

Some roots of anti-colonial historical writing about Namibia

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Abstract

This article traces the early development of what has now become the dominant tradition in Namibian historical writing. Michael Scott, Ruth First and others were among the first to challenge the then dominant colonial tradition of writing and to attempt to write the history of all the people of the country and to record their resistance to German and South African rule. This writing later fed into more scholarly historical writing, and into later historical writing by Namibians themselves.

Along with the struggle for Namibian independence went the decolonisation of Namibian history. As in the South African case, the historiography shifted dramatically away from its former pro-colonial bias long before the struggle against apartheid was won, towards an identification with a history that focused on all the people of the country rather than just the ruling minority, and on the struggle against colonial oppression. The way this happened for South Africa has been traced in some detail, and preliminary attempts have been made to suggest that the historiographical shift influenced and played a minor part in the anti-apartheid struggle.¹ But the story of how historical writing about Namibia developed over time has been strangely neglected. It is now twenty-five years since I attempted to sketch how work of the late 1970s and early 1980s in English was challenging the colonial interpretation then still dominant in Namibia itself,² and, surprisingly, to date no-one has pursued the theme in greater detail, and traced it over time to produce a historiographical synthesis, showing the development of Namibian historical writing over time. This is surprising not least because Namibian historiography is especially interesting because of the unusually close relationship between political activism and the reorientation of historical knowledge. The present article explores some of the roots of anti-colonial writing, as a precursor to a fuller study.

Colonial rule of Namibia, whether German or South African, was buttressed by a view of the past summed up crudely in the title of the essay by the former Namibian archivist on the work of Heinrich Vedder, the most prolific of Namibia's colonial apologists: "Thank

¹ Christopher Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past*, Cape Town and New York, 1988; "The Forgotten Factor. Apartheid and History in South Africa", *Times Literary Supplement*, April 1994.

² Christopher Saunders, "Towards the Decolonisation of Namibian History: Notes on some Recent Work in English", *The Namibian Review*, 27, 1983: 29-36 (reprinted in: Brian Wood, (ed.), *Namibia 1884-1984. Readings on Namibia's history and society*, London, Namibia Support Committee, Lusaka, United Nations Institute for Namibia, 1988: 81-89).

God the Germans Came". Brigitte Lau's 1981 paper with that title was one of the first scholarly critiques of the school of writing about Namibia that defended and justified colonial rule.³ Though within that writing, German and South African, could be found information about early struggles against colonial rule, it took time for a counter-tradition to emerge, one that focused on the history of Namibians themselves, opposed colonial rule and was sympathetic to the idea that Namibia should be freed from it. From where did that counter-tradition come and who was involved in creating it?

Activists working against South African rule began the anti-colonial tradition of writing, and a close relationship developed between political activism and the presentation of a new view of the past. Such activists wrote about the Namibian history to challenge South African rule by revealing a past of exploitation and oppression, to encourage resistance in the present by reference to resistance in the past. In time, such writing would feed into a more scholarly literature that presented a more complex and nuanced view of the past, based on a closer examination of the evidence, while at the same time also challenging the old colonial myths. Trained as a historian at the University of Cape Town, Lau made a major contribution to this in her work on the nineteenth century in the 1980s, before, eccentrically, "venturing progressively into colonial apologetics" before her untimely death.⁴

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Looking for the first important writing on Namibia from an anti-colonial perspective, the names Michael Scott and Ruth First come immediately to mind. As we will see, a third radical activist from outside Namibia, the American Allard Lowenstein, played a lesser role, but in different ways all three used history to support the cause of ejecting South Africa from Namibia. In time Namibians themselves would write about their history, but as Randolph Vigne, then honorary secretary of the Namibia Support Committee in London, said in his *Story of the Namibian Nation*, first published in 1973: while it would have been better had that story been written by a Namibian, Namibians were "too busy living its final chapter".⁵ Vigne's point was repeated by Sam Nujoma in 1980: "much of

³ Brigitte Lau, "'Thank God the Germans Came' Vedder and Namibian Historiography", in: K. Gottschalk and C. Saunders, (eds.), *Collected Seminar Papers*, Cape Town, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1981, 24-53 (reprinted in: Annemarie Heywood, (ed.), *Brigitte Lau. History and Historiography. 4 Essays in reprint*, Windhoek, Discourse/MSORP, 1995: 1-16). This is not the place for a full discussion of such pro-colonial historiography and how it continued from German to South African rule. One South African propagandist wrote of pre-colonial Namibian history as a history "of genocide and chaos" and added that "anyone who talks about an independent history of South West Africa under a system of one-man-one-vote ... reveals abysmal ignorance of the history of South West Africa" (Eschel Rhoodie, *South West: the Last Frontier in Africa*, s.l., Voortrekkerpers, 1967, Preface and p. 5).

