eventually 120 ZAPU members were deported to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where they were arrested and sentenced to death. Faction fighting took place within the ranks of the MPLA in 1973, but the outcome was not as drastic as the previous two incidents.

"sole and authentic" representative of the Namibian people by the United Nations and as a result it perceived the need to project its presence in southern Africa more actively.

The most important motivating factor was Zambia's vulnerable geographic and economic position. With President Kaunda entering into a détente policy with the South African regime, Zambia came under pressure from Pretoria to reduce its support of SWAPO. President Kaunda consequently ordered SWAPO to cease all military activities from Zambian soil and vacate its headquarters [Brown,1995:26].

4.2.3) Prelude to a Crisis: The Demand for Accountability

At the Tanga Congress of 1969 it was decided that the next Congress would be held in December 1974. The SWAPO leadership was tasked with formulating proposals for the organisation's new constitution and tabling suggestions for the streamlining of SWAPO's organisational structure. However, by late 1974 it became evident that a Congress would not be held that year.[68]

By mid 1975 still no Congress had been held. It was a situation that the *Times of Zambia* (6 June 1975) described as "very unhealthy" given that all political power was concentrated in the hands of the Executive. The article argued that:

> When party Congresses are overdue and the incumbents keep quiet about it, this usually brings in some nasty speculations that the "old soldiers" might be afraid of changes at a convention... One hopes that a mature organisation

[68] A steering committee had not been appointed to organise the Congress, nor had the Central Committee met to determine the agenda and venue.

like SWAPO has learnt from the bitter lessons of other movements and will not fall into similar pits.

With most southern African liberation movements holding congresses or meetings to review their strategy in light of the regional geopolitical changes, demands for a Congress began to emerge from within the ranks of SWAPO's general population [Shipanga,1989:100].

The SWAPO Executive, in the face of organisational turmoil due to the massive influx of new exiles and challenges to their authority from Youth League members[69], as well as an eroding support base, stalled on the holding of the Congress [Katjavivi,1988:106]. As time passed and no progress was made on the Congress-related issues, groups within SWAPO's exile population became highly critical of their leaders. Critics began to demand greater representivity and accountability from leadership, and insisted that a Congress be held [Leys & Saul,1994:130]. For example, in February 1975 the SWAPO Youth League (SYL) Executive drew up a comprehensive memorandum seeking a response from the SWAPO leadership on the following issues:

- The tendency of SWAPO officials to treat all questions as treasonous
- The constitutional position of SWAPO; its ideology, in particular the form of government SWAPO will establish in Namibia once it gains political power; its aims and objectives; its foreign policy; and the conditions under which it was receiving aid from other countries
- Problems of administrative and financial efficiency and control.

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[69] Members of the Youth League who had recently joined SWAPO in exile had, before leaving Namibia, held a Congress of its own in Oniipa where delegates elected, amongst others, Keshii Pelao Nathanael as Youth League President and Reuben Shangula as Secretary General. Once in exile, these Youth League members having been democratically elected to positions within SWAPO's internal body, in whose name the exile body (which had been resolved at the Tanga Congress) was operating, began to demand positions of leadership in the exile organisation.

A few days after this document was published the SWAPO Vice-President Mishake Muyongo and four other Executive Committee members, namely Peter Tsheehama, Andreas Shipanga,[70] Peter Nanyemba, and Peter Mueshihange, met with the Youth League leaders to discuss the document [Leys & Saul,1994:132]. Vague promises were made by these Executive members to address the Youth League grievances. This was followed by a formal meeting between the SYL leaders and the complete SWAPO Executive six months later, after pressure from moderate members of the Executive, overseas SWAPO representatives and a number of African leaders.[71] It was agreed that the Congress would be held by 20 December 1975 and that a steering committee, representative of all SWAPO departments, would be established to co-ordinate the holding of the Congress.

However, the leadership failed to honour this undertaking and in January 1976 the Youth League declared the SWAPO Executive unconstitutional and invited them to resign [Leys & Saul,1994:133].

The stage was now set for the ensuing crisis, but it was the actions of members of PLAN which were to prove crucial.

4.2.4) The Dissatisfaction of PLAN

Since the early 1970s many PLAN cadres, including senior military officers, became increasingly dissatisfied with the SWAPO Executive and began to

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[70] Andreas Shipanga, who was becoming increasingly marginalised within the SWAPO circle of power, was also highly critical of the current state of affairs. In the same year Shipanga issued an internal memorandum to the members of the National Executive, Central Committee and foreign representatives of SWAPO that the Congress should be held by 20 December 1975. This was a move that ultimately lead to his political demise in SWAPO.

express a lack of confidence in the political leadership's ability to direct the liberation struggle. This was inspired by PLAN's lack of representation on the Executive, the management of the armed wing's logistics, SWAPO's alliance with UNITA and the armed propaganda approach to armed struggle. For example, Dimo Hamaambo, the PLAN field commander, dissatisfied with the state of affairs, left Zambia with a group of volunteers for Angola in late 1974 [Leys & Saul,1994:133].

Low morale, influenced by the relative inactivity on the military front and weaknesses in PLAN general logistics, pervaded the rank and file. With severe shortages of food, clothing, medicine, arms and ammunition, the arrival of some 2000 new recruits simply exacerbated these problems [Cliffe,1994:22]. The general soldiery was also feeling disempowered, as any questions regarding the operational and organisational state of PLAN were viewed as criticism of the SWAPO leadership. Any overly critical individual was arrested.

These conditions had important implications for SWAPO as they ultimately obstructed the members of PLAN from fulfilling their primary role, namely the defence of the revolutionary movement.

This dissatisfaction was also linked to rumours that senior SWAPO officials were misappropriating funds and equipment that had been allocated for the liberation struggle.[72] Many cadres believed that shipments of AK-47 assault rifles originating from China had been sold to UNITA and that consignments

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[71] Shipanga (*In Search of Freedom*, p. 140) alleges that Kenneth Kuanda, in an article published in the UNIP party newspaper called for the SWAPO leadership not to delay the holding of a Congress.

[72] Shipanga [1989:101-103] claims Peter Nanyemba (Secretary of Defence), Peter Mueshihange (Executive member) and SWAPO President Sam Nujoma owned shares in two night-clubs in Lusaka – the Kilimanjaro and the Lagodoro. Shipanga also accuses Nanyemba of misappropriating donor funds.

of weapons and ammunition were being buried in the ground. Rumours also abounded that Shipanga and another Executive member, Soloman Mifima were collaborating with the South Africans, and that Peter Mueshihange (Secretary of Foreign Relations) had made arrangements to have PLAN dissidents assassinated [Leys & Saul,1994:134]. Evidence to support these claims was circumstantial, but in the context of strict ammunition rations and weapons shortages these accusations became more widespread.[73] This led to the general soldiery increasingly loosing faith in their commanders and becoming openly hostile towards the SWAPO Executive.[74]

4.2.5) The Crisis

4.2.5.1) The Anti-Corruption Fighters

The SWAPO Executive's inability to effectively address the grievances within PLAN lead to the emergence of a group comprising several hundred cadres drawn from most military bases in Zambia. This group became known as the "anti-corruption fighters" as they began to campaign against perceived financial mismanagement in SWAPO. They called for an organisational overhaul of PLAN and a party Congress to be held.

Fearing a repressive response from the Executive, the initial meetings of this group were arranged in secret at Central Base. Two committees, an Investigating Committee or the "main committee" and an Advisory Committee were elected, comprising about 50 members each and were

[73] It was reported that certain PLAN recruits were armed with rifles of World War II vintage at best, with some units only having access to sticks.
[74] According to Shipanga [1989:102] this antagonism developed to such a point that Nujoma only visited certain PLAN camps in Zambia on a few occasions, and then only with Zambian army escort.

supported by a five-man Drafting Committee, which was responsible for issuing statements.[75]

4.2.5.2) The Crisis Spreads

In March 1976 fifteen representatives of the anti-corruption group travelled to Lusaka to present their demands to the SWAPO leadership, the Zambian authorities and the OAU's Liberation Committee. On arriving in Lusaka the delegation met with prominent members of the Youth League in which their common grievances were discussed. This was followed by a meeting with SWAPO Vice-President Mishake Muyongo (the rest of the SWAPO Executive refused to meet with the group), the African Liberation Committee of the OAU and the Zambian government, under the chairmanship of the Zambian Minister of Defence, General Kingsley Chinkuli.

At this meeting the PLAN delegates expressed their lack of confidence in PLAN commanders, and showed extreme distaste for Peter Nanyemba, the Secretary of Defence. It was decided the current command structure would be restructured, however, neither the PLAN leadership, nor the incumbent commanders were a party to this decision.

In the next few weeks tensions between the dissidents and the commanders loyal to the SWAPO Executive intensified. The anti-corruption group was the first to act and seized control of Central Base and a few other satellite camps.

[75] This group of anti-corruption fighters released a series of statements confirming their loyalty to the party, but demanding that a Congress be held in which a new Central Committee would be democratically elected. In their view this Committee, which would have members elected by the PLAN cadres themselves, would appoint capable commanders whom the soldiers would be willing to serve under. In a document titled "We Demand the Party Congress", the anti-corruption group envisaged a "commission of inquiry", representative of all divisions within PLAN and SWAPO, which would conduct a meticulous audit of every aspect of SWAPO operations, and address the many grievances of the PLAN cadres [Quoted in Leys & Saul, 1994:136-137].

The Zambian government, at the request of the SWAPO leadership and fearing that this unrest could have a spill-over effect, sent in several battalions of the Zambian army. The dissidents were forced to surrender and 48 "anti-corruption fighters" were arrested [Leys & Saul,1994:137-138].

In late March cadres in Detachment "B" at the Eastern Front also revolted [Katjavivi,1988:106]. This was not only a response to the above-mentioned conditions, but to a situation where certain PLAN units found themselves fighting alongside SADF troops in encounters with the MPLA's armed wing, FAPLA and Cuban troops. Such encounters allegedly took place at Munhango, Cangumbe, Luso and Serpa Pinto in late 1975.[76] These dissidents were eventually arrested and taken to Mboroma detention camp near Kabwe, where they were imprisoned with the "anti-corruption" rebels.

During this time Nujoma and other SWAPO leaders convinced the Zambian authorities to arrest the dissident SYL leaders and their sympathisers within the SWAPO leadership circle, such as Shipanga and Mifima. These dissidents were eventually shipped of Tanzanian jails in order to avoid a writ of *Habeas Corpus* that had been secured in Zambian courts on Shipanga's behalf. They were eventually freed, under international pressure in 1978.

With the crisis brought to an end, Nujoma announced in a press statement that,

> The agents of the South African Region and imperialists have been routed out of our movement and the Central Committee carried out a systematic purge of all traitors [*Windhoek Advertiser*, 3/8/1976].

[76] This state of affairs was the result of the uncertainty surrounding SWAPO withdrawal from its alliance with UNITA and UNITA's alignment with the SADF.

SWAPO's military wing had once again provided a significant challenge to the status quo within the movement. The leadership's reaction was not only an attempt to stifle demands for democratic practices, but more importantly to crush another attempted coup d'etat.

4.2.5.3) Incarceration, Re-education and Ex-communication

The detainees at Mboromba camp had to endure extreme hardships. In April 1977, two detainees, Hizipo Shikondombolo and Sakarias Elago, managed to escape to Nairobi via Dar es Salaam. They met up with other Namibian exiles who had fallen out with the SWAPO leadership [*Star*, 2/5/1977]. A press release was drafted in which the plight of the cadres at Mboromba was described in detail. This press release drew considerable international attention [Leys & Saul,1994:139-140].

The Zambian authorities, faced with a potentially embarrassing situation, intervened and gave the detainees the choice of either accepting the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or returning to SWAPO for rehabilitation. Approximately three hundred chose to leave SWAPO and were taken to the UNHCR refugee camp in north-western Zambia where they stayed until 1989. The remainder, approximately one thousand three hundred, opted for rehabilitation by SWAPO. It is believed that those who led the anti-corruption campaign were put to death [Shipanga,1989:134], however, this has never been confirmed.

4.2.6) Repercussions of the Crisis

The 1976 crisis had four key repercussions for SWAPO.

4.2.6.1) International Consequences and Damage Control

This incident and the leadership's subsequent heavy-handed response threatened to undermine SWAPO's international reputation as a liberation movement of high moral standing as well as its recent diplomatic successes [*The Guardian*, 15/5/1976]. In particular, SWAPO was anticipating the UN General Assembly declaring SWAPO as the "sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people"[77] [Leys & Saul,1994:141]. This label would promote SWAPO from a liberation movement to a government-in-exile. The SWAPO leadership, in order to limit the political fallout, engaged in damage control by establishing a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the causes of the PLAN uprising. It was chaired by SWAPO stalwart John Ya-Otto.

In its report, the Ya Otto Commission acknowledged that there were certain structural shortcomings within SWAPO that had contributed to the crisis. However, it took the scapegoat option and laid the blamed the Youth League leaders and SWAPO Executive Committee members who had been sympathetic to the dissident's cause, particularly Andreas Shipanga. The report alleged that Shipanga was a South African spy and had planned to disrupt SWAPO's operations by undermining its leadership and eventually seizing power [SWAPO(c),1976:9-11].

Shipanga's actual role in the 1976 crisis is unclear. According, to Leys and Saul [1994:141-142], Shipanga was a marginal player, a hapless victim. He was selected as the "fall-guy" because of his profile as an Executive member and had the greatest potential to embarrass the SWAPO leadership, via the international press, with claims of authoritarianism within SWAPO. Therefore he had to be neutralised. Following the crisis he was used for fairly

extensive propaganda purposes by SWAPO, where he was blamed for many of SWAPO's internal problems.

