‘A lonely and brave voice from Namibia’: Goldblatt and ‘bridge-building’

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Review article on:

This latest volume in the Basler Afrika Bibliographien’s “Lives, Legacies, Legends” series appears in the same rather unappealing format as the earlier ones, with the detailed footnotes and quotations in too small and faint a font, but it contains fascinating material and a large number of photographs of historical importance, many never published before. Dag Henrichsen of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien must be congratulated on seeing the potential in the notes of Israel Goldblatt found by his daughter in 2003 long after his death.¹ Henrichsen then worked with Goldblatt’s two daughters to produce what is a most useful addition to our knowledge of recent Namibian history. Though Goldblatt’s notes are often frustratingly brief, Henrichsen has made as much of them as possible, and admirably sets them in the context of the times.

The main focus of the volume is, as its title suggests, on the interactions that took place between Goldblatt and a number of black Namibians in the 1960s, and it is explicitly designed as a tribute to those who tried to build such “bridges” (see esp. p. 96). This article will, in reviewing the volume, both draw on additional information relevant to its contents and suggest how those contents relate to a broader theme in Namibian history.

The term ‘bridge-building’ is taken from a phrase used by Randolph Vigne, then Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Party in South Africa, in a report he compiled after he visited Windhoek in 1961 to see whether members of the Liberal Party could carry on the work they had begun with Namibian migrants in Cape Town and help establish an organisation in Windhoek that would bring together members of the new and very small African elite and members of the white community there.² After his visit, Vigne reported negatively about building any organizational inter-racial bridges, though he did not rule out the


possibility that individuals could interact across the racial divide. At the time of his visit the already repressive climate had become even more repressive after the massacre in Windhoek's Old Location in December 1959, after which Sam Nujoma and other political activists had left the country to go into exile. Vigne had hoped to go north into Ovamboland, where Toivo ya Toivo was living after his return from Cape Town, but when in Windhoek was told that Ovamboland was "almost unreachable".

It was, of course, a tragedy that the various communities in Namibia were, both then and later, so divided, with so little communication and interaction between them. It is therefore noteworthy that soon after Vigne's visit some bridges between individuals were built, fragile and short-lived though they turned out to be. As Henrichsen acknowledges, Goldblatt was not the first or the only white person in Namibia with liberal leanings who tried to build bridges across the colour line. Another who tried to do so in the 1960s was the American Robert Mize, the Bishop of Damaraland and head of the Anglican Church in Namibia between 1960 and his deportation in 1968. It was at Mize's house in Windhoek in 1961 that Vigne met Clemens Kapuuo, an influential member of the Herero Chief's Council and deputy to, and designated successor of, the veteran Herero leader Chief Hosea Kutako. Kapuuo urged Vigne to meet Goldblatt, whom Vigne had not heard of before Kapuuo mentioned his name. Vigne did then meet Goldblatt, who asked him about Kapuuo and the Chief's Council, and Vigne likes to think that he helped bring Goldblatt and Kapuuo together.

The following year, 1962, the radical journalist Ruth First visited Windhoek from South Africa and met Goldblatt, whom she probably encouraged to make contact with black political activists. In her book on South West Africa (1963) she wrote of three whites there who had contacts with blacks, without giving their names. One was clearly Goldblatt, whom she was to keep in occasional contact with, despite their ideological differences, and another Bishop Mize. Henrichsen speculates that the third may have been a journalist, perhaps Hannes Smith (the famous Smittie, later of Windhoek Observer fame). This seems unlikely, as he was very young at the time and was not one of the people mentioned in Ruth First's papers as possible contacts in Windhoek (p. 77 n.19), and Vigne thinks that the 'third man' was probably Ferdinand Lempp, who had...

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3 I draw here and elsewhere on an email to me from Randolph Vigne, 15 January 2011, commenting on a first draft of this review article.

4 Vigne to Saunders, email, 15 January 2011.

5 Henrichsen is probably the first Namibian historian to have used his papers, now held by the University of Kansas.

6 Vigne to Saunders, email, 15 January 2011.

7 Ibid.

8 He did not attend the major conference on South West Africa/Namibia that she organised with Ronald Segal in Oxford in 1966. He would hardly have fitted in there, for most of those who attended it were activists based abroad.