⁴ Werner Hillebrecht, "'Certain Uncertainties' or Venturing Progressively into Colonial Apologetics", *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 1, 2007: 73-95.

⁵ Randolph Vigne, *Dwelling-Place of our Own. The Story of the Namibian Nation*, London, IDAF, 1973, 2nd ed. 1975, Preface: 5). Vigne does mention the heavily historical doctoral thesis that the activist-scholar Zedekia Ngavirue had completed at Oxford University just before his booklet was published: "Political Parties and Interest Groups in South West Africa: A Study of a Plural Society", University of Oxford, D.Phil

the time and energies of Namibian revolutionaries and patriots is consumed in the liberation activity of our country such that our scholars are not now in a position to conduct in-depth studies of our society.”⁶ From the late 1970s, however, SWAPO began publishing material on its own history and prepared a general history of resistance and colonial oppression that would appear in print in 1981.⁷ The roots of the anti-colonial tradition of writing taken a major step further by SWAPO’s history-writing go back over two decades before then, however, and lie in books written by outsiders sympathetic to the cause of Namibians fighting against South African rule. How and why were these books written, and what contribution did they make to a new view of Namibia’s past?

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The recent publication of the first biography of the Anglican priest Michael Scott has drawn attention to the life of this remarkable man. Though he took up many causes, he devoted most time and energy to that of bringing the plight of the Namibian people under South African rule to world attention.⁸ The biography, admirable in many ways, fails to highlight the contribution that Scott made to telling the world about the history of the people whom he met on his visits to Namibia in the late 1940s.⁹ When in Windhoek and elsewhere, he spent much time taking down what he was told about the history of the Herero in particular, to support his case before the United Nations (UN) on the way they had been colonised and exploited over time. He was too busy himself at the UN and elsewhere in the late 1940s to organise his material and put it into publishable form, and he left that to a South African friend and collaborator Freda Troup, who published *In Face of Fear: Michael Scott’s Challenge to South Africa* in 1950.¹⁰ The information in the book, and much of its powerful writing, came from Scott himself, and it represents a pioneering attempt to publish a history from the point of view of Namibians themselves, using the words of Namibians. As Scott pioneered the use of oral history, it was

thesis, 1972, eventually published as *Political Parties and Interest Groups in South West Africa (Namibia)*, Basel, Schlettwein, 1997. Ngavirue was active in SWANU.

⁶ Sam Nujoma, Preface, in: Horst Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting. The Struggle of the Herero and Nama Against German Imperialism (1884-1915)*, London, Zed Press, 1980: vii.

⁷ SWAPO of Namibia, Department of Information and Publicity, *To Be Born a Nation. The Liberation Struggle for Namibia*, London, Zed Press, 1981). The Foreword by Peter Katjavivi is dated August 1979. The Bibliography lists earlier SWAPO publications: p. 349. On its production see Christopher Saunders, “History and the Armed Struggle. From anti-colonial propaganda to ‘patriotic history’?” in: Henning Melber, (ed.), *Transitions in Namibia. Which Changes for Whom?*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007: 13-28 (17).

⁸ Anne Yates and Lewis Chester, *The Troublemaker. Michael Scott and His Lonely Struggle Against Injustice*, London, Aurum Press, 2006.

⁹ On those visits and how he became involved in Namibia see Christopher Saunders, “Michael Scott and Namibia”, *African Historical Review*, 39 (2), 2007: 25-40.