Shipanga, on the other hand saw himself as one of the central protagonists, a major campaigner for democratic reforms within SWAPO. In the introduction to *In Search of Freedom*, an account of Andreas Shipanga's life in exile, Fred Bridgland attributes Shipanga's arrest and detention as the spark that ignited the PLAN uprising [1989:iii].

Evidence in terms of newspaper reports of the time (*Windhoek Advertiser, Star, Citizen*) suggests that Shipanga did play a fairly important role. In addition, a hand written statement signed by the other prominent detainees, which accuses an "evil clique" within the SWAPO leadership circle of human rights abuses, lack of accountability, financial mismanagement and corruption, as well as conspiring with the Zambian authorities to eliminate any opposition within SWAPO, was written by Shipanga [1976]. It also seems likely that Shipanga's involvement was not benevolent, but possibly motivated by a desire for greater political power [*Windhoek Advertiser*, 28/5/1976; Cliffe,1994:22].

4.2.6.2) Process of Reform

This crisis revealed that there was large-scale dissatisfaction among SWAPO cadres that could not simply be resolved through mass arrests and intimidation. The leadership responded by implementing a package of reforms and restrictions to try and prevent similar incidents from re-occurring. Reforms included constitutional amendments. For example, at an Enlarged Central Committee meeting in late July and early August, a new constitution and programme of action was adopted. SWAPO's new

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[77] This was achieved in November 1976 after intense lobbying by SWAPO.

programme embraced a fairly radical socialist perspective, pledging SWAPO to,

> unite all Namibian people, particularly the working class, the peasantry and the progressive intellectuals, into a vanguard party capable of safeguarding national independence and of building a classless, non-exploitative society based on the ideals and principles of scientific socialism.

According to Saul and Leys [1995:52], this programme did not reflect the state of the SWAPO leadership's thinking, but was embraced for three opportunistic reasons. First, it was hoped that these policy and constitutional changes would increase the leadership's credibility in the eyes of the SWAPO rank-and-file. Second, to curry favour with the Soviet Union, eastern European countries and Cuba in order to get access to funding. Third, in anticipation of SWAPO's move to Angola, the Executive desired to improve relations with the Marxist-Leninist government of Angola.

This programme also set out the conditions under which a settlement with South Africa would be acceptable. These conditions included, amongst other issues: the right to Namibian independence; release of political prisoners; free return of all exiles; withdrawal of the South African security forces; and UN supervised elections.

Restrictions included the issuing of *Revolutionary Decrees*, in which "crimes against the Namibian People's Revolution", and the requisite punishment were identified [SWAPO,1977(b)].[78] These *Revolutionary Decrees* were a warning to anyone who sought to challenge the authority of the SWAPO Executive. Similar sentiments were reflected in, *The Struggle for Total*

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[78] Crimes included espionage, treason, conspiracy, military disobedience, to name but a few. Penalties ranged from capital punishment and imprisonment, to monetary fines.

Liberation: a Political Manual of the Namibian Institute of Revolutionary Studies (1977).

4.2.6.3) Combat Paralysis

PLAN became temporarily paralysed as over half its combatants, approximately between 1600 and 1800, had been imprisoned [Leys & Saul,1994:138]. With the move to Angola, PLAN became revitalised fairly rapidly.

4.2.6.4) National Congress

There was a National Congress of SWAPO's internal wing held in Walvis Bay from 29 to 30 May 1976. Apart from dealing with issues of liberation within Namibia, the Congress aimed to clarify and re-evaluate the internal wing's position in the liberation struggle following the crisis in Zambia. The internal wing unanimously voted to endorse the top leadership and call upon them, in turn, to appoint the rest of the outside leadership [SWAPO(b),1976:11].

4.2.7) Summary

The time SWAPO spent in Zambia was turbulent. The restrictions of Zambian government policy, in conjunction with financial, logistical and diplomatic factors, impeded the organisational development of SWAPO, particularly the armed wing. However, despite the armed wing's relative underdevelopment, it had been far more confident and assertive. These circumstances contributed to increased tensions between the civilian leadership and the armed wing, followed by the crisis that culminated in SWAPO Executive's authority being seriously challenged by PLAN.

The crisis was largely the result of two factors.

In the first instance, the interests of PLAN were neglected (as was the case with the "China-men" incident), in that adequate supplies of food, clothing and weapons were not forthcoming.

Second, PLAN had become increasingly alienated from the rest of the SWAPO movement, a recipe for disaster in a revolutionary/insurgent context, where the military is one of the cornerstones of the party/political movement. Communication between the SWAPO Executive and the PLAN rank and file was poor, with the leadership remaining aloof.

The civilian leadership, with the aid of the Zambian security forces, was able to defuse the crisis, but did not address the underlying causes. In short, this crisis can be attributed to ineffective application or enforcement of civil supremacy mechanisms.

4.3) The Intensification of the Armed Struggle

4.3.1) The Move to Angola

In 1976 SWAPO moved its main area of operations to Luanda, Angola, where the organisation was able to develop in a relatively unencumbered environment. By 1977 SWAPO had established a quasi "state-in-exile" with an active army and a fairly well-developed education and health system [Saul & Leys,1995:54].

With a new found confidence in the international arena, SWAPO began publicly stating that 1977 would be the year that it would intensify the

armed struggle [Matatu,1976:9-10].[79] With increased material support from the Soviet Union, Cuba and the MPLA, this change in military objective started to become a reality [Shultz,1988:140; *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/1/1977].

4.3.2) The Struggle Intensifies

By the beginning of 1977, with SWAPO using Angola as a springboard for its military actions, PLAN was able to establish three fronts into Namibia: northern, north-eastern and north-western. Each of the three fronts had a commander, a chief of staff, and a political commissar. Heading different sections were a chief engineer, chief medic, chief of anti-air defence, chief of artillery and chief of logistics [Brown,1995:24-25].

In 1978 the SADF estimated that there were a total of 462 contacts between security personnel and PLAN in the Namibian operational area. This was to increase to 1,175 contacts in 1980 [Seegers,1996:230]. The SADF also reported that, at any given time, approximately 300 insurgents were in Namibia, with some 2000 grouped in Angola for deployment into Ovamboland, and another 1,400 in Zambia ready to target the Caprivi region [Steenkamp,1989:70-71].[80] Other estimates put PLAN's force numbers at 5,000-6,000 [Shiweda,1997; Matatu,1976:10].

4.3.3) The SADF Response

In response to SWAPO's intensification of the armed struggle the South Africa military establishment, infused with "total strategy"[81] thinking,

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[79] This included numerous press statements, as well as radio broadcasts, especially from Radio Luanda.
[80] Quoted in Brown [1995:27].
[81] From the 1950s key decision-makers within the South African security establishment, influenced by the Cold War mentality, saw South Africa as an intrinsic component of

intensified its external operations. These involved pre-emptive attacks on selected PLAN targets in Angola, including air strikes and bombing attacks with the objective of destroying SWAPO's logistics and supply lines, and pushing PLAN deeper into Angola [Dale,1993:15]. South Africa's most significant operation against SWAPO was *Reindeer*, which included a controversial raid on the SWAPO's Cassinga camp in deep Angola.[82]

The South West African Territorial Force (SWATF), a small military organisation resembling the SADF that conscripted white Namibian males and accepted Namibian African volunteers was also created by the SADF [Dale,1993:12]. By 1979 SWATF was fully operational and made up of ethnic battalions of indigenous Namibians and officered by whites. In addition, *Koevoet* (Crowbar), a South African Police counterinsurgency unit was created in 1978.

4.3.4) PLAN Takes Charge

By 1978 PLAN, began operating in units of 80-100 guerrillas. Local supporters would drive their herds of cattle behind PLAN groups to conceal their footprints, and often heavy material, arms and ammunition was loaded on the cattle as well. Rural communities and villages, as well as many parish

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Western society, whose duty it was to repel the global spread of communism. These policy makers perceived South Africa to be of vital strategic importance to the West due to its geographic location, mineral wealth, highly developed infrastructure, strong economy, and its anti-Communist stance. The impact of this perception was that a security ideology that envisaged the South African state as the target of a "total communist onslaught" directed from Moscow began to develop within Pretoria's corridors of power. Throughout the first half of the 1970s the notion and means of achieving a total integrated strategy to deal with the "total onslaught" slowly evolved, and with the disclosure of the 1975 and 1977 Defence White Papers that such a "total strategy" formally entered state policy.

[82] The Cassinga incident, which is still commemorated in Namibia today, was a major bone of contention between the SADF and SWAPO. The SADF claimed that Cassinga camp was predominantly a military camp, while SWAPO attests that it was predominantly civilian. Evidence tends to favour the latter perspective. For more in depth studies see Heywood, A. 1994. *The Cassinga Event* (Windhoek: Archeia).

churches provided food and shelter for many of the combatants. A few churchmen helped fighters to cache arms, and at times local businessmen provided transport for combatants. PLAN combatants were able to operate intensively as political agitators and intelligence gathers, as well as guerrillas within the communities they operated. On average these cadres remained in their designated area for periods of up to three months [Brown,1995:29].

At this stage SWAPO military strategy centred on the escalation of battles within Namibia, striking at economic targets, infrastructure and communication equipment. PLAN also began to operate in Namibia's urban areas, where sabotage actions, particularly against petrol stations in Windhoek, Swakopmund and Keepmanshoop were carried out [Katjavivi,1988:87].

Due to these activities, as well as the presence of landmines planted by PLAN operatives, certain regions within Ovamboland became "no-go" areas for the SADF. However, SWAPO was unable to convert them to liberated zones due to the SADF's air support and the nature of the terrain. These incidents of sabotage, assassination, landmine explosions were to increase dramatically over the next two years [Brown,1995:29].

By 1980 PLAN operational structure started to change, mainly due to the PLAN combatants' regular incorporation into FAPLA units[83] and almost total reliance on Soviet financial and material support. A force of mobile guerrilla units became an army of semi-regular troops who made use of use of trenches, bunkers and outposts. PLAN began to adopt more conventional military structures and tactics, especially for defensive purposes. Even the war with the SADF was escalating into a more conventional one, with PLAN

routing SADF units on a number of occasions. SWAPO's armed wing began to develop mechanised brigades, which were used to protect both military and refugee bases in Angola, and transport troops and supplies. These mechanised divisions assisted FAPLA as "payment" for the protection the MPLA government offered to the liberation movement [Shiweda,1997].

In summary, the late 1970s and early 1980s were the high point of PLAN's operational life. SWAPO's armed wing, more conventional in nature, made unprecedented infiltrations into northern and central Namibia where it scored numerous military victories against the SADF. These events indicated a definite change in military strategy, from a war of attrition to a war of conquest. The PLAN high command actually began to toy with the idea that SWAPO could defeat the SADF militarily.

It was also a period in which SWAPO cadres were able to conduct political education amongst the rural people, and consequently gain essential popular support and assistance. The downside of these military successes was that certain PLAN members rose to influential positions within the SWAPO leadership, which would prove problematic in the years to come.

4.4 From Linkage to Negotiated Settlement: Diplomatic and Military Frustrations

4.4.1) PLAN on the Retreat

From 1982, PLAN's military advantage began to diminish due to an increased SADF presence in the operational area, which involved the stepping-up of patrols in the northern areas and an increase in strikes on

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[83] Some 3,600 PLAN troops were incorporated into FAPLA by 1977 [Copley,1977:9].

PLAN bases by the South African Air Force (SAAF), such as the Lubango and Ongiva headquarters. These actions had a significant impact on PLAN's cross border incursions, which fell to 620 in 1983 [Seegers,1996:230].

Forward command posts, from which guerrillas operated into Namibia, became increasingly insecure with their lines of supply constantly disrupted. As a result, PLAN combatants, previously based within a few kilometres of the Namibian border were forced back into the Angolan interior. This meant that combatants had to carry all their equipment themselves, including landmines, mortars, automatic rifles and medical equipment for great distances. This was not feasible without water, so PLAN operations became restricted to the rainy season between November and March [Brown,1995:32].

PLAN 's position was further diminished with increased counterinsurgency activity within northern Namibia. This included the SADF's deployment of 32 Battalion, composed of former FNLA guerrillas, who established a buffer zone of approximately 40 kilometres into Angola to intercept PLAN guerrillas [Jaster,1990:12].

PLAN activity in the Caprivi region effectively ended in 1980 when the Caprivi African National Union (CANU) split from SWAPO with mutual recriminations. These conditions also affected SWAPO's ability to conduct political work among the local population. As a result the role of the combatants was increasingly forced into an exclusively military mould.

Despite these setbacks, SWAPO was still able to score limited military successes. In 1981 PLAN units infiltrated white farming areas during the rainy season, with between 500 and 600 guerrillas being active in the war zone [Brown,1995:32].

In 1982, PLAN's Typhoon/Volcano unit was active in the Tsumeb white farming area for two months, but high casualties forced the survivors to withdraw. The 1983 rainy season was the last substantial PLAN military strike south of the Red Line. In 1984 there was a heavy concentration of attacks in Kavango region. In addition, the Ondangua airbase in Ovambo region was mortared with some sabotage and other activity north of the Red Line still continued.

In 1985 PLAN activity in Kavango had declined dramatically, partly due to UNITA's expanding presence along the north-eastern border. PLAN still remained active in the Ovambo region, with a SADF base at Eenhana being mortared and other sabotage actions taking place. Central and coastal cities were also targeted for bomb attacks [Brown,1995:32].