9 Over many years I tried to get the Ruth First Trust to send a copy of the Ruth First papers from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London to southern Africa. Eventually a microfilm was sent to the...
got into trouble for reporting critically of the conduct of the police in the Old Location shooting in December 1959 and who had, Vigne remembers, more “real contact” with Namibian political activists than any other white person.10

Henrichsen acknowledges that the book he has compiled with Goldblatt’s two daughters is not a full study of Goldblatt. It focuses mostly on the 1960s and does not discuss his decades of legal work in any comprehensive manner (p. 96). Nor does it even draw fully upon, for instance, the articles he published on his early legal career in Windhoek in the *South African Law Journal* in 1977-78. Enough is said, however, in the introductory chapter on him by his daughters, to show that he had a fascinating life.11 Within a few months of his birth in London in 1897, his mother took him to join his father, David, in Cape Town. A radical socialist, David Goldblatt first opened a bookshop, then began Cape Town’s first Jewish daily newspaper, tried to promote Yiddish, and was a prominent member of the local Jewish community before abandoning his family and leaving for the United States, in the year in which Israel graduated from the University of Cape Town.12 That was also the year (1915) in which South Africa occupied South West Africa, and in 1919 Israel moved to Windhoek as a staff member of the Crown Prosecutor. He returned to Cape Town to complete his law degree and after being admitted as an advocate in August 1919, went back to Windhoek to settle. He became the official reporter for the High Court established in 1920, acted as an interpreter in that court, because he spoke German, and practiced as an advocate in Windhoek until he retired in 1970. Though appointed an acting judge, he was not given a permanent seat on the bench. His daughters suggest that this was both because he was too independent and because he was Jewish.

In 1923 Goldblatt took on the defence of Chief Jakobus Christiaan of the Bondelswarts in the High Court in Windhoek. Christiaan had been involved in the rebellion against South African rule the previous year and had surrendered and then been sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour. The judge in the High Court mentioned that Goldblatt had appeared pro deo for the accused, and as Goldblatt left the courtroom he was then told that someone wished to speak to him. This was Christiaan’s wife, who

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Historical Papers Department at Wits University. When I went there to consult it in November 2009 I found that the Namibia reel was faulty and could not be read, but a year later this was finally accessible digitally.

10 Vigne to Saunders, email, 15 January 2011. There is a photograph of Lempp in Henrichsen, et al., *Goldblatt* : 5.

11 For a not always accurate summary see Catherine Sasman, “Israel Goldblatt: A man of justice and fairness (1897 to 1983)”, *New Era*, Windhoek, 8 October 2010.

12 The bookstore was in Long Street, where Anthony Clarke opened the famous Clarke’s Bookshop half a century later. From 1904 to 1914 David Goldblatt edited the weekly Yiddish newspaper, *Der Yiddish Advokaat*. On his role in the Jewish community see esp. Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society. The origins and activities of the Jewish Board of Deputies for the Cape Colony*, Cape Town, Historical Publication Society, 1983.
thanked him for defending her husband without a fee. Goldblatt was so moved by this that he recalled the episode with some emotion over fifty years later.\textsuperscript{13}

The other significance of the Christiaan case for Goldblatt’s later career is that it involved the status of South Africa as the mandatory power in the then South West Africa, and led him to study in detail the terms of the mandate, and therefore the international status of the territory. After the Second World War he took a keen interest in the attitude of the new United Nations (UN) to South West Africa and from early 1960 he started a study group among whites in Windhoek (known as ‘Die Gruppe’) that met at his home to discuss, among other things, this issue. In 1960 and 1961 he wrote two booklets arguing against South Africa’s incorporationist policies and in support of the idea of the UN having a key role in determining the future of the territory.\textsuperscript{14}

For a white person in the territory at that time, this was an extremely bold position to take and it is significant that in an introduction, dated March 1961, he made the point that he had written the booklet “for all the inhabitants of South West Africa, not only the whites”. In reaching the views he expressed in these booklets, Goldblatt may well have been influenced by the visit paid to him in 1959 by the young American activist Allard Lowenstein, who in his book \textit{Brutal Mandate} (1962) wrote of Goldblatt’s ‘remarkable’ intervention,\textsuperscript{15} which was made when Ethiopia and Liberia were bringing the landmark case before the International Court of Justice in the Hague against South Africa’s continuing rule of Namibia.\textsuperscript{16}

In July 1960 the difficulties in the way of bridge-building were illustrated in dramatic fashion when three members of the very small African intelligentsia in Windhoek were barred from attending a meeting in the city addressed by the then chairman of South Africa’s Liberal Party, Alan Paton, in Windhoek (p. 75).\textsuperscript{17} When he met Vigne the following year, Goldblatt told him that in his view conditions were not ripe for building any organizational bridges across the racial divide, and Vigne concurred, writing in his


\textsuperscript{14}In the second of these, \textit{The Mandated Territory of South West Africa in Relation to the United Nations} (Cape Town, Struik, 1961), he quoted the resolution passed by the UN’s Fourth Committee on 26 October 1959 on South West Africa after it heard the evidence of Allard Lowenstein and others, and adopted on 17 November that year by the General Assembly (pp. 64-65).