¹⁰ Freda Troup, *In Face of Fear: Michael Scott’s Challenge to South Africa*, London, Faber & Faber, 1950. Yates and Chester only mention the book briefly and do not bring out its significance (cf. *Troublemaker*: 116). Troup (née Levson) was one of the few whites to participate in the Defiance Campaign of 1952 in South Africa. She later settled in Britain, where she wrote *South Africa. A Historical Introduction*, London, Methuen, 1972; Penguin, 1975.

appropriate that a Michael Scott Oral Records Project should attempt to take such work forward after his death.¹¹

After briefly considering the history of the Herero and Nama before German colonisation, *In Face of Fear* describes, in often vivid prose, the interaction between them and the Germans, quoting at length Hendrik Witbooi's letters to Maharero, to the English magistrate at Walvis Bay and to the German governor, Leutwein. Much that would be repeated in later histories is to be found here, such as Samuel Maharero's plea to Witbooi "let us die together...fighting together" and Leutwein's tribute to Witbooi as "a man who probably might have become world-famous had it not been his fate to be born into a small African nation". Writing only a few years after the reality of the Holocaust had become known, Scott said that the details of what happened to the Herero were "no less horrible than those we have come to associate with the names of Dachau and Belsen". He then went on to explain to readers in Britain and elsewhere what South African rule had meant for the Herero, quoting at length what the Herero chief Hosea Kutako and his assistant Festus Kandjo had told him.¹²

Eight years after *In Face of Fear* Michael Scott published his own memoir of his life, in which he included a briefer account of Herero history in a chapter entitled "The Heritage of Your Father's Orphans". He also told of his work for Namibia at the UN and in the Africa Bureau in London, and reproduced some original documents on Namibia as appendices.¹³ Scott's fellow lobbyist and close friend, the South African Mary Benson, who under Scott's influence became an active campaigner on the Namibian issue, then published a life of Tshekedi Khama that devoted a chapter to the way in which he had played a leading role in ensuring that the UN refused to allow South Africa to annex South West Africa.¹⁴ Scott's writing, though not given due recognition by many later historians of Namibia, influenced Vigne, among others.¹⁵ Vigne, who became a fellow campaigner on Namibian issues in London, used as the title of his short *Story of the Namibian Nation*, first published in 1973, a quotation from the moving prayer offered by the Herero leader Hosea Kutako that Scott recorded and which ends *In Face of Fear*: "O

¹¹ The MSORP published Theo Sundermeier, *The Mbanderu. Their History until 1914 as told to Theo Sundermeier in 1966 by Heinrich Tjituka*, Windhoek, MSORP, (1986) and Annemarie Heywood, Brigitte Lau & Raimund Ohly, (eds.), *Warriors leaders sages and outcasts in the Namibian past. Narratives collected from Herero sources for the Michael Scott Oral Records Project (MSORP) 1985-6*, Windhoek, MSORP, 1992.

¹² Troup, *Face*: 48, 50, 54 and 73ff. The book was dedicated "to all 'displaced persons' and those dispossessed of all their lands...all who are made trespassers and vagabonds by unjust laws". The title of the chapter on the German take-over of Namibia was taken from the Book of Job, "My Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook".

¹³ Michael Scott, *A Time to Speak*, London, Faber, 1958 (the title came from Ecclesiastes, 3). See esp. chapter XIV and appendices 5-10.

¹⁴ Mary Benson, *Tshekedi Khama*, London, Faber, 1960. On her relationship with Scott see esp. Mary Benson, *A Far Cry. The Making of a South African*, London, Viking, 1989 and Yates and Chester, *Troublemaker*: chapter 16.

¹⁵ For example, while Jan-Bart Gewald includes the books by Troup and Scott in his Bibliography, he does not use the material they contain in *Herero Heroes. A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890-1923*, Oxford, Currey, 1999.

Lord Help us who roam about. Help us who have been placed in Africa and have no dwelling place of our own. Give us back a dwelling place, O God, all power is yours in Heaven and Earth."¹⁶

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One of those who read *A Time to Speak* when it first appeared and was enthralled by it, and by meeting Scott in person in New York, was the young American Allard K. Lowenstein. He had first become interested in Namibia by meeting at Fort Hare in South Africa the young Jariretundu Kozonguizi, then a student there. By the time they met, Kozonguizi had written an article on "South West Africa" that began with some pages of historical background before going on to describe conditions of life in the territory and ending by asserting that "the question of South West Africa cannot be solved without a complete divorce of the territory from the Union of South Africa, and a realisation on the part of the Whites in South West that the indigenous peoples must inevitably share in the rule of the country they live in".¹⁷ Kozonguizi then joined Scott at the UN and it was Scott who persuaded Lowenstein to visit Namibia in 1959 to collect information about the impact of South African rule. After that visit Lowenstein put together a book to influence the American public about Namibia.¹⁸ The title he chose, *Brutal Mandate*, sums up his assessment of South African rule, but the subtitle *A Journey to South West Africa* is more appropriate, for his book was political reportage and travelogue, not a scholarly study, even though Lowenstein was teaching a course on "The Politics of sub-Saharan Africa" at Stanford University in California when writing it.¹⁹ He says nothing about, say, the Herero genocide or the rise of Namibian nationalism; SWAPO only receives one mention.²⁰