With the theatre of war moving increasingly into Angola's interior, PLAN activities were increasingly confined to joint operations with FAPLA and Cuban brigades in conventional clashes with the SADF/UNITA alliance. Operations into Namibia became significantly reduced. The consequence of these developments was that the resolution of the Namibian conflict became directly linked to events within Angola.

4.4.2) Diplomatic Wrangling

The SADF, PLAN and Angolan military actions, in most cases, were not enacted with simple military victory as the only objective. From the mid-1970s military action was, in many cases linked to diplomatic negotiations,

particularly between South Africa and the UN-endorsed Contact Group.[84] South Africa, facing increasing pressure for the UN to grant Namibia independence, constantly tried to sell the international community the idea of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). The DTA concept incorporated the moderate leaders of Namibia's 11 official ethnic groups who would meet and draft a constitution for the territory, after which they would establish an interim government to lead Namibia to independence. However, SWAPO was excluded from this process, which made this option unacceptable to the Contact Group and SWAPO. Major diplomatic bargaining followed between the South African government and the Contact Group.

With SWAPO's military success and intense international pressure targeting South Africa, a potential breakthrough was reached in April 1978 when a general framework for a settlement of the Namibian conflict was provisionally accepted by the South African government and later by SWAPO. It was adopted in September 1978 by the UN Security Council as Resolution 435. However, major opposition within the South African government to the settlement plan prevented further diplomatic progress [Jaster,1990:11]. There has been much speculation that the controversial attack on Cassinga in May 1978, in which hundreds of SWAPO non combatants were killed, can be attributed to elements within the South African security establishment who wanted to bring about the demise of the diplomatic process.

Up until 1981 complex diplomatic negotiations dragged on with very little progress being made. It seemed as though the parties to the conflict placed a higher priority on success in battle rather than at the negotiating table. In

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[84] The Contact Group comprised representatives of France, the United Kingdom, USA, West Germany and Canada. Its job was to negotiate terms for implementing a peaceful settlement to the Namibian conflict.

1981, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, in an attempt to address the South African objections to the Namibian settlement plan, introduced the concept of "linkage". "Linkage" encompassed the idea of linking South African agreement to Namibian independence to a Cuban withdrawal from Angola[85] [Jaster,1990:13]. Linkage was opposed by most of the parties except South Africa and the US. This effectively rendered the diplomatic process impotent, with no further process being made for several years.

4.4.3) The Spy Drama

SWAPO's military successes of the late 1970s had a significant implication for the movement's civil-military relations. The expansion of PLAN that accompanied its increased infiltration of northern Namibia resulted in SWAPO's armed wing becoming effectively autonomous from the rest of SWAPO [Saul & Leys,1995:56]. In addition, a number of military people attained key positions of power within SWAPO. This was not problematic for the SWAPO leadership whilst it was notching successive military victories against the SADF. However, in the face of military reverses increased military influence began to become a liability.

From 1981 onwards SWAPO began to suffer major military setbacks which led to low moral among many of the PLAN cadres. Rather than face the painful truth that the SADF was gaining the upper hand due to superior military prowess, SWAPO leadership, particularly PLAN commanders, looked elsewhere to point their fingers.

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[85] "Linkage" was a response to domestic US politics, where a conservative Republican administration desired the tide of Soviet expansion to be stemmed.

Since the 1976 crisis dissent within SWAPO's ranks was blamed (mainly for propaganda purposes) on South African informers and spies who had allegedly infiltrated the senior ranks of SWAPO. Similar reasoning was used for explaining the military reverses, as the SADF seemed to have accurate knowledge of PLAN's movements and operations. South Africa's intelligence, however, was largely attributed to the SADF's ability to monitor PLAN's radio communications rather than from information provided by spies. This is not to say that spies did not exist.

4.4.3.1) The Emergence of an Intelligence Agency

This state of insecurity, in conjunction with a strong security-centric influence by FAPLA, provided the rationale for the establishment of a separate SWAPO Military Security (intelligence) Organisation in 1981, under the supervision of the Soviet Union. This organisation was headeded by the Deputy Army Commander, Solomon Hawala, who had extensive powers and was answerable only to the SWAPO President. This security organisation consisted of 250 personnel, the majority of which had received security training in the Soviet Union and East Germany. Its sole aim was to identify potential spies, arrest and interrogate them, and detain those suspected of espionage. It had wide-ranging powers of arrest, and could even recall SWAPO cadres who were studying abroad to Lubango, Angola for questioning. However, at this point, the SWAPO leadership's obsession with spies and informer, particularly their use for propaganda purposes, started to backfire, as its security agency turned into an institution of organised terror that embarked on a seemingly irrational witch hunt.

The security organ's mode of operation remained consistent. Detainees who refused to admit to being "sent" (i.e. by the South African authorities) were tortured until they confessed to various crimes that their captors wanted to

hear and gave the names of "co-conspirators". It was understood that any person implicated by three such "confessions" might in turn be detained. These individuals were then confined to covered pits in the ground, where they had to endure harsh conditions, which included poor food and sanitation, as well as inadequate medical care. An unknown number died as a result. Detainees were rarely released, as they had confessed to being spies in order to save themselves from execution, and it kept the outside world in the dark as to the events that were unfolding in Lubango [Saul & Leys,1995:56-57].

4.4.3.2) Purges and Paranoia

With many loyal SWAPO members being arrested on a regular and random basis, and in the absence of accurate information, intense paranoia began to take root. As the arrests became more frequent and irrational, members of the Central Committee attempted to intervene, but were told to mind their own business by Hawala.

By the late-1980s the situation became critical. Almost one thousand SWAPO members had been arrested and taken to Lubango. Nujoma's wife was interrogated in 1988 and his brother-in-law, Aaron Muchimba, a Central Committee member was arrested the following year. Nujoma's was now in a vulnerable position as he could be the next victim of the security clique. At this point it was rumoured that Dimo Hamaambo, fearing the disintegration of PLAN, was contemplating a military assault on Hawala's headquarters [Saul & Leys,1995:56].

Fortunately for the SWAPO leadership a diplomatic agreement was reached between South Africa, Angola and Cuba, which paved the way for the implementation of UN Resolution 435. This ultimately prevented the security

clique from taking complete control of SWAPO, which more than likely, would have brought about the movement's demise.

4.4.4) Summary

The military setbacks of the mid-1980s and diplomatic stalling had serious consequences for SWAPO, as it significantly contributed to the breakdown of civil supremacy within the liberation movement. SWAPO's forced withdrawal from northern Namibia led to the movement losing contact with local population, the key to its survival and success, as well as being incorporated into FAPLA, the conventional army of the MPLA. A Stalinist intelligence agency was created in an attempt to restore the civil-military balance in favour civil control. However, this agency, driven by excessive organisational paranoia, engaged in extensive witch-hunts, which virtually incapacitated SWAPO.

4.5) Conclusion

The decade preceding Angolan independence proved to be the most profitable time for SWAPO. It was the period that saw a dramatic expansion of SWAPO's military operations, especially in the wake of the transfer of its political and military headquarters from Zambia to Angola. This was followed by an intensification of the armed struggle with PLAN units being deployed, in larger numbers deeper into the Namibian interior. By the late-1970s PLAN had gained the upper hand over the SADF, which led to the armed wing becoming more assertive. Additionally, certain prominent SWAPO members took the view that the military option could ultimately bring about Namibia's liberation from South African occupation.

From the early 1980s, with the theatre of war moving into the Angolan interior, PLAN found itself on the retreat. The only means left to SWAPO's armed wing to challenge the South African security forces was through integration with FAPLA. This had the effect of "conventionalising" PLAN, with it moving away from guerrilla techniques to embrace the doctrines of civil war. This reinforced the idea that SWAPO could defeat the SADF militarily.

This period was characterised by two separate crises.

The first crisis, which took place in the mid-1970s, was spearheaded by a PLAN uprising in response to the SWAPO leadership's perceived lack of political accountability. It was also a reaction by an assertive armed wing to military inactivity as well as inadequate food, clothing and weapons supplies. Civil supremacy was only restored when the SWAPO Executive called in the Zambia military to quash to military rebellion.

In the mid- to late-1980s, in the context of a severe civil-military imbalance in favour of PLAN, the second crisis emerged. In an attempt to restore the civil-military balance, the SWAPO leadership created a security (intelligence) organ that would dilute the political power of the armed forces. However, this organ, driven by extreme organisational paranoia, gained so much power and influence, that it almost brought about SWAPO's demise. Civil supremacy was only restored with the brokering of a peace deal. The end result ensured that civil supremacy over the military was secured.

Both crises were the consequence of ineffective or misdirected implementation of methods and techniques of civil supremacy, which had also been a factor in the "China-men" crisis. Many of the "revolutionary" methods of political control were in existence, such as political commissar

system, however, they proved to be insufficient in maintaining civil supremacy.

Chapter 5

Namibia's Transition to Statehood

The objective of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the transition period (1987-1992) in Namibia. The focus will not only be on the political transition, but also on the transition from revolutionary or insurgent tradition to that of a democratic tradition.

5.1 The First Steps to Namibian Independence: The 1988 Peace Accords

5.1.1) Diplomatic Stalemate

By the first quarter of 1987 all the parties to the Angolan conflict, motivated by economic hardship, military setbacks and war fatigue, began to reassess their diplomatic and military positions.

The Angolan government (MPLA), which was suffering the most in material terms, decided to resume talks with Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, in April 1987, with an aim to resolving the Angolan conflict.

In July the Cuban government, feeling the financial and political pinch of conducting a war on foreign soil expressed a desire to participate in talks involving Angola (MPLA), South Africa, SWAPO, and the United States.

No diplomatic progress was made until mid 1988, as Cuba and Angola refused to accept linkage, that is the withdrawal of Cuban troops from

Angola, unless South Africa made certain concessions. These included: an agreement to a fixed date for implementing UN Resolution 435; an SADF withdrawal from Angola; an end to US and South African aid for UNITA; and outside guarantees against South African aggression [Jaster,1988:20]. South Africa refused to make any concessions unless an acceptable timeframe for Cuban troop withdrawal was secured.

5.1.2) Diplomatic Manoeuvring and Successes

In the wake of a series of humiliating military setbacks[86] by the SADF, domestic resistance to South Africa's involvement in Angola, and the threat of severe United States economic sanctions,[87] the South African government concluded that a negotiated settlement was the only viable option to save face [Dreyer,1994: 174-181; Bridgland,1990:318]. This led to South Africa entering into a series of talks with Angola (MPLA), Cuba and the United States, which became known as the quadripartite talks.

During the third round of the quadripartite talks on Governor's Island, New York (11-13 July), a diplomatic breakthrough was made where an agreement was reached between all parties on fourteen "Principles for a Peaceful

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[86] The first military setback suffered by the SADF in collaboration with UNITA was at Cuito Cuanavale, a stronghold of the combined FAPLA/Cuban/SWAPO force, located some 300km north of the Namibian border. Cuban troops had been sent in to support FAPLA, reinforce Cuba's bargaining position at the negotiating table, as well as possibly bring about an SADF defeat. For several months the SADF/UNITA alliance had laid siege to Cuito Cuanavale, but had been unable to take it. Eventually, in May 1988, the SADF/UNITA force had to withdraw due to heavy casualties suffered by white conscripts, which had been brought on by South Africa's loss of air superiority to the Cuban/MPLA airforce. The Cuito Cuanavale incident was followed shortly by SADF/UNITA defeat at Techipa (another Cuban stronghold) at the hand of the FAPLA and Cuban troops, as well as a Cuban air strike on Caluque Dam, which resulted in the water supply to northern Namibia being cut off.

[87] In March 1988 the US Congress started considering tougher new sanction bills against South Africa. In May, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives adopted the so-called Dellums sanctions bill. This bill prohibited all imports from South Africa except some strategic minerals, and all exports to South Africa save humanitarian

Settlement in South-western Africa". In addition linkage between Namibian independence and Cuban withdrawal from Angola were agreed upon. These principles were strengthened at a secret meeting of military chiefs at Cape Verde (22-23 July). The 5th round of talks in Geneva (2-5 August) led to the signing of the Geneva protocol which effectively brought about a cease-fire between South Africa, Angola (MPLA) and Cuba.

It was agreed that Cuba would move its troops 30 miles north of the border by 10 August, while South Africa was to withdraw all its forces from Angola by 1 September. Cuba and Angola were to use their powers of persuasion to press SWAPO to move its bases north of the 16 Parallel, namely, 100 miles north of the border [Jaster,1988:24-25]. The issue of a timetable for Cuban withdrawal, however, remained unresolved.

In mid-August SWAPO announced its acceptance of the cease-fire which was followed by the establishment of a Joint Military Monitoring Committee (JMMC). The JMMC, which had been provided for by the Geneva Protocol, was a body consisting of South African, Angolan and Cuban representatives, with the United States and the Soviet Union as observers. Its mandate was to monitor the implementation of the agreements, and settle any conflicts that may arise in this regard, thereby stabilising the Namibian-Angolan border region [James,1990:253].[88] On 30 August, Angola and South Africa confirmed that all South African troops had departed from Angola. The Cubans and SWAPO were deployed behind their respective lines [Jaster,1990:26].

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assistance. Furthermore it proposed a ban on South African investment in the United States, and an end to military co-operation between the two states.