\textsuperscript{17}\textit{South West News}, 23 July 1960.
confidential report on his visit, now in the Namibian archives, “If Goldblatt is right, and it is an impossibility to build bridges at this stage, the best hope of bringing about a non-racial group inside SWA and averting a racial clash, is to afford travel and study to some of the young African leaders” (p.11). White South African liberals seem not to have followed up on this suggestion, and Vigne himself was to leave South Africa in 1964, and in London was to focus his activism for Namibia, as the leading figure in what became the Namibia Support Committee, in itself a major effort at bridge-building, among Namibians in exile who were able to travel to England.18

Though Vigne encouraged Goldblatt to meet Kapuuo and others, it was not Goldblatt who took the initiative, but Kapuuo. He sought a meeting with Goldblatt after reading his booklet on the UN. In rejecting South Africa’s legal claim over Namibia, Goldblatt accepted the argument advanced by the Herero Chief’s Council since the late 1940s in petitions the Council had made to the UN. The specific reason for Kapuuo seeking Goldblatt’s legal advice was that in late 1961 some of the Hereros still living in the Old Location were being prosecuted for building there without permission, for the Windhoek municipality still wanted to get them to move to the new township of Katutura.

Kapuuo’s arrival in his office was the beginning of Goldblatt’s contacts with a number of influential black Namibians. Though the volume under review shows these to have been far more extensive than previously known, it seems that Goldblatt remained skeptical that such contacts could constitute effective bridges between Namibia’s divided communities, given the harsh political environment. Three months after Kapuuo’s visit, however, he did begin writing notes on his contacts with him and others and on related matters.19 One can only speculate on why he began writing these notes when he did, and why he did not tell his children about them. It may be that he thought that if the police were to search his home and find them, they would help show that he had not been doing anything subversive.

Besides giving free legal advice to Africans – as did, say, the advocate Donald Molteno in Cape Town at the same time20 – Goldblatt gave lectures on law and administration to a small group of Africans, visited Windhoek’s Old Location on a number of occasions, and collected information from the Africans he met, especially on what happened to the Herero in the war against the Germans in the first decade of the century. He would have known of Allard Lowenstein’s meeting with Kutako in 1959, which almost certainly took place when Lowenstein was staying with Goldblatt, and of the meeting that Vigne had with the old man on his visit in 1961, but it was only in July 1962 that Goldblatt met Kutako. He immediately recognized that he was a remarkable man with a “massive personality” (notes, 30 July 1962). With his attorney son Lucian, Goldblatt represented Kutako and Samuel Witbooi when they were sued for damages over an allegation they

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19 He had not been writing such notes “all his life”, as stated on p. 97.
had made in a petition to the UN, and some of the relevant UN documents are reproduced in an annexure to the book under review.

Kapuuo brought the Caprivian leader Brendan Simbwaye, who was to die under mysterious circumstances in 1972, to see Goldblatt, who subsequently gave Simbwaye advice when he was in jail. It is useful to have the correspondence between the two men reproduced in an annexure to the volume under review, but more might have been made of what Bennett Kangumu has written about the context in which Goldblatt’s interactions with Simbwaye took place. One wonders whether his interaction with Goldblatt from 1964 may have influenced him to tell the magistrate of Karasburg in 1966: “I don’t hate the White man. That I never do… I believe in a multi-racial government in South West Africa. That the Whites and the Blacks must live together.”

Goldblatt also met such younger nationalists as the Rev Bartholomew Karuaera and the lively Levy Nganjone; we still do not know nearly enough about such men. But these contacts soon petered out and there seems to be no evidence that they fed directly into later developments, such as Kapuuo’s contacts with South Africans or his meetings with whites prior to his involvement in the Turnhalle conference in 1975.