What Lowenstein did do was reveal in clear and often eloquent prose the climate of fear that existed for most people in the South African ruled territory, and what was involved in the forced removal of people under the apartheid-style legislation enforced there. To Lowenstein's American biographer, the eminent historian Bill Chafe, the book "brilliantly accomplished its mission of interweaving the dramatic events of the trip with analysis of the structural barrier imposed by the system of apartheid and the international mandate system...the book succeeded in entertaining readers...while never losing sight of the

¹⁶ Vigne, *Dwelling Place*. Vigne quoted the prayer on his cover page. He was the first to use Namibia in a work of history.

¹⁷ Jariretundu Kozonguizi, "South West Africa", *Africa South*, 2 (1), Oct.-Dec., 1957: 64-72.

¹⁸ Allard K. Lowenstein, *Brutal Mandate. A Journey to South West Africa*, New York, Macmillan, 1962. On Lowenstein see my article in *Insight Namibia*, February 2007. The South African propagandist Rhodie, later to be at the centre of the so-called Information Scandal of the late 1970s, which led to the fall of John Vorster as Prime Minister, dismissed *Brutal Mandate* as "disappointing one-sided and misleading" (Rhodie, *South West*: 40).

¹⁹ David Harris, *Dreams Die Hard. Three Men's Journey Through the Sixties*, San Francisco, Mercury House, 1993: 17. Much of the second half of the book is about South Africa itself rather than South-African ruled South West Africa.

²⁰ Lowenstein, *Mandate*: 117.

larger, more intractable geopolitical problems that framed those adventures.”²¹ Though *Brutal Mandate* includes no systematic discussion of, say, the international dispute over the territory, its main message is clear: South Africa cannot be permitted to rule it any longer, for South Africa has violated the mandate. This was an important point to get across to the American public at a time when the South West Africa case then before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) turned on the nature of South African rule.

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A year later a quite different book appeared, a systematic study of Namibia with a much clearer historical focus. *South West Africa* was, like *Brutal Mandate*, the fruit of a visit to the territory by an outsider, this time the radical South African journalist Ruth First, who travelled to Windhoek to collect material for it, her first book. She had worked with Scott in South Africa even before he had become involved with Namibia, and he had given her the first petition against South African rule in Namibia for publication in the radical newspaper she then wrote for, *The Guardian*.²² She had followed his work at the UN with admiration, and now that the case against South Africa’s rule of Namibia was before the ICJ, she wanted to bring out a scholarly book that would reveal to the world the nature of South Africa’s rule and the resistance of the Namibian people. She researched and wrote her book under the most difficult circumstances, for she and her husband, Joe Slovo, were being closely watched by the security police, and much of her book was written while she was under house arrest in Johannesburg. The manuscript, when finished, had to be smuggled out of the country and she faced prosecution for having prepared it, contrary to her restriction order, had she remained in South Africa. Published in paperback in the Penguin African Series in 1963, *South West Africa* was much better researched than Lowenstein’s book and was a much more useful source of historical information about Namibia, for she did systematic research in the published sources on Namibia, including the short-lived *South West News*, the first African publishing enterprise in Namibia.²³ Though the work of a journalist, her book was the

²¹ William Chafe, *Never Stop Running. Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998: 150. A friend of his wrote parts of the book, and it gives the impression of having been put together rapidly.

²² *The Guardian*, 2 October 1947. She had worked with Scott to expose labour conditions of farms in the Bethel district of the then Transvaal. For her early journalism see esp. Donald Pinnock, “Writing Left: Ruth First and radical South African journalism in the 1950’s”, DPhil thesis, Rhodes University, 1993, published as *Writing Left: The Radical Journalism of Ruth First*, Pretoria, University of South Africa Press, 2007.