[88] The JMMC consisted of middle-ranking military officers from Angola, Cuba and South Africa. Every second week a higher-level military meeting was held on the border, and there was provision for meetings at foreign ministry level. In order to provide the JMMC with the necessary intelligence, 8 observation posts, consisting of about 20 military personnel each,

In mid December, South Africa, Angola and Cuba signed the Brazzaville Protocol, which recommended that the UN secretary-general set 1 April 1989 as the deadline for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 435. It was also agreed that a 27-month timetable for the withdrawal of Cuban troops. By August 1989, 15,000 Cubans would have left Angola and the remaining 35,000 would be located above the 15th Parallel, some 160 miles north of the border. By 1 November 1989, half of the Cuban military force would have left Angola and the rest would be deployed above the 13th Parallel, 300 miles north of the border [Jaster,1990:27].

This Protocol was reinforced with the signing of the New York treaty at the UN Headquarters, facilitated by the United States and the Soviet Union. This was followed by a bilateral agreement on Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola between the governments of Angola and Cuba. Critically, this Geneva Protocol made no direct reference to either UNITA or SWAPO, who had been excluded from the negotiations from the start. Chester Crocker defended the decision to exclude SWAPO, claiming *linkage* to be a regional strategy and not explicitly concerned with internal conflicts. The inclusion of non-state actors such as SWAPO would have complicated the process and opened the door for other parties such as the DTA and UNITA to demand inclusion. However, SWAPO was an important party and named in the cease-fire, and therefore should have been a party to the process [Weiland & Braham,1994:78].

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were set up along the border to monitor the implementation of the various agreements in October. However, they only became operational in January 1988.

5.1.3) SWAPO's Acceptance of Terms and Conditions of the Settlement

SWAPO, given its confinement to state of exile, had never had its popularity within Namibia tested. It was aware that it had a significant following, but it was unsure of numbers. The DTA process and SWAPO's absence in terms politicising activities in Namibia from the mid to late 1980s intensified this uncertainty. This uncertainty of support meant that SWAPO negotiated for the fairest possible terms and conditions for a transition period and political outcome, namely a liberal democracy, in the instance that it did not achieve the majority vote that it desired.[89]

In summary, after a lengthy period of diplomatic bargaining and negotiating, a peace settlement, linked to the resolution of the Angolan conflict had been achieved, which all parties agreed to. The concern for SWAPO was that it was only a secondary party to the negotiations and often not invited to discussion meetings. In certain situations it was forced to accept dictated terms. This state of affairs was to have serious consequences in the near future.

5.2 Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435

5.2.1) Uncertainties and Problems of Implementation

In mid-February 1989 the UN Security Council agreed on the term of the implementation of Resolution 435. This was directly followed by the arrival of General D. Prem Chand, Commander of UNTAG's military contingent, and twenty other senior military and UNTAG officials in Windhoek. However,

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[89] I am indebted to Prof. Annette Seegers for this observation.

due to administrative delays within the United Nations bureaucracy over the approval of UNTAG's budget, which the General Assembly reduced from $700 million to $416 million, the first group of UNTAG troops only arrived in mid-March. This meant that the UNTAG components were reduced from the planned 9,200 "full strength" to 6,450 personnel [Cliff,1994:90].

UN Security Council Resolution 435, in order to make it acceptable all parties, remained vague on many of the crucial details of the process of transition. These details were set forth in other UN documents and in the subsequent series of letters, memoranda and informal understandings reached in the ten years after Resolution 435 had been formally adopted. However, not all of these documents were approved by the UN Security Council, and some were not made public, which resulted in certain ambiguities being present following the signing of the Brazzaville Protocol [Stedman & Ohlson,1994:106].

The most important document was the Contact Group's April 1978 settlement proposal which outlined the various tasks that needed to be fulfilled in order to effectively implement Resolution 435.

The key element was the holding of UN supervised free and fair elections for the Constituent Assembly that would draw up a constitution for an independent Namibia. The proposal stipulated that the independence process be closely monitored and supervised by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, who would also be responsible for declaring that each phase was completed to his satisfaction before the next phase could begin.

According to Ahtisaari, the UN Special Representative, this gave him "considerable leverage and if required, veto power, over the South African installed administrator-general" [1994:59]. The reason for this was that the

elections were to be run by the latter individual, Louis Pienaar, with the South African Police in Namibia (SWAPOL) being responsible for law and order during the transition period [Jaster,1990:33].

5.3.2) The Role of UNTAG

The United Nations had to fulfil three tasks in the implementation of the peace settlement.

First, a cease-fire had to be secured, which included the confinement of SADF and PLAN forces to base, and their monitoring by UNTAG. However, UNTAG, incapable of monitoring SWAPO's military forces, which were dispersed over a very wide area, relied on the Angolans and Cubans, together with five or six UNTAG liaison officers, to monitor SWAPO's restriction to base.

Second, UNTAG had to oversee the staged withdrawal of the SADF and ensure that they had completely departed shortly after the certification of the election.

Third, the civilian UNTAG component of police, administrative, legal and electoral officials had to supervise the democratic election of the Constituent Assembly. This included overseeing the release of political prisoners, the return of exiles, the repeal of discriminatory legislation, the drawing up of the electorate, the registration of political parties, as well as monitoring the election campaign in order to minimise irregularities and intimidation [Jaster,1990:33]

Once elected the assembly had to draw up a constitution and adopt it by a two-thirds majority, after which the country would become independent on its own terms.

5.3) 1 April 1989 Incident

5.3.1) The SWAPO "Invasion"

According to the 1988 Geneva Protocol, the cease-fire between SWAPO and the SADF was supposed to take effect at midnight on the 1 April 1989. However, between the 31 March and 1 April, between 1,500 and 1,800 armed PLAN insurgents entered Namibia from Angola. This was SWAPO's biggest cross border penetration ever.

The JMMC, which was winding down its operations, failed to notice the massing of PLAN troops on the border [James,1990:254]. All SADF units in Namibia had already been confined to base and Namibian SWATF battalions demobilised. However, the supposedly defunct Koevoet, which had been incorporated into SWAPOL, engaged the PLAN combatants militarily.[90]

Despite SADF intelligence reports, this incident seemed to have caught most parties by surprise.[91] The UN Special Representative, Martti Ahtisaari, with

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[90] By all indications, Koevoet was aware of SWAPO movements, as a few weeks prior to the incident, South Africa warned Western diplomats and UN officials of a heavy build up of SWAPO guerrillas in southern Angola. South Africa also raised the issue with the Cuban and Angolan members of the JMMC in late March, but was give vague reassurances concerning SWAPO's intentions and Angola's efforts to move the guerrilla's north of the 16th Parallel. By 30 March, when South Africa reported that SWAPO forces were moving to within 500 metres of the border, the South African Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha informed Ahtisaari, Chand and Pienaar that an incursion was imminent.

[91] D. Prem Chand recalls the situation as follows: ON 31 March, during an official dinner hosted by the administrator-general for UNTAG, SADF, and senior South African officials, unconfirmed reports started to come of armed SWAPO activity involving 300-500 men along the Angolan border. However, no one at the dinner showed any concern because it was

no peacekeeping personnel or capabilities at his disposal, and fearing that the South African government would withdraw from the peace process and/or take the matter into their own hands, agreed to a limited redeployment of the SADF/SWATF to support SWAPOL [Weiland & Braham,1994:81].

5.3.2) An Unnecessary War

SADF troops engaged guerrillas in battles in the border areas, to the west of Ruacana, in the remote parts of the Kaokoland and the Okatana, as well as other parts of the Ovamboland. In the next few days about thirty small scale battles were fought across much of the northern border from Kaokoland through Ovamboland to the western border of Kavango.

There was a common pattern to these engagements: a group of SWAPO fighters would be spotted and surrounded, usually by SADF helicopter gunships, and the highly mobile Koevoet units in armoured vehicles. In most cases the PLAN insurgents returned fire, but reports suggest that SWAPO fighters who tired to surrender were simply killed [Cliffe,1994:85]. Photographic evidence indicates that many of these SWAPO soldiers had been shot execution style, at close range with a bullet to the back of the head.[92]

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simply inconceivable that SWAPO would be in the area: either the reports were grossly exaggerated or they were UNITA operations, which is something that had occurred in the past [Weiland & Braham,1994:95]. Leon Englebreght, the SADF soldier who took the call confirming the SWAPO incursion on the 1 April, thought it was an 'April Fools Day' joke and hung up the phone only to be called straight back to say that it was a serious situation (interview with the author, Parktown, 1997).

[92] Interview with Gen. (ret.) Peter Zuze, former President of the UN Council for Namibia and Zambian diplomat who was part of a fact-finding team that investigated the 1 April incident, Harare, 30/3/98.

5.3.3) A Solution is Sought

Over the next week the crisis intensified and the peace settlement began to slip away.

South Africa rejected a proposal by the Front-line States for a cease-fire under which SWAPO infiltrators would be disarmed but allowed to remain inside Namibia. On 9 April, the A-G announced a suspension of Resolution 435 and an indefinite postponement of the preparations for elections.

In an effort to defuse the crisis, senior officials from Angola, Cuba and South Africa held an emergency meeting of the JMMC at the Mount Etjo Safari Lodge near Windhoek, from 8-9 April. The meeting led to the formulation of the Mount Etjo Declaration, which called for the safe passage of SWAPO fighters to designated UNTAG-mandated assembly points. From there they would be given UNTAG escort to bases above the 16th Parallel in Angola, as stipulated in the Geneva Protocol. All SWAPO insurgents would be compelled to leave Namibia by the 15 April, after which the settlement process would resume. The SWAPO leadership accepted the terms of the Declaration, and ordered its forces to stop fighting and report to the designated assembly points within 72 hours.

5.3.4) The Implementation of the Mount Etjo Accord

The implementation of the Mount Etjo Accord did not run all that smoothly. News of the agreement was slow to filter through to soldiers and guerrillas, and UNTAG units took several days to reach the designated assembly points. As evidence mounted that South African security forces were hunting down and killing SWAPO guerrillas, Nujoma ordered his forces to return directly to Angola to avoid being ambushed near the assembly-points. As the 15 April

deadline for the guerrillas' return to Angola passed, there was wide disagreement over how many had in fact returned and how many remained inside Namibia.

By the end of April, South Africa claimed 400 guerrillas were still unaccounted for in the territory, while UN officials claimed it was closer to 200. The three-member governments of the JMMC agreed to allow another two weeks – that is, until 15 May – for verification of the SWAPO withdrawal. On the 13 May South African troops returned to base, and six days later confirmed that peace had been restored and that independence process could continue. The crisis had lasted 50 days [Jaster,1990:37].

5.3.5) Explanations of SWAPO's Intervention

The critical question remains as to why the SWAPO leadership authorised such a provocative action, which had a distinct possibility of scuttling the entire settlement, when it was generally accepted that SWAPO would win the election by a substantial margin? The arguments and theories around this particular issue are very rich, but are generally unsubstantiated with empirical evidence, particularly, as the SWAPO leadership remained tight-lipped about the incident. What follows is an attempt to make sense of these various explanations and try and shed some light on the actual course of events.

Since the incident, two major explanations have emerged, both in terms of the general literature on post-independence Namibia, as well as comments from analysts and prominent persons. This dissertation offers a third possible explanation.

5.3.5.1) Ignorance and Confusion

The first argument, which was employed by the SWAPO leadership in the immediate aftermath of the 1 April incident, focuses on the confusion and lack of information that was the result of SWAPO's exclusion from the negotiating process and the ambiguities and vagueness of UN Resolution 435.

It follows that there was never a face-to-face signing of the cease-fire between the SADF and SWAPO, but only an exchange of letters between the two parties through the UN secretary-general. Resolution 435 was unclear as to where SWAPO insurgents *inside* had to report for demobilisation. This argument, however, was rejected by Martti Ahtisaari at a conference on the Namibian peace process in Freiburg, Germany (July 1992), as he claimed both SWAPO and South Africa were thoroughly briefed as to the logistics of the cease-fire.

5.3.5.2) The Issue of "Liberated Zones"

The second argument centres around the issue of SWAPO's "liberated zones" (or the lack thereof) inside Namibia.

Since the inception of the armed struggle SWAPO continually emphasised the importance for guerrillas to establish a visible presence inside Namibia. This became increasingly important in the run-up to the implementation of Resolution 435, where SWAPO wanted to be seen by local inhabitants as being their liberators, particularly in Ovamboland, where its greatest support base was located.

SWAPO leadership argued at the time of the incident that the SWAPO insurgents had not invaded, but had been inside Namibia for a significant

amount of time. The argument followed that these cadres had been securing certain liberated areas, and were simply waiting for UN troops to confine them to base when they were attacked by SWAPOL.

This explanation was rejected by UN officials and refuted by President dos Santos from Angola, who rebuked the SWAPO leadership for failing to control its guerrillas and prevent their crossing the border "at the critical moment of the start of Resolution 435".[93]

A more credible second argument follows that SWAPO's leaders, uncertain of SWAPO's popular support, gambled on a successful infiltration of their forces by 1 April, while the SADF was confined to base and UNTAG monitors were only starting to arrive. If the infiltrating guerrillas could have eluded the police and located UNTAG officials to protect them, they might have made a convincing case that they had been within the borders of Namibia prior to the cease-fire taking effect. This visibility factor may also explain why, according to SADF officials, the April infiltrators wore new camouflage uniforms rather than nondescript clothing that would have reduced their visibility as guerrillas.

5.3.5.3) An Alternative Explanation

This dissertation offers a third explanation, which draws on the previous two explanations, as well as comments from various analysts and prominent SWAPO figures that have had the opportunity to reflect on this incident over the past ten years.

There were four inter-related reasons for the SWAPO invasion on 1 April.

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[93] Since independence, the existence of SWAPO liberated zones inside by Namibia has generally been refuted by both prominent SWAPO figures and SADF personnel alike.