Goldblatt’s many contacts with Kapuuo and others from 1962 brought him to the attention of the Security Police, and though its records are now no-where to be found—they were almost certainly either taken to Pretoria and shredded there or shredded in Namibia before independence—the policeman who kept Goldblatt under surveillance in the 1960s has recently published a memoir in which he recalls his interaction with Goldblatt, and he was able to provide Henrichsen with relevant information via email. Piet Swanepoel recalls that Goldblatt told him that he was lonely in Namibia, as the only intellectual in the country. Swanepoel wrote of him as “the only acknowledged white liberal in the country”. When he found that Goldblatt had been refused a passport, Swanepoel intervened, having discovered that though Goldblatt regarded Bram Fischer, the leading South African communist, as a friend, Goldblatt’s elder sister Sarah had been the personal assistant to C.J. Langenhoven, regarded as the father of Afrikaans, and was the literary administrator of his estate. Goldblatt was then issued with a passport.

Henrichsen tries to explain his failure to develop his contacts further in part by the new divisions that opened up in the mid-1960s, with the start of the armed struggle and increased polarization between the communities (e.g. pp. 88, 91), but it may also be that Goldblatt was, from the mid-1960s onwards after the death of his wife, anticipating

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22 Kapuuo addressed the 43rd annual council meeting of the South African Institute of Race Relations in January 1973 and spoke at the UCT Summer School on internal developments in Namibia.

23 Pietrus Cornelius (‘Piet’) Swanepoel, Really Inside Boss. A Tale of Late South Africa’s Intelligence Service (and Something about the CIA), Derdepoortpark, Swanepoel, 2007. 17. See also idem, Polisie-Avonture in Suid-Afrika, Johannesburg, Voortrekkerpers, 1968(?).
his relocation to Israel, where his daughter was living, and therefore was increasingly
disengaging from Namibian affairs. Though Goldblatt could be forceful — seen, for
example, in his response to the Administrator of South West Africa in 1963: when the
Administrator told him to sit, he responded that he was an advocate of standing and
walked out of his office (p. 76) — he remained guarded and reticent in his bridge-
building efforts: he refused to take sides in the controversy between the residents of the
Old Location and the municipality (p. 53), for example, and would not allow his booklet
on the role of the UN to be translated into Herero, as Kapuuo suggested it should be,
because he would be unable to check the Herero text (p. 20), while his ignorance and
gender bias are shown, for example, in the statement in his notes that while the Herero
he knew always used European dress (though he must have seen numerous Herero
women in Windhoek in their own distinctive dress), he did not know the situation in the
rest of the country (p. 19).

Before he left for Israel, Goldblatt attended, with his daughter, the funeral on 28 July
1970 of Hosea Kutako in Okahandja and the photograph on the cover of this book
shows him at the graveside behind Kapuuo and other mourners. Goldblatt never
returned to Namibia, but when Kapuuo was assassinated in 1978 he wrote to a
Namibian newspaper, saying that the news had “come as a great shock”. From the time
they had met in 1961 until he had left for Israel, he wrote, “there was no other white
member of the South West Africa community who was so intimate with him” (p. 36).
Though six months later the UN Security Council passed its famous Resolution 435
providing for a transition to independence for Namibia, Goldblatt must have remained
apprehensive about the future of the country until his death in December 1982.

Little is said in the book under review of his History of South West Africa from the
Beginning of the 19th Century, published in 1971. This was a pioneering attempt at a
general history of the territory over more than 150 years, and drew on research which
he seems to have begun in the 1950s, both in the archives in Windhoek and the
relevant secondary sources. Though we learn from this volume that Goldblatt recorded
some of what he was told by his black acquaintances of their history in his notes, he
seems to have used very little of this in his History. In his foreword he regrets that
records for the history of blacks in Namibia do not exist “which would enable us to see
events through the eyes of the Black man”, and the only major source he mentions by a
Namibian is the diary of Hendrik Witbooi.24 Though he lists, among the books he
consulted, such seminal works on the German period as those published in the 1960s
by Helmut Bley and Horst Dreschler — author of the classic account of the Herero and
Nama revolt in the first decade of the twentieth century, based on the German colonial
records at Potsdam — along with those by Allard Lowenstein and Ruth First, he made
relatively little use of any of them and certainly did not seek to emulate them, for his
history was written in a very dry and unattractive style. He wrote with none of the
passion, let alone literary skill, of say Michael Scott. Clearly the work of a lawyer rather