²³ Dag Henrichsen, (compiler), *A Glance at Our Africa. Facsimile reprint of South West News*, Basel, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 1997. Cf. Shula Marks, “Ruth First: A Tribute”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10 (1), October 1983: 123-25; Gavin Williams, “Ruth First’s contribution to African studies”, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 14 (2), 1996: 197-220; Barbara Harlow, “On Her Heels, On Her Side: Ruth First in South West Africa”, paper given to conference on *1904-2004 Decontaminating the Namibian Past*, Windhoek, August 2004. There is a mass of information in the Ruth First papers in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library, University of London. Though there can be little doubt that First would have wanted her papers to be available in southern Africa, the Ruth First Trust has not to date made them available anywhere in the region. See the catalogue at <http://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/resource/RFCat1.doc> (accessed March 2008).

first attempt at a scholarly study of Namibia's past from an anti-colonial perspective, even if in some respects it retained a Eurocentric bias, for in its early history there was more about Europeans than Africans.

The first part of her well-structured book sets the scene, looking in turn at "the servants" and "the masters". The second concerned "the heavy hand of history", from the arrival of the first Europeans through the German period; parts three and four explored the meaning of the mandate; and the fifth the international status of the territory and the organisation of resistance inside the territory. After paying tribute to Scott, whose memorandum to the UN "transformed the South West Africa issue from a tedious, legal wrangle with a minor government into a crusade to save a people", she dealt in some detail with the complex history of the late 1950s and the relations between the newly formed South West African National Union (SWANU) and SWAPO.²⁴ Though she repeated SWANU criticism of SWAPO for making "a career out of petitioning" and for a "reformist approach in the struggle for liberation" – and so was to be accused by some in SWAPO of being a SWANU supporter – she added that the differences between the two movements were "more apparent than real" and that both had "all the problems and weaknesses of young political movements".²⁵ Writing in 1962 she could not see which would emerge dominant. She ended with an appeal for UN action, rather than merely words and legal judgments. It would be a travesty, she said, if the UN did not act to prevent conflict but only after conflict had broken out, a remark that suggested that she was anticipating the launch of the armed struggle.

After being detained without trial for 117 days following the arrest of members of the underground in South Africa, First fled to England in the year her book was published. A few years later she was co-editor with Ronald Segal, a fellow South African exile who edited the Penguin African Series, of *South West Africa. Travesty of Trust*, which published a selection of the papers delivered at the first international conference on Namibia, held in Oxford over four days in March 1966.²⁶ Segal, who had published Kozonguizi's article in his journal *Africa South* almost a decade earlier, convened the conference, and co-edited with First the volume that came out of it. This focused on the meaning of South African rule in Namibia, and included chapters on "The Land Theft" by the young SWANU activist Zedekia Ngavirue and reflections by Hage Geingob, who was to become the first prime minister of an independent Namibia in 1990, on his experiences as a student and teacher.²⁷

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²⁴ First, *South West Africa*: 182.

²⁵ Ibid.: 203, 204, 207, 208.

²⁶ Olof Palme, then minister in the Swedish Government and later to be prime minister, was in the chair. Those who attended included Vigne and Lowenstein.

²⁷ Ronald Segal and Ruth First, (eds.), *South West Africa. Travesty of Trust*, London, Deutsch, 1967. Vigne remembers the Namibians as being "silent" at the conference: email, 10 April 2007. On Ngavirue see note 5 above.

The books by Scott, Lowenstein and First, then, all followed visits to Namibia in which the writers were harassed by the South African authorities, who tried to prevent them meeting Namibians. Scott in the late 1940s, and Lowenstein over a decade later, had to meet Hosea Kutako in secret, while First conducted interviews “on street corners, in motor-cars, under a tree, in crowded shops [...] for this is a community where passers-by look askance at any conversation between a White and an African”, and she was refused permission to see material after 1946 in the Windhoek archives.²⁸ All three moved on to take up other causes, but Scott retained a lifelong interest in Namibia and it was his primary passion. For Lowenstein Namibia turned out to be but a passing interest, though he did return to it tangentially in the late 1970s, towards the end of his life, when he tried, with no success, to help negotiate settlements in Namibia and the then Rhodesia.²⁹ Two years after he was killed in his New York office by a mentally-disturbed acolyte, First was assassinated by the South African security police in Maputo. Her contribution to Namibian history, so much more important than Lowenstein’s, might have received more attention had she not been critical of SWAPO. In the 1970s she refused to revise her book, even with a collaborator,³⁰ but whenever she was in London she was willing to give active help to the small Namibia Support Committee, even after she moved in 1977 to become Director of the Centre for African Studies at the university in Maputo in independent Mozambique.³¹