First, PLAN cadres invaded Namibia at the request of the SWAPO leadership in order to secure popular support, and conduct political education, especially in Ovamboland. This is reflected in an address given by Nujoma at to a Military Cease-Fire Parade at Okatale near the Namibian-Angola border on 31 March, which was attended by many PLAN cadres. Segments of the speech appeared in the March-April 1989 edition of *SWAPO News and Views*, under the sub heading 'PLAN Combatants Mobilising', in which Nujoma claimed that,

> on April 1, *some* of them [PLAN cadres] will be ordered to shed their uniforms and put on civilian clothes in order to go to Namibia to carry out the political mobilisation of the masses to vote for SWAPO and thereby, consolidate the revolutionary gains..." [SWAPO,1989:27]

Second, SWAPO did not trust the South African government, and particularly the SADF. Since 1970s, South Africa had gone to extra-ordinary lengths to stall and even sabotage an effective political settlement. In addition, as SWAPO had been excluded from the quadripartite talks, the trust that is usually formed between warring parties in a negotiating forum, and crucial to the success of a peace settlement, was not established. There was also indications that South African security agencies were looking to sabotage the elections. Consequently, SWAPO invaded in order to hedge its bets – should South Africa renege on the Brazzaville Protocol, SWAPO at least would have been at least able to take control of areas within Namibia if the peace process failed.[94]

[94] It has been reported that these PLAN insurgents were part of a reserve army that was in existence in case the peace process failed. After the 1 April affair, an unknown number of PLAN insurgents remained hidden in camps in Angola, and returned independently after the final SADF withdrawal [Coletta et al,1996:132].

Third, there is also a strong possibility that SWAPO invaded due to military considerations. As has already been pointed out, the militaristic faction within SWAPO had grown very powerful, especially under the patronage of the MPLA and its army, FAPLA. At the Freiburg conference Theo-Ben Gurirab indicated that there were many elements within SWAPO that totally disagreed with the negotiation process. SWAPO had developed a "split personality" [Weiland & Braham,1994:79]. For the militaristic faction, remembering PLAN's heyday of the late 1970s, a major military victory against the SADF would given significant weight to the argument that Namibians had been liberated not by SWAPO, and not the whims of super powers.

Fourth, SWAPO, was unaware of the limited UNTAG presence in Namibia. SWAPO assumed, in line with Resolution 435, that UNTAG would be deployed in significant numbers throughout Namibia. This was reflected in Nujoma's Okatale address, where he claimed that UNTAG's peace-keeping force, police force and civilian personnel had already arrived in Namibia [SWAPO,1989:26]. This was the real impact of not being party to the negotiation process.

It was envisaged that after PLAN had entered Namibia it would locate UNTAG forces so that the PLAN forces could be confined to base for demobilisation inside Namibia, thereby protecting them from possible SWAPOL/SADF retaliation, as well as claiming that liberated zones had existed within Namibia for some time. This was illustrated by certain comments made by Brigadier Opande, deputy military commander of UNTAG, that appear in Cliffe [1994:88]. Opande interviewed two PLAN survivors who claimed "they came to be monitored by UNTAG" and determine whether or not the SADF had been confined to base.

SWAPO had under estimated the ruthlessness of Koevoet and the speed at which it could be deployed. SWAPO's intelligence regarding the presence of SWAPOL (Koevoet) also seems to have been very poor, as on 1 April the SWAPO leadership were very surprised when they were ambushed by Koevoet, who by all accounts had been lying in wait for them for several days.[95]

5.3.6) Aftermath of 1 April Incursion

The most immediate consequences of the PLAN incursion was a substantial improvement in South Africa's credibility as a honest and responsible participant in the settlement process, and a corresponding international political fallout for the SWAPO leadership. This was represented by a reduction in support amongst its closest allies, the Front-line States. The 1 April incursion also hardened many other international actors stance towards SWAPO. Angola, Cuba, South Africa, the US, USSR, UK and Front-line States pressured SWAPO to recall its forces from Namibia, and ensure their confinement in camps north of the 16th Parallel under UNTAG monitors.

This incident, however, generated much support for SWAPO amongst its chief constituency, the Ovambo majority in Ovamboland, as the SADF/SWAPOL were blamed for the bloodshed and not the SWAPO "invasion" [Jaster,1990:39].

In summary, the period of implementing UN Resolution 435 was turbulent. The process was almost derailed with the April 1 1989 incident, but international pressure and political will put it back on track. This period also

[95] In a private conversation with the author, a prominent SWAPO activist admitted that the SWAPO leadership, who was in Harare at the time, was taken completely by surprise by the news of the Koevoet ambush.

provided a window on the state of civil-military relations within SWAPO, which was in a state of flux. Control of the movement was being contested between civilian (diplomatic) component and the security clique.

5.4 The Electoral Period

5.4.1) Preparations for the Election

It was decided that the political campaigning for the first democratic election for the Constitutional Assembly would start on 1 July 1989, with November as the election month. To ensure to that the elections would take place in accordance with the principles stipulated by UN Resolution 435, the A-G was obliged to declare a general amnesty for all Namibians living abroad, remove prohibitions on political activity, and repeal or amend the forty-six discriminatory laws. This paved the way for the return and repatriation of Namibian exiles under the auspices of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHRC).

The first group of senior SWAPO leaders returned to Namibia from exile on 18 June, with Nujoma eventually returning on 14 September. The UNHCR had repatriated more than 40,000 Namibian refugees from Angola and Zambia by late August.

Some 200 had been in detention in SWAPO-run camps in Angola, and on their return made public accusations that the SWAPO leadership was responsible for torture and human rights abuse in these camps. Several organisations that had been active on the detainee issue, especially the

Parents Committee (PC) charged that 1,000 or more such prisoners were still being detained by SWAPO officials in Angola and Zambia.[96]

In response to these accusations a fact-finding commission was set up by the UNSR, Ahtisaari, under the auspices of the UNTAG, called the United Nations Mission on Detainees (UNMD). This mission was sent to 30 SWAPO camps in Angola and Zambia in September but was unable to verify the charges.[97] SWAPO leaders in an attempt to limit the political damage, declared that any members found guilty of murder or torture of detainees would be punished.[98] [Jaster,1990:43].

Toward the end of 1988 SWAPO accepted the text for a new organisational constitution, which formed the basis of its 1989 Election Manifesto. The Manifesto retained many of the principles of SWAPO's previous programmes, however, it toned down many of the more radical Marxist elements and showed a greater willingness to compromise on economic issues [Putz et al,1989:264].

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[96] In May 1989, the PC brought a court action to secure the release of six people it alleged SWAPO was holding in detention in Angola. Even though the Supreme Court in Windhoek ruled that five of the six had been detained up until May 1989, it lacked the authority to release prisoners in Angola. Another detainee pressure group, the Political Committee (PCC) was established in Angola by ex-SWAPO detainees shortly before their repatriation to Namibia. The PCC and PC campaigned for the release of other detainees still held through press conferences. They also sought to prevent SWAPO from attaining power [Africa Watch,1992:98]. There efforts were, however, undermined by the South African security operatives who used the detainee issue for their own propaganda purposes.

[97] Of the approximately 1,000 names of the people allegedly still under SWAPO detention, 315 could not be accounted for. The UN report was widely criticised in Namibia. See Siegfried Groth's (1995) controversial book, *Namibia – The Wall of Silence. The Dark Days of the Liberation Struggle* (Cape Town: David Philip), and the Africa Watch Report (1992) *Accountability in Namibia: Human Rights and the Transition to Democracy*, for analyses of the detainee issue.

[98] To this day the detainees issue and human rights abuses allegedly committed by SWAPO in exile remains unresolved. After considerable public pressure SWAPO published a book called *Their Blood Waters Our Freedom* (1997) which accounts for the death of 6846 cadres, with an additional 948 being classified as "missing". This publication was widely criticised in Namibia, particularly with respect to the number of people who died from natural causes at young ages, and car accident victims.

5.4.2) Intimidation and Violence

The registration period (July to September), was marked by numerous incidents of intimidation and violence, particularly between DTA and SWAPO supporters. Koevoet, even though it had been disbanded, continued to function as part of the local police, SWAPOL. It carried out brutal actions against SWAPO in Ovamboland, by breaking up its political rallies, assaulting its supporters, and terrorising villages suspected of having pro-SWAPO sympathies.[99] This resulted in UNTAG becoming more active in these areas and the drawing up of a mutually agreed code of campaign conduct which led to the reduction in the violence [Cliffe,1994:128]. Local and international pressure forced the A-G to confine 1200 Koevoet members for retraining. This proved ineffective so the unit was completely disbanded [Jaster,1990:35,41].

Despite continuing levels of violence and allegations of irregularities on all sides, 701,000 people, 99% of those eligible to vote, had been registered by the mid-September. By late October, the levels of violence and intimidation had virtually subsided to the extent that simultaneous SWAPO and DTA rallies were held in the same small town, Rundu, without incident.

5.4.3) The Elections

Namibia's many political parties underwent major changes and consolidation as the November elections approached. Most of the parties had a

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[99] During this unstable period, Anton Lubowsky, a SWAPO lawyer, and one of the few white members of SWAPO was assassinated on the 12 September. It is widely believed that a South African death squad, linked to military intelligence, called the Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) in collaboration with local policemen, was responsible for the murder. However, despite numerous inquests, no person has been arrested in this regard.

predominant ethnic base, and most had come into being following a leadership or policy split in a larger party.

Ten parties registered for the November 1988 elections. There were few ideological differences between them. All publicly favoured a multi-party democracy; a mixed economy; encouragement of foreign investment and a non-aligned foreign policy. The closest thing to an ideological split was between those parties, particularly the DTA, which had taken part in the political arrangement that had been established by South Africa, and those parties, notably SWAPO, which had not.

There were serious divisions over policy issues. These divisions included: whether or not to adopt a Westminster system or a strong executive presidency; whether to protect group rights as well as individual rights; whether to maintain or gradually loosen economic dependence on South Africa; and the extent to which nationalisation should be promoted [Jaster,1990:43-46].[100]

The general perception was that SWAPO would win the elections, but as SWAPO's popular support had not been effectively tested, the nature of its victory was anybody's guess. Of much concern to the smaller political parties was the stipulation that if a party secured two-thirds of the delegates in the Constituent Assembly, it could effectively dictate the content of the constitution. With less than two-thirds, SWAPO would have to engage in coalition politics to get a constitution adopted.

Voting for the Constituent Assembly took place between 7-11 November 1989. Turnout was more than 97%, with SWAPO polling 57.3% to win 41 out

[100] For a more detailed analysis of the various parties and programmes see Cliffe [1994:155-158]

of the 72 seats in the Assembly. The DTA, with covert South African government financial backing managed to block a two-thirds SWAPO majority by winning over 28% of the vote and 21 seats.

On 14 November, the UN Special Representative, Martti Ahtisaari certified the election as "free and fair" [Jaster,1990:43]. This was followed by the withdrawal of the last component of SADF troops. By the end of 1989 UNTAG troops left Namibia.

In summary, Namibia experienced a fairly violent period in the run up to its first democratic general elections. The elections, however, took place without any controversy and were declared free and fair by the UN Special Representative. This environment was to contribute to elements within SWAPO re-asserting civil control of the military.

5.5) The Constituent Assembly Process

On 21 November, a week after the election result, the Constituent Assembly was opened by SWAPO President Nujoma. Substantial progress was made in a short space of time, especially after SWAPO proposed that the Assembly adopt the constitutional principles negotiated by the UN and South Africa in 1982 as a "frame of reference" for the constitution-making process, a major conciliatory move on SWAPO's part.

These principles included a bill of individual rights; a stipulation that Namibia would be a unitary, democratic state with three branches of government; election by universal suffrage; an independent judiciary; and a constitution as the supreme law of the land. SWAPO's motion was unanimously adopted, along with a proposal that individual articles of the

constitution would be decided by a simple majority vote, with a two-thirds vote needed to adopt the constitution as a whole.

During this constitution-making process serious differences emerged between the two main contenders, SWAPO and the DTA. SWAPO favoured single member constituencies while the DTA and most other smaller parties, favoured proportional representation. Disagreement also emerged over the powers of the President. SWAPO wanted the President to have executive powers. The other parties wanted the position to be ceremonial in nature. SWAPO proposed a legislative body with a single chamber, while the other parties wanted a bicameral system.

By the end of January agreement had been secured by all parties on all the above issues. A system of proportional representation was to be adopted. Namibia would have an Executive President, but his powers would be severely limited. The legislature would be bicameral, however the second chamber, the National Council, could review and delay legislation. The National Assembly would run for a five year term.

In the second week of February 1990 the Constituent Assembly unanimously adopted the new Constitution. This was followed by the unanimous election of Sam Nujoma as President. On the 21 March Namibia became independent, and the Constituent Assembly became the National Assembly.

5.6) Re-enforcing Civil Supremacy

Civil supremacy was at the forefront of the minds of SWAPO decision-makers during the transition period, especially after the purges in Angola by the security clique. These concerns with civilian control were reflected in

SWAPO's 1988 Constitution and 1989 Election Manifesto, as well in the appointment of cabinet ministers and other government officials.

5.6.1) SWAPO Documents

In SWAPO's 1988 Constitution it was envisaged that,

> the armed forces of Namibia shall ... always be subordinate to civilian authority.

In its *Election Manifesto*, SWAPO wanted an armed force that would be based on national conscription where all Namibians of between age 17 and 45 would undergo a period of military service for at least two years. PLAN would form the permanent core of the Namibian military. The conscription issue, apart from being derived from SWAPO's belief that everyone should make a contribution to the struggle, was also a means to enforce civil supremacy. However, the Constituent Assembly process and funding constraints prevented SWAPO from realising this vision.