24 Israel Goldblatt, History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the 19th Century, Cape Town, Juta,
1971: v, xi and xii.
than a historian, his *History* was designed, he tells us in his foreword, not to be controversial. It said nothing at all about the start of the armed struggle in 1966 and gave no suggestion that he had himself been involved in any bridge-building efforts. His foreword said that its major theme was “the fate of the Black man”, which was a radical emphasis given much of the previous historiography but one that conveyed no sense of any struggle for freedom. His book appeared as new approaches, emphasizing African agency, were becoming dominant in the field, and as in South Africa a new history was emerging stressing ‘interaction’ of the various communities as the main theme in that country’s history.25

Published by the legal publisher Juta in Cape Town, his *History* gained only a very small readership, even though it was for a decade the only substantial history in English of the territory in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Henrichsen does quote Horst Drechsler as saying that Goldblatt’s *History* rejected colonial rule, but Henrichsen adds “Whether this assessment makes Goldblatt’s *History* a piece of anti-colonial writing needs consideration” (p. 93, n.15). Though one reviewer thought that what Goldblatt wrote of the role of missionaries and administrators in the nineteenth century resembled what had previously been advanced “only by the historiography of the Soviet part of Germany… and eastern authors”26, my assessment — which I would have included in a second article in this journal on the roots of anti-colonial writing on Namibia, had such an article been completed27 — is that his *History* is only marginally anti-colonial. It seems to have had little or no influence on later writing that was much more clearly anti-colonial, in particular the SWAPO history *To be Born a Nation* (1981).

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The volume under review, then, is important in revealing the extent of Goldblatt’s contacts with leading political figures in Namibia in the 1960s. On the other hand, too much should not be made of such contacts. The modest ‘bridge-building’ that Goldblatt engaged in was not sustained and it petered out without any long-term significance. Only a few other whites in Windhoek followed him in seeking such contacts. That Carl and Daniela Schlettwein accompanied him to the Old Location on at least one occasion makes it particularly fitting that this volume should be published by the Basel Afrika

Bibliographien, which Carl Schlettwein founded in Basel.28 Other whites in the churches and the media were of course to try to build bridges in later years, though later bridge-building usually took place with little or no knowledge of previous attempts. Hans-Ludwig Althaus, a German Lutheran pastor who spent eighteen months in South West Africa before being forced to leave at the end of 1971, said when he left that young blacks there needed white friends who are [and he used the term] “bridge builders”’. He had tried to organize inter-racial reading and discussion groups among students and teachers, and as he left the country a hundred young people held up placards, some saying “Althaus is colour blind”, and sang “We Shall Overcome”.29 The Anglican Bishop Colin Winter, who was elected to succeed Mize after he was forced out of the territory, was himself deported some years later, along with three of his assistants.30 In the media world one thinks particularly of Gwen Lister, who from the late 1970s worked with Hannes Smith, traveled to Europe to interview Sam Nujoma, and then founded and became editor of The Namibian in 1985, a position she still holds.31

A small number of lawyers played important ‘bridge-building’ roles. Besides Goldblatt, they included, from 1973, David Soggot, who was to draw on his Namibian experiences in his seminal work entitled Namibia. The Violent Heritage (London, 1986).32 Anton Lubowski, who became a leading figure in SWAPO until his assassination in September 1989, and Dave Smuts, who did so much to expose the atrocities being perpetrated in the North in the 1980s and then was a key player in founding the Legal Assistance Centre in July 1988.33 In the report he wrote after his visit in 1961 Vigne was impressed above all by the then “young barrister” Bryan O’Linn, who was to defend Ovambo migrant-workers who went on strike in 1971 and from 1986 was first chairman of the Namibia Peace Plan and Study Group formed to support the implementation of the UN

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28 When the author of this article drove the Schlettweins from downtown Cape Town to the airport on one occasion, probably in the late 1980s, they asked me to take them into the township of Langa en route.
29 Rand Daily Mail, 1 January 1972. The South African liberal parliamentarian Helen Suzman kept a copy of this article in her files, probably because she was asked to try to intervene on his behalf: University of the Witwatersrand, Historical Papers, Suzman Papers, A2084, JA 1.1.2. Althaus told the reporter that he had aimed “to bring Black and Coloured youth from all denominations together for religious education and co-operation on an ecumenical level”.
32 That later in Johannesburg Soggot had his briefcase returned after it was stolen was a tribute to the man he was, suggests David Beresford in his obituary: Mail and Guardian, 4 June 2010.
Peace Plan embodied in Security Council Resolution 435.\textsuperscript{34} NPP435 was in a sense a successor to the study group that had come into existence in Goldblatt’s home in 1960. While it may be stretching things too far to speak of a liberal tradition in Namibia, the activities of the few liberal whites in what was in effect a police state, and the role such people played in helping to produce the context in which a formally liberal democratic constitution was drawn up in 1989-90 and a non-racial ethos emerged, to the extent it has, in post-independence Namibia has yet to be analysed.