For all three the Namibian issue was taken up not only for its intrinsic interest as a particularly brutal case of colonialism; they saw Namibia as South Africa’s Achilles heel, the weakest link in the apartheid chain because of its international status. They helped promote the idea that South African rule of Namibia was highly oppressive and illegal, and that Namibia should be allowed self-determination. All three had died by the end of 1983, when independence still seemed a distant prospect, but they would have welcomed the fact that important new anti-colonial writing appeared in the 1980s, some of it by Namibians themselves.³²

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The Oxford conference was held as the world waited to see what the ICJ decided in the case against South Africa for its rule of Namibia. When the ICJ threw out the case, the armed struggle was launched. Coincidentally, there appeared the same year in German

²⁸ Ruth First, *South West Africa*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1963: 13f.

²⁹ Cf. Christopher Saunders, “Al Lowenstein and Southern Africa: *Brutal Mandate* and Other Mysteries”, paper for conference on *1904-2004 Decontaminating the Namibian Past*, Windhoek, University of Namibia, August 2004.

³⁰ Julius Lewin tried to get her to revise it in the 1970s with Randolph Vigne as collaborator, but this came to nothing: Randolph Vigne, “Past Personal”, *Southern African Review of Books*, May/June 1994: 18. First, *South West Africa*, was reprinted in hardback by Peter Smith Publishers of Gloucester, Mass. in the United States in 1975.

³¹ My thanks to Brian Wood, a leading figure in the NSC, for talking to me about her role: interview, July 2007.

³² Besides the SWAPO history (see note 7 above), note especially Peter Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*, London, UNESCO and Currey, 1988.

the first detailed archivally-based work on Namibian resistance, and one that remains of seminal importance in the anti-colonial tradition. For it must not be forgotten that there was a distinct strand in that tradition that came out of East Germany, by scholars who had access to the German documents and took an interest in them because of German rule of Namibia, and a concern to analyse that rule, and resistance to it, from a Marxist perspective. Horst Drechsler began writing on the Herero-Nama war against the Germans from 1958, and Heinrich Loth made major scholarly contributions on Christian missions from the late 1950s, making the first serious attempt to challenge Vedder's pro-colonial interpretation.³³ Their work remained little known in the West, however, until Drechsler's book appeared in English in 1980.

Drechsler had spent many years reading the files in the Potsdam German colonial archive, and though confined to the German Democratic Republic, had read widely in the relevant literature, including newspaper sources, on the Herero-Nama resistance to the Germans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and he knew the work of Scott and First. When his work did eventually appear in English, it did so with a Preface by Sam Nujoma. The President of SWAPO wrote of his appreciation of "contributions by progressive scholars or scientists to a new and reliable literature on Namibia, beyond the existing racist genre" and added that Drechsler's work "will help Namibian patriots to identify who among the past and present leaders of our people may enter the list of Namibia's national heroes", for his story showed how some Namibian leaders possessed political shrewdness and military genius, while weak leaders lacked "bravery or imagination".³⁴ Whereas in the first German edition, Drechsler had in his final pages identified Mburumba Kerina with SWAPO, in a new Epilogue, dated 1979, he omitted that and said, instead, that from its birth "SWAPO, led by its President Sam Nujoma, has since stood undisputedly in the van of the Namibian people's struggle for independence" and ended by asserting that "There can be no doubt that, with every day that passes, Namibia is moving closely to independence under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization".³⁵

The appearance of Drechsler's book, in the year that the armed struggle was launched, may be said to open a new chapter in the history of Namibian anti-colonial writing. It is hoped to analyse the subsequent development of that writing, and its relation to the struggle for Namibian independence, in another article in this journal.

³³ The early work by Drechsler and Loth is listed in the Bibliography of Drechsler, *Fighting*. Cf. Tore Eriksen and Richard Moorsom, *The Political Economy of Namibia. An Annotated, Critical Bibliography*, Oslo, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1985: 76.

³⁴ Drechsler, *Fighting*: Preface.

³⁵ Horst Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1966: 286f.; *Fighting*: 252f.

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