5.6.2) Political Appointments

With the appointment of cabinet ministers and other government officials, the SWAPO leadership deftly integrated "old guard" leaders such as Peter Muehihange with the more educated second generation of leaders, such as Hage Geingob (Prime Minister) and Hidipo Hamutenya (Minister of Information and Communications).

Each member of Cabinet was balanced by an appropriate team of deputy ministers and permanent secretaries. "Hard-liners", such as Hamutenya, were counterpoised by "soft-liners", such as Tjongareno, Hamutenya's Deputy

Minister. The majority of the defence and security personnel from Lubango were slotted into the defence and security branches where, in the short run at least, they appeared removed from mainstream policy making [Saul & Leys,1995:198].

5.7) Demobilisation, Reintegration and the Formation of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF)

5.7.1) Demobilisation

The demobilisation of the relevant armed forces was to be undertaken within the framework of Resolution 435 and the Brazzaville Accords. The objective of this demobilisation process was to disarm and repatriate PLAN cadres in Angola, and disarm and disband the SWATF in Namibia.

By June 1989, the end of the demobilisation process the Namibian Ministry of Defence estimated that a total of 57,000 former combatants were demobilised [Colletta et al,1996:131]. The breakdown of these demobilised soldiers was as follows:

PLAN	32,000
SWATF	25,000
San soldiers	2,000
Koevoet (SWAPOL)	3,000
Total	57,000

In 1990, prior to independence, a Tripartite Military Integration Committee was established with representatives from both PLAN and SWATF. It was chaired by members of UNTAG.

The Committee's function was to develop a structure and force design for the post-independence Namibian military [Colletta,1996:149]. It was decided that an all new defence force needed to be created, one that moved away from the oppressive military culture of the former occupation regime [Preston,1997:459]. The language of official communication would be English, and the military would consist of an all-volunteer force with the army being the first priority. An airforce and navy would be developed at a later stage.

5.7.2) The Creation of the Namibian Defence Force

The Defence Amendment Act, 1990 (No. 20 of 1990), passed in December which amended the original Defence of 1957 (No. 44 of 1957), called for the creation of the Namibia Defence Force (NDF). It was envisaged that the NDF's primary role would be the protection Namibia's territorial integrity from external threats. Its secondary roles included assisting the police in containing civil unrest, providing relief in unforeseen environmental disasters, and playing a support function in various developmental projects [Shiweda, 1997].

After the election the First Infantry Battalion of the NDF was established with the initial assistance of Kenyan and Canadian contingents from UNTAG and then technical supervision of the fifty-seven strong British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT). BMATT had three roles. First, to provide advice on the creation and maintenance of the Ministry of Defence and army headquarters. Second, to assist in the formation of the NDF by working with the Personnel Directive on the selection and training of officers,

NCOs and warrant officers. Third, to supervise the training of rank-and-file soldiers [Nathan,1990:13].

5.7.3) The Integration Process

The process of integrating combatants from two distinctly different military traditions into the conventional armed force was not without its problems.

SWAPO and the DTA initially agreed that integration of PLAN and SWATF forces into the NDF would take place on the basis of parity (50-50). This agreement was realised at the top echelons of the military structure, with two of the four heads of directorates at the Ministry of Defence, coming from the PLAN camp and two from the former SWATF forces.[101] The commanding officer of the 1st Infantry Battalion was a former PLAN commander, and the second in command was a former SWATF captain [Nathan,1990:9].

In terms of Proclamation No.8 published on 11 July 1990, the President Nujoma appointed Dimo Hamaambo, former Commander-in-Chief of PLAN, as the Chief of the Defence Force. Hamaambo, was later replaced by his deputy, Salomon Hawala, which was highly controversial given Hawala's reputation in the detention camps in Angola.

The selection of personnel for the NDF was based on both theoretical and practical examination methods. This proved to be a major barrier to entry for many illiterate former PLAN insurgents. These former combatants who only knew the military life had become accustomed to expect that SWAPO would provide for them and assumed this would continue after independence, which did not happen. It seemed as though only those who had been given the opportunity to study and train abroad achieved attractive appointments in

the NDF or elsewhere in government. This led to a growing sense of resentment among many ex-combatants [Preston,1997:457].

Beyond 1990 the parity agreement was set aside. The Ministry of Defence adopted an unofficial policy limiting the numbers of former SWATF members in the NDF to ten percent [Preston,1997:459]. SWATF officers were mainly stationed at the military school at Okahanja and not in operational units. By 1993, the only NDF commander of SWATF background was the Director of the military school [Preston,1997:460]. By the end of 1994 approximately eighty percent of the 6,500 strong NDF were former-PLAN cadres. The remaining NDF members were either new recruits or former-SWATF, whose expertise and professionalism was valued [Colletta et al,1996:149].

5.7.4) Reintegration into Civilian Life

Neither the international community nor the new Namibian government envisaged that any assistance would be necessary for ex-combatants, who had not been included in the NDF, to rejoin the civilian way of life. It was naively assumed that civilian and military returnees, and demobilised SWATF personnel, would be re-integrated into civilian live on their own accord.[102]

Many former combatants from both PLAN and SWATF camps began to express their grievances through a number of demonstrations. The government, realising the potential security hazard that a significant group of unemployed and dissatisfied individuals with military training represented, responded by devising a cash payment scheme (which is still operational today), designing vocational training programmes in the form of

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[101] It took a year to generate trust between the four directors of the MoD [Preston,1997:460].
[102] Only disabled veterans and San ex-SWATF soldiers received specialised assistance.

development brigades,[103] and including ex-combatants in the general refugee resettlement programme [Colletta et al,1996:129]. However, these efforts have only had limited success in addressing these grievances. The problem of dissatisfied ex-combatants persists to this day.[104]

The demobilisation and integration process proved to be very important for SWAPO. It defused the militarist tendency that was developing within the movement. The integration of PLAN and SWATF into the NDF, even though it was not on the basis of parity, was a means by which "two dangerous forces might 'neutralise' each other" [Saul & Leys,1995:58].

In summary, the process of demobilising combatants from both sides and integrating them into a new Namibia Defence Force was relatively successful, even though the re-integration of former combatants who were excluded from incorporation into the NDF left much to be desired. This process was to strengthen Namibia's democratic outlook as it created a military subordinate to the wishes of civilian government.

5.8) Conclusion

The peace agreement reached by the South African, Cuban and Angolan governments in late1988 had a fundamental impact on SWAPO's struggle for

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[103] The Namibian Development Brigade drew its inspiration from the highly successful Botswana Youth Brigades and the skills training centres that were created for ex-combatants in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. The aim of the Namibian Development Brigade was to provide training for, amongst others, unskilled former combatants, in agricultural production and construction. In 1993 the Development Brigade was converted into a parastatal, the Development Brigade Corporation, which has branched out into the realm of small business development.

[104] Between 1997 and 1998 there were at least two significant protests by former combatants. Dissatisfied former PLAN combatants staged a sit-in in the parliamentary gardens, while former-Koevoet members protested at the lack of equity in the distribution of war veterans benefits, and threatened to destabilise the country if their demands were not met. Came to naught (The Namibian 1997-1998, various issues).

liberation, as it paved the way for Namibian independence and SWAPO's ascension to power via a constitutionally bounded democratic political settlement.

Like most transitions, this process had its share of problems. For instance, there was a serious violation of the cease-fire agreement (1 April incident), followed by large-scale intimidation in the run-up to the elections. In ordinary circumstances these events would have resulted in the scuttling of the peace process, and a resumption of armed conflict. However, regional and international conditions were such that the parties' to the conflict, namely the SADF and SWAPO, only realistic option was to pursue a peaceful settlement.

It was a highly volatile period for civil-military relations within SWAPO. The civilian (diplomatic) component of the movement and the security/intelligence clique were in a state of constant struggle over control of SWAPO. The security clique, with the advent of the spy drama, was in a dominant position at the start of the negotiations in the late 1980s. However, with the successful implementation of the negotiated peace settlement and the April 1 1989 embarrassment, this clique's influential position was undermined. Civilian elements within SWAPO began to reassert themselves. Civil supremacy was reintroduced with the advent of democratic elections, the careful selection of cabinet ministers and the formation of the NDF. In short, the period of transition was more than a political transition, but a transition between revolutionary and democratic traditions of civil supremacy.

Chapter 6

Contemporary Civil-Military Relations in Namibia

This chapter provides an overview and analysis of civil-military relations in contemporary Namibia. It seeks to determine whether a democratic tradition of civil supremacy has emerged since independence.

6.1) Legal Arrangements

In terms of the Namibian Constitution, the President is the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force with the power to appoint the chief of the Defence Force on the recommendation of the Security Commission [Articles 27, 32 (Sub Article 4C)].

The National Assembly has the power to approve budgets and the cabinet ministers are accountable to both the President and parliament [Articles 63 (Sub-Article 2A), 41]. In addition, the National Council, composed of representatives from regional councils throughout the country, has the power to review bills passed by the National Assembly and has investigative powers [Article 59 (Sub-Article 3)]. The Ombudsman, appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission has the power to investigate complaints relating the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) as they relate to "a balanced structuring of such services of fair administration in relation to such services" [Article 91 (Sub-Article B)].

6.2) The Namibian Defence Force

The Namibian Defence Force (NDF) was established by the Defence Amendment Act (Act 20 of 1990) amending the South African Defence Act (44/1957), in order to "defend the territory and national interests of Namibia". This act sets out, amongst a variety legal requirements, the composition and organisation of the Defence Force. The act is supported by a *Military Discipline Code*, which provides the practical framework for the administration of the armed forces. The *Defence Policy Paper* approved by the National Assembly in March 1992, presents policy guidelines for the composition and organisation of the NDF. According to the *Statement on Defence Policy* (1993) the NDF's role is as follows: to ensure the maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity; to provide assistance to the civil authorities and to the civil community when required; to undertake ceremonial functions and to assist the process of reconciliation.

Over the past eight years the strength of the NDF has varied between 5000 and 9000 personnel. It is lightly equipped and its structure is currently based on 4 Infantry Battalions under the central control of an army head quarters, supported by a Logistic Support Battalion and supplied via a Composite Depot.

Garrisons have been established in Windhoek and Grootfontein, and military training takes place at the Military School in Okahandja. There is a Combat Support Brigade, comprising artillery, anti-tank and air-defence regiments at Otjiwarongo base that provides combat support services. The 21st Guard Battalion located in Windhoek has responsibility for aspects of Presidential security and ceremonial activities [Republic of Namibia,1993:5-6].

Recently, the Namibian Air wing was commissioned. It consists of two squadrons: one fixed wing and one helicopter squadron [Interview with Brig. M. Shiweda, Chief of Staff, Personnel, Windhoek, 1997]. A maritime wing has been created, but is more of a coastguard than a navy as it falls under the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. This maritime wing is staffed by 100 personnel and has 3 patrol craft [IISS,1998:258].

All battalions undergo a similar pattern of basic training: commanders attend "leaders cadre training" at the military school, followed by standardisation cadre training covering basic military subjects. Continuation training is also provided with the emphasis on shooting, fitness and administration [Republic of Namibia,1993:6].

The NDF has rendered the following services in support of civil authorities and communities: mine clearance; repatriation of Namibian nationals from Botswana; controlling of locusts in the Caprivi region; apprehension of trawlers illegally fishing in territorial waters; joint operations with the Namibian Police Force; and fire-fighting Services. NDF personnel were also involved in peacekeeping operations, namely in the UN mission to monitor the elections in Cambodia in 1993 [National Planning Commission,1995:486].

The NDF has only been involved in two additional military encounters. These include a brief confrontation with the Botswana Defence force over the Kasikili (Sidudu) Island in the Linyanti (Chobe) River in 1995, and recently their deployment in conjunction with the Angolan and Zimbabwean armed forces in support of Laurent Kabila's regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

See Appendix 3 for graphical representation of the NDF structure.

6.3) Ministry of Defence (MOD)

Immediately after independence the Ministry of Defence (MOD) was established.

According to the *Statement on Defence Policy* [1993:4-5] the MOD's principal roles and responsibilities are to formulate and execute defence policy; to provide the central operational and administrative headquarters for the NDF; and to act as the body that procures the NDF's equipment.

The ministry is headed by the Minister of Defence who chairs the Defence Staff Council, the MOD's highest management committee. The Minister also represents the ministry in the National Assembly and in Cabinet. The Minister is supported directly by the Deputy Minister and by the Chief of the Defence Force and the Permanent Secretary. The Chief of the Defence Force is responsible, under the terms of the Constitution, for the military effectiveness of the NDF. The Permanent Secretary is responsible for the financial, administrative and political aspects of defence policy and its execution. As accounting officer, he is personally responsible to the Minister and to the National Assembly for the financial propriety and regularity of MOD business and its prudent and efficient administration.

The Ministry consists of four directorates: Operations, Finance, Personnel, Logistics. Each directorate consists of a number of divisions (see Appendix 4).