Over a long period many black Namibians have gone out of their way to build bridges to whites. One of them approached Goldblatt in 1961, and others saw in him a relatively sympathetic figure, whose privileged position gave him the means to assist them. Opportunities for such contacts within Namibia were very limited, but began to grow with the South African government-inspired Turnhalle process from 1975 and then from 1978 with the beginning of the break-down of apartheid and the new political climate arising from the South African government’s need to negotiate with the international community. In the 1980s they developed further with the formation of the Multi-Party Conference and then the Transitional Government of National Unity in 1985.\textsuperscript{35}

The SWAPO leaders who in exile engaged in various forms of diplomatic activity worked closely with sympathetic whites, such as Betsy Landis, who in New York gave extensive legal advice, while a few whites were able to travel from Namibia to visit the exiled leadership. Few whites joined SWAPO before independence, however, and none were active in the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia. Only in the late 1980s did extensive contacts take place between whites from within the territory and the SWAPO leadership, at first in Stockholm, Sweden, and then, after the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 had begun in 1989, inside the country. As in the case of South Africa, the very absence of contact, caused by apartheid and repression, may have meant that when contact began the old barriers broke down more easily. Namibia had so small a population, and its elite, white and black, was so small that it was not difficult for close relationships to develop relatively rapidly. How they did so over time deserves to be the subject of future study. The book under review shows what can be done with sparse material. Further research in the newspapers and other sources may reveal more nuggets of twentieth century Namibian history and permit the broader picture to emerge more clearly.


\textsuperscript{35} The writer of this review was befriended by Zedekiah Ngavirue at St. Antony’s College, Oxford, in the late 1960s. That friendship led to his developing an academic interest in Namibia and in 1980 he attended the first major historical conference to be held in Namibia, organized by Kenneth and Othilie Abrahams, Neville Alexander and others. The article I wrote on Namibian historiography after that conference appeared first in the Namibian Review and then in: Brian Wood, (ed.), Namibia 1984-1994. Readings on Namibia’s History and Society, London, Namibia Support Committee, 1988.
The initial approach to Goldblatt was to seek his legal advice, and he continued to give such advice, but this book shows that his interaction with the political figures went beyond giving free advice. One can only speculate what might have happened had conditions allowed such interaction to continue and develop. Jariretundu Kozonguizi, when President of SWANU in the 1960s, thought the very modest attempts at ‘bridge-building’ that were taking place important enough for him to denounce them. He preferred to think that “The choice is between the White Nationalists on the one hand and the African Nationalists and Socialists on the other”, and that there was “No room for Liberals or liberals be they white, yellow or black.” Over twenty years later, in an address he gave in 1988, the same Kozonguizi denied a historical role to “the white man… in the struggle for liberation”. He did now admit that Goldblatt, along with his daughter, the Reverend Michael Scott and Hannes Smith of the Observer, were “prepared to ascertain the views of the black man”, but he made it clear that in his view whites should play no leadership role in the struggle.36 How widespread were such views in Namibia? What do they say about the nature of the Namibian liberation struggle?

In South Africa, though similar views were expressed, especially in the Pan-Africanist Congress, the main emphasis among those fighting apartheid was for a long time on the idea that the country belonged to all who lived in it, black and white. There a non-racial tradition had much greater depth and much more content than in Namibia.37 By the 1960s there was a long history of whites and blacks working together in the Communist Party and then, from 1953 in the Liberal Party. There were whites active in Umkhonto we Sizwe from its establishment in 1961 and throughout its life. The implications this difference between South Africa and Namibia has for the kind of societies that have emerged in the two countries since they became formally democratic is a large issue, one that the book under review, with its limited focus, does not begin to address, but it is one that its contents ultimately points towards. It is a key topic for future historians to explore.

Bibliography


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