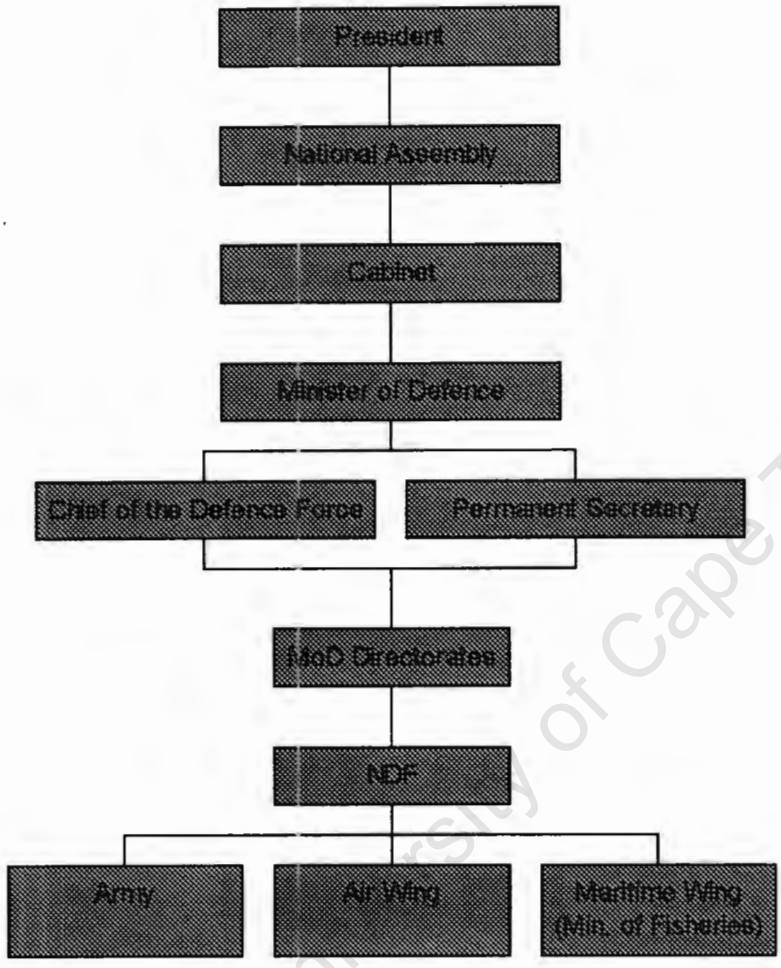
The *Statement on Defence Policy* [1993:8] further maintains that Ministry of Defence and the NDF should be: apolitical; well disciplined and accountable to government and the people through clearly defined political mechanisms of control; militarily capable of defending Namibia's territorial integrity; and

finally affordable (bearing in mind national resource constraints, defence should not represent an unaffordable burden on the economy).

The main elements of defence policy are set out each year in the *Statement on the Defence Estimates* (SDE), which describes the Namibian government's view on developments that affect Namibia's security, its responses to those developments, and the resources that it proposes to devote to defence. Defence Expenditure as a percentage of GDP has remained fairly constant over the past eight years averaging out at just over 3% [IISS,1990-1998].

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*
Defence Expenditure (US$m)	67	33	45	50	57	65	74	89
Defence Expenditure (US$ per capita)	52	25	35	25	35	39	44	51
Defence Expenditure (% of GDP)	5.1	2.5	2.9	2.3	2.3	2.7	3.0	3.5

6.4) Graphical Representation of Civil Supremacy in Namibia



6.5) Assessing Civil Supremacy in Namibia

To date there have been no coup d'etats or attempted coups in Namibia. Civil supremacy in democratic Namibia is upheld through a combination of constitutional mechanisms, such as legislative oversight, budgetary control of defence expenditure, a civilian dominated Ministry of Defence, and the maintenance of a small professional military.

Geographical factors have also contributed to the preservation of civil supremacy. The Southern African region (geographically defined), with the exception of Angola, has experienced almost a decade of relative peace. As a result there has been no immediate external threats to Namibia's territorial sovereignty that could allow for undue military influence in political affairs.

There is, in most cases, transparency in the conduct of military affairs. The exception seems to be the NDF's acquisition plans, which remain classified. Senior NDF staff are willing to meet with researchers and journalists to discuss defence and security matters. The NDF also participates in civilian-run training courses, which aim to promote civil supremacy. The Defence Management Diploma offered by the Graduate School of Public and Development Management at the University of the Witwatersrand is one such course.

However, there are deviations between the "pure" or classical tradition of democratic civil supremacy as discussed in chapter 1 and the current state of civil supremacy in Namibia. Five discrepancies can be identified.

First, the President has the authority to declare war as well as a state of emergency [Republic of Namibia, 1989: Article 26]. War results in military expansion, growth in the power and influence of government, and its intrusions into the lives of citizens to increase – including more taxes and limits on individual freedoms [Kohn,1997:149]. This constitutional provision led to the recent deployment of troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a subsequent increase in the defence budget to maintain these troops on foreign soil (*Pan African News Agency*, 13/11/98). An abuse of this power could undermine the democratic dispensation in Namibia.

Second, due to financial considerations, the MOD fulfils the dual role of Department of Defence (DOD) and the Headquarters of the Defence Force, co-locating the Chief of the Defence Force with the seat of civil supremacy, namely the Minister of Defence. According to the *Statement of Defence Policy* [1993:4],

> The principal advantage of this design is that it facilitates clear political control of higher direction and management of defence.

However, in reality, this arrangement may hinder civil supremacy as it could lead to excessive military influence in the affairs of the civilian-oriented DOD.

Third, the NDF is predominantly involved in non-military tasks, such as policing and disaster relief. Disaster relief is uncontroversial as this type of military involvement in domestic affairs is infrequent and often lacks political significance. However, this is not the case when armed forces are used to police domestic unrest or conflict. The use of the armed forces in this regard has the potential to weaken a democratic regime as the military encroaches on the responsibilities of the police and the neutrality of the military is compromised. In the extreme case, where political legitimacy has collapsed altogether, the military may become the only prop of the regime, safeguarding it from popular rebellion or revolution. When this occurs government by consent is replaced by a dictatorship.

Fourth, government oversight is weak. Most stable democracies have developed permanent standing committees in their legislatures, or in their party-based parliamentary cabinets, which are devoted to the routine oversight of their countries' military establishment. These committees have professional staffs specialising in matters of military strategy, budgeting and

procurement [Stepan,1988:133]. In Namibia, as defence has not been a priority area for most politicians, a permanent defence, with adequate research capacity, does not exist.

Fifth, the capacity of civil society to engage in debates around defence and security issues is weak.[105] No non-governmental organisations or research institutes, which deal with defence and security matters, exist. The University of Namibia, which operates on a very modest budget, does not incorporate military sociology or military strategy routinely into its curricula.[106] There are only a handful of academics that have an interest in military issues. In addition, there are very few citizens who are experts on, for example, force structure, budgetary issues, doctrinal questions, and specific details of weapons systems. Only the local media provides a forum of debate. *The Namibian*, Namibia's most widely read Newspaper, has reporters that are acquainted, to a degree, with defence and security issues.

6.6) Conclusion

A democratic tradition of civil supremacy does exist in Namibia, however, there is discontinuity (represented by the above-mentioned five deviations) between the classical tradition of civil supremacy of the military and the current state of affairs.

As Namibia is a developing country with a relatively small military, the classical tradition is a luxury that this country cannot, in reality, afford to nurture. If such a rigorous tradition was adhered to, this may in fact constitute a misuse of valuable resources that might be better used for

[105] According to Tapscott [1997], civil society in general is weak, which "may be ascribed to policies of the colonial government and to SWAPO's political strategies during the independence struggle..."
[106] The Department of Political and Administrative Studies, however, offers both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in internal relations.

education, housing and job creation. With the lack of any immediate external military threat, civil supremacy of the armed forces can be maintained without employing the full "tool bag" of techniques and controls. However, in order to ensure the civil supremacy is upheld in the foreseeable future, civilian politicians need to be vigilant of excessive military influence in civilian affairs and aware of analyses of qualified neutral observers.

Conclusion

Civil supremacy rests on a set of ideas, institutions and behaviours that have evolved over time. Together these practices limit the possibility of excessive military intervention in political affairs and provide a system that endows civilian officials with the authority and the machinery to exercise supremacy in military affairs.

The aim of this dissertation was to provide greater clarity on the phenomenon of civil supremacy, and in particular how it evolves and how it is sustained. A theoretical case study of Namibia was undertaken to achieve this objective, with three traditions of civil supremacy, namely colonial, revolutionary/insurgent and democratic (as well as the relevant mechanisms and techniques), being the focus. This dissertation sought to determine how these traditions emerged and developed over time.

Evolving Traditions

Colonial Tradition

Chapter two presented an overview of Namibian history up until 1960. This period was characterised by three successive waves of foreign intervention, namely *Oorlam*, German and South African. Each colonising power gained control of the territory through the use of armed forces, with the amount of military power at their disposal determining the extent of their territorial expansion. Only South Africa had the ability to pacify the entire Namibian territory. A common feature of all three phases was that political relations of

consent was absent with power being exercised in a coercive manner. There were, however, three contradictions.

First, the Germans introduced constitutional mechanisms of civilian supremacy and employed a small professional colonial army. Second, South Africa instituted more rigorous methods of civil supremacy, such as parliamentary oversight, budgetary control and a professional military supported by conscripts. Third, through the influence of trade unions and other political organisations, democratic demands began to emerge in the workplace in the 1950s. This state of affairs did not correspond to a pure or classical colonial tradition as Namibia was constantly being invaded, thereby preventing a single tradition from emerging.

Revolutionary/Insurgent Tradition

Chapters three and four dealt with the period from the formation of SWAPO in 1960 until the peace settlement in 1988. This period saw SWAPO develop from a labour-based movement to a political party, which established an armed wing in the mid-1960s.

Over the first decade or so of the liberation struggle a revolutionary tradition began to emerge, with the SWAPO political leadership seeking to secure civil supremacy through six techniques. First, a small professional "revolutionary" armed wing was created. Second, PLAN was placed under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defence (a political appointment). Third, parallel political chains of command (commissars) were constructed within PLAN. Fourth, indoctrination and political education of PLAN rank and file were introduced. Fifth, there was close political supervision in the appointment of officers to sensitive commands. Sixth, geographical methods were introduced. For

example, prior to the move to Angola the armed wing was stationed in isolated camps in Tanzania, and later Zambia.

Despite the application of these techniques, the SWAPO experience differed in three respects from the classical revolutionary model.

First, up until the mid-1970s, SWALA (which later was renamed as PLAN) was maintained as an army of convenience. SWAPO's primary motivation for creating an armed wing was for financial reasons as it gave SWAPO access to funding, especially from the OAU.

Second, from the late-1970s, due to the influence of Soviet Union and the MPLA's armed wing, PLAN became more of a conventional armed force in terms of doctrine and outlook. PLAN moved away from fighting a war of attrition (the hallmark of the revolutionary/insurgent tradition) to conduct a war of conquest, where military victory was envisaged.

Third, as the insurgency period became more prolonged, so the techniques for enforcing and maintaining civil supremacy became less effective. In the mid-1970s, with the interests of the armed wing (which had become fairly assertive) being increasingly neglected, PLAN cadres challenged the civilian authority of SWAPO. An open rebellion was the result. From the late-1970s, with PLAN becoming increasingly dominant within SWAPO, and in the midst of organisational paranoia, a security (intelligence) organ was established in the mid- to late-1980s. This was an attempt by the SWAPO Executive to restore the civil-military balance within the movement. The introduction of a third aspect to the civil-military equation, however, proved to be disastrous as it led to the security clique dominating SWAPO.

The Transition

Chapter five provided an analysis of the transition period, where the demobilisation of former combatants, the electoral process, the creation of a new Namibian Defence Force, and consolidation of SWAPO's position in government was analysed.

There was more than just a political transition during this period. There was a transition from a tradition that resembled the revolutionary/insurgent type to the beginnings of a democratic tradition. The civilian (diplomatic) component of SWAPO and the security/military clique were in a state of constant competition over control of the movement. However, the potent position that the security clique had achieved with the deepening of the spy drama was undermined by diplomatic successes, the achievement of a peace settlement and the April 1 debacle. This led to the re-emergence of civil supremacy, which was reinforced through democratic elections, the careful selection of cabinet ministers and the formation of the NDF.

Democratic Tradition

Chapter 6 provided an overview of civil-military relations in contemporary Namibia. Since independence, a democratic tradition of civil supremacy has emerged in Namibia, however, this arrangement digresses in a number of ways from the classical democratic tradition of civil supremacy. With limited resources, a small military, and no overt security threats to its territorial sovereignty, Namibia does not utilise a full "tool bag" of techniques for the maintenance of civil supremacy.

General Remarks and Conclusions

From this case study analysis five general conclusions can be formulated about how civil supremacy evolves and is sustained.

First, civil supremacy is not a static phenomenon. It involves a set of fluid relationships, a perpetual contest between the strengths of civilian political institutions and political strengths of the military. It is a phenomenon that evolves (and devolves) over a substantial period of time.

In the introduction a study by Robert Griffiths was assessed, in which he attributed current democratic civil-military relations in Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa to be the product of the transition period in each country, while acknowledging that the past patterns of civil-military relations had a minor influence. This dissertation has shown that in Namibia the relationship is in fact reversed. Contemporary civil-military relations, and in particular civil-supremacy, does not begin with the transition, but has deeper historical origins. For example, the constitutional and professional mechanisms that emerged during the eras of German and South African rule had an impact on the current democratic civil supremacy tradition in Namibia. In addition, the negotiations with the Contact Group, the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 435 and developments in response to various crises within SWAPO in a way predetermined the civil-military relationship in post-independence Namibia.

Second, there is often a gap between enforcing and maintaining civil supremacy in theory and what happens in practice. The Namibian case study has revealed that local conditions and exogenous factors impact on the enforcement and maintenance of civil supremacy. Tried and tested mechanisms and techniques of the traditional civil-military equation were

incapable of sustaining civil supremacy. This was especially the case when the basic interests of the military were neglected or during times of severe tension or crisis.

In these situations new thinking and creativity concerning civil supremacy is required. However, implementing alternative or new ideas can be risky, as was the case with the spy drama.

Third, the internationalisation of the Namibian conflict, namely the interference of a number of powerful international actors, had a critical impact on the evolution of civil supremacy in Namibia. This state of affairs impeded the natural emergence of the classical or "pure" traditions of civil supremacy. Being a small liberation movement that was dependent on foreign funding for its survival, SWAPO was heavily influenced and at times controlled by its hosts (Tanzania, Zambia and by Angola) and patrons (OAU and the Soviet Union). The creation of the Contract Group and the linking of a Namibian solution to the settlement of the Angolan conflict meant that SWAPO had very little room in which to manoeuvre and develop.

Fourth, this dissertation reveals that, in certain situations, state-centric controls and mechanisms of civil supremacy are ineffective. It has alluded to the idea that non-state actors and civil society have been involved in the evolutionary process of civil supremacy and can play a meaningful role in enhancing and maintaining it. However, in the general civil-military relations literature, this perspective remains under-researched.

Fifth, there is an ongoing debate in historical circles between structuralism and agency. Structuralism is a mode of thinking and a method of analysis that values deep structures over surface phenomena. It is concerned with underlying causes, unconscious motivations, and transpersonal forces,

shifting attention away from individual human choice. Individuals have a negligible impact on the greater scheme of things. Agency, on the other hand, maintains that individuals, not structures, are largely responsible for the way events unfold. This dissertation strikes a balance between these two extremes.

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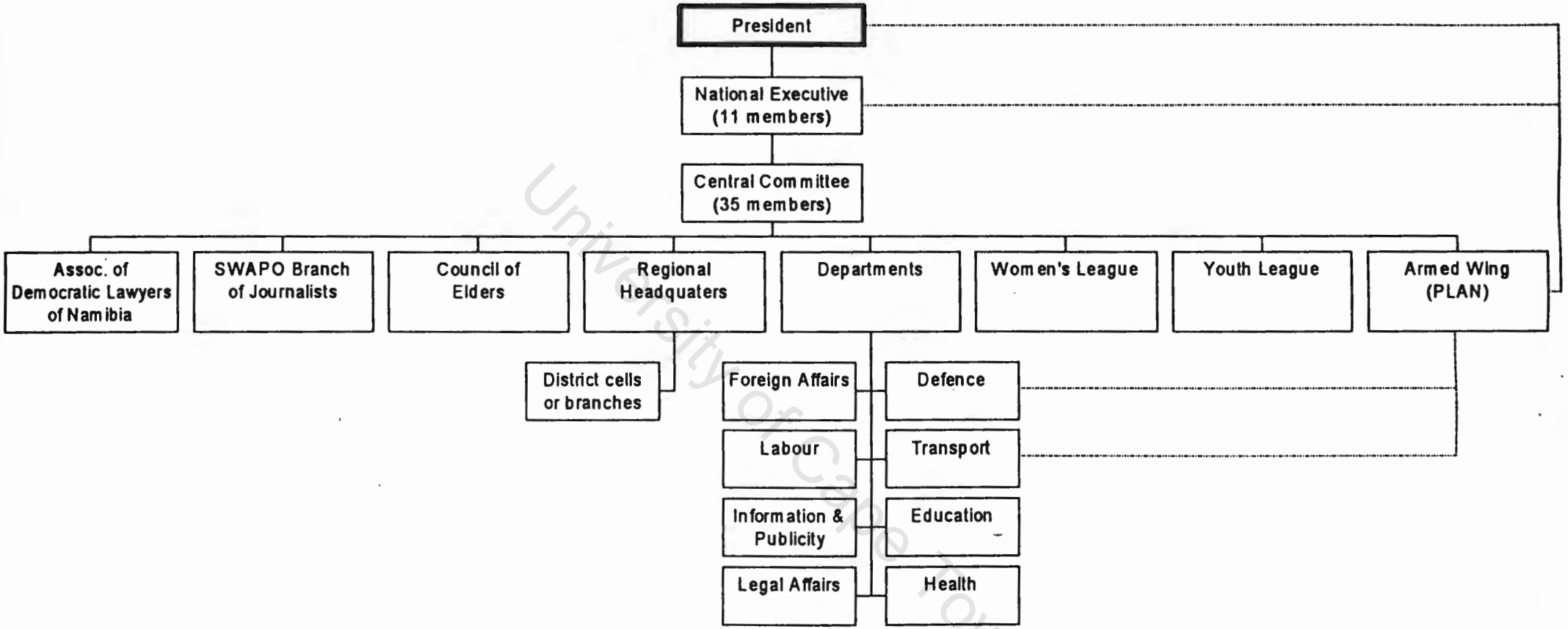
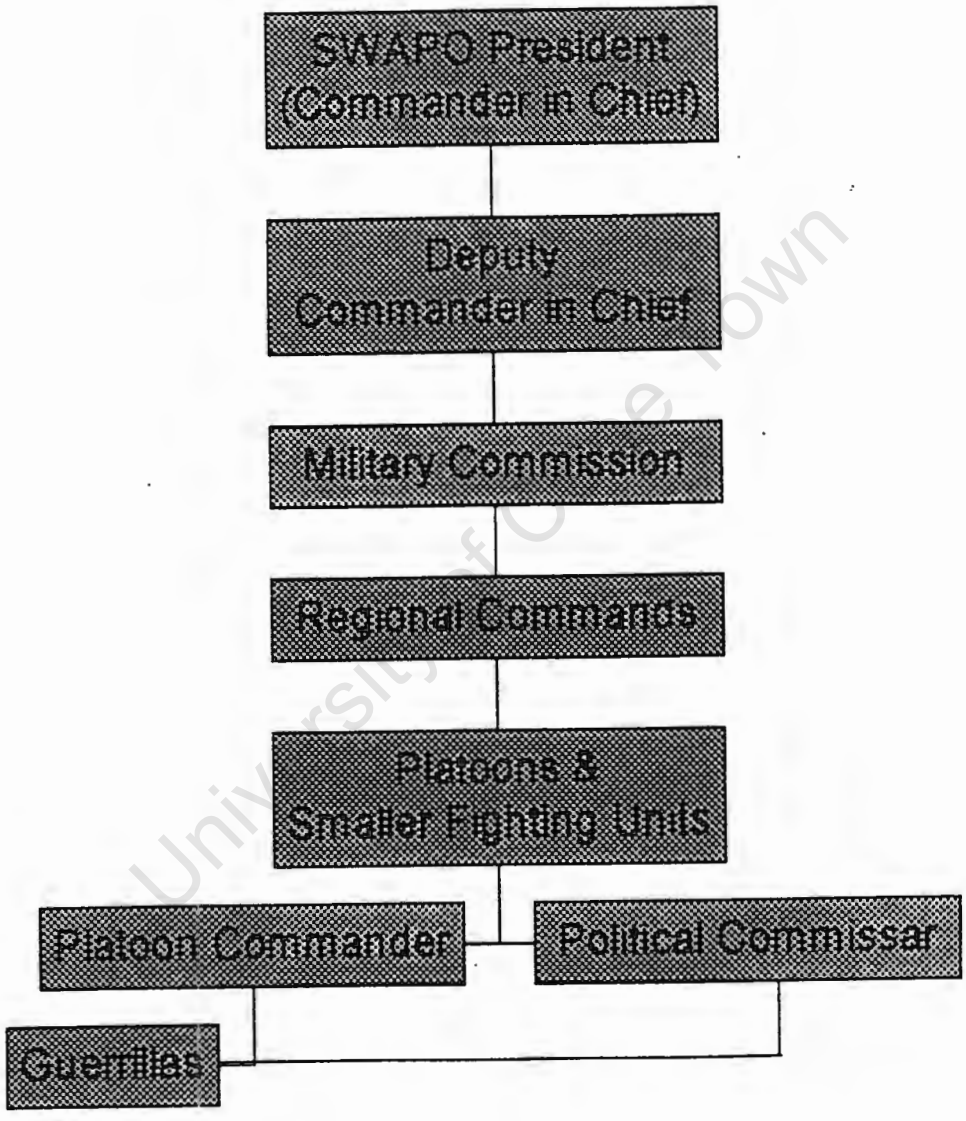
SWAPO: A Liberation Organisation



Appendix 1

Appendix 2

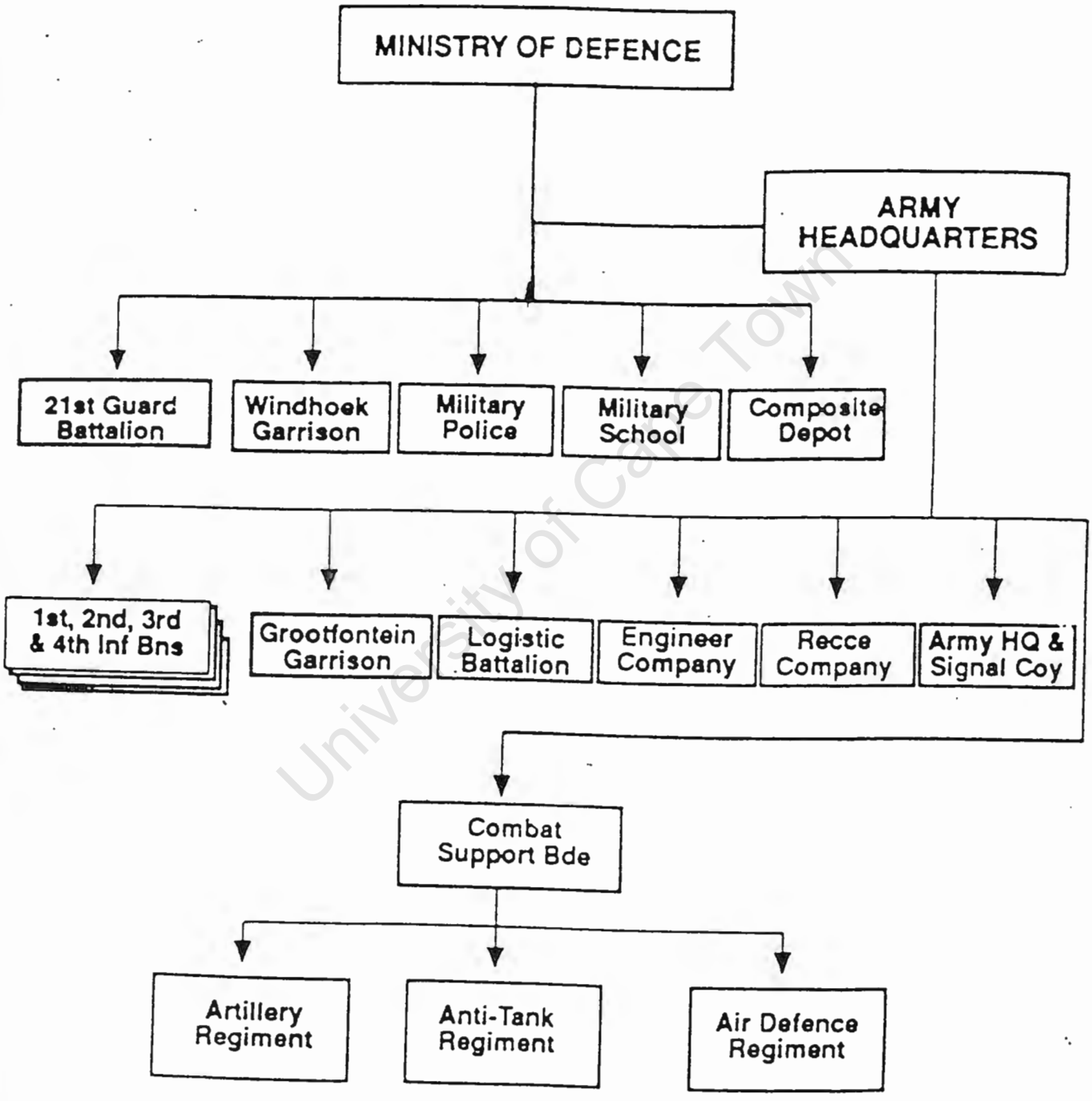
The Structure of SWAPO's Armed Wing (PLAN)



Appendix 3

(Source: Republic of Namibia, 1993)

NDF Structure



Appendix 4

(Source: International Development Consultancy,1997:21)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

OBJECTIVES: To provide and ensure efficient management and administrative support to the Namibian Defence Force in order to defend the State against foreign and international aggression.

Address:
Sam Nujoma Drive, Bastion 1
Private Bag 13307
Windhoek
Tel: (061) 2049111
Fax: (061) 232518

Posts filled: 684 (Excluding soldier force)

Budget 96 / 97: N$293 840 000

Directorate: Operations Personnel and Logistics Chief of staff Brigadier E D Ndaitwah Tel: 2042000

Division: Operations & Commitments

Division: Policy & Training

Division: Communications

Division: Coordination

Division: Intelligence

Directorate: Finance Director: Ms N Hamunokola Tel: 2042013

Division: Finance Administration

Division: Financial Control & Budget

Division: Support Services & Administration

Directorate: Personnel Chief of staff Brigadier M Shiweda Tel: 2042112

Division: Military Personnel

Division: Manpower Planning

Division: Civilian Personnel

Division: Manpower Service

Division: Legal Services

Division: Welfare

Directorate: Logistics Director: Brigadier J Jacobs

Division: Technical Services

Division: Logistic Acquisitions and Defence Estates

Division: Operations, Planning & Training

Division: Supply Commodity Management

Division: Procurement, Research & Development

Division: Defence Secretariat

Division: Public Relations

Division: Internal Audit

Division: Information Technology