



With Untag... the group receives a briefing from chief Untag spokesman Cedric Thornberry.

# A chronic expect

The sight of the burly Kosie Pretorius, leader of the National Party of South West Africa, quietly waiting in a back seat in a lecture hall of the University of Namibia for the eloquent Prof Fanuel Tjingaete to finish his speech, somehow commented on the emancipation of Africa's last colony.

A mere two decades ago when Pretorius's party ruled the "gebied" Prof Tjingaete — being a black man — would probably not even have been allowed in the hall. Now the white Afrikaner leader, having arrived a little early for his appointment, was quite satisfied to give his fellow-countryman the chance to inform an IDASA delegation on the economic situation facing the soon to be independent Namibia.

The IDASA group consisted of 27 members, mostly up and coming young businessmen and academics from various backgrounds and diverse political persuasions, capably led by IDASA's Wayne Mitchell and André Zaaiman. (At least one UDF member included; also a member of the National Party.) Windhoek was the first stop-over of a tour that would eventually lead them to Zimbabwe, in the last year of its first decade of independence, and ultimately to Zambia, temporary home of a said 5 000 South African exiles waiting to return to an own liberated country.

The shift in the balance of political power over the past decade was even more graphically illustrated the next day, July 5, when a local newspaper reported that Pretorius had secretly visited Swapo's office in Windhoek to get a copy of the liberation movement's election manifesto. The self-proclaimed leader of the country's 70 000 whites was treated to a cup of tea and handed an autographed copy of the manifesto by the recently returned Swapo leader, Hage Geingob.

Pretorius and Tjingaete were but two of a range of internal politicians, academics, journalists and union, church and business leaders who, through the good offices of the local facilitators, the Namibian Peace Plan Contact and Study Group (NPP 435), were to address the IDASA delegation over a period of four days.

If Pretorius was the embodiment of a nostalgic white past, the dynamic Ben Ulenga as secretary-general of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) was certainly representative of the growing expectations of his country's black work force. Ulenga, a trained PLAN-fighter, had served a number of years on Robben Island before peacefully taking up the cause of the "socialist revolution". Pressed by the delegation on his views of Swapo's policy of a mixed economy, Ulenga insisted that the

**From an atmosphere of excited expectation in Windhoek to the more sober mood of Harare — and on to meet estranged compatriots in Lusaka. In July, IDASA took 27 young business people and academics on a tour of our neighbouring states to look at political and economic developments in those countries. CHRIS LOUW reports**

MUN would be quite prepared to operate in the political framework provided by the liberation movement should it come to power after the November elections for a Constituent Assembly. (He doesn't doubt that Swapo will.)

The MUN have adopted a resolution supporting Swapo during the elections. Some IDASA delegates had their doubts about the relevance of a trade union under a party that itself claims to be the "party of the workers".

vehicles with their white number plates actually seem to outnumber Untag personnel. There is a sense of expectation in the air: self-confidence amongst T-shirt-wearing Swapo supporters; apprehension amongst white businessmen.

Dirk Mudge, for so long the Great White Hope, talks about the politics of opposition. "A Swapo government join? Never, not even if they offered me the job of minister of finance."



But these are problems for the future. The Windhoek of today is both an exciting and an excited city: high-rise buildings spring up like mushrooms; house prices have gone crazy; hotels are overcrowded with strangers; Untag

**ABOVE:** In Windhoek... Namibian workers outside the offices of the Namibian Union of Mineworkers. **RIGHT:** In Harare... at the Zimbabwean Parliament, the tour group with parliamentarians, including the Speaker, Mr Didimus Matasa (fourth from right), and Mrs Amina Hughes, Minister of Transport (right).



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Although the technical details of a country in transition were fully provided by both the Administrator-General, Adv Louis Pienaar, and a senior delegation of Untag, led by Cedric Thornberry, the real impact of the human drama was only realised when a group of seven of the IDASA delegation were taken to a refugee camp at Döbra, just outside Windhoek.

After 22 years of bloody war nearly 10 000 refugees have returned from neighbouring countries to their mother land, their return made possible by the implementation of Resolution 435 of the United Nations. At Döbra they are being looked after by the Roman Catholic Church supported by Untag. The prevailing sense of being lost, of waiting for something to happen, of not being in control of their own destiny brought the tragedy of the Southern African conflict painfully home.

From a country in transition to a country faced with what could be described as the harsh realities of post-independence trauma: Harare, in all its colonial splendour, is still the beautiful, spacious city that Salisbury in the "good old Rhodesian days" used to be. And yes — we do meet old Smithie; old and pale and grey and just a little bit shaky, but ever the defiant Ian Smith of "never in a thousand years". In the last year alone of his war, so businessman and political analyst Eddie Cross informs us, no less than 15 000 people were killed, most of them blacks. The Ian Smith of today, so much frailer than Kosie Pretorius in Namibia, is an anachronism that is still tolerated in a country which failed to completely fulfil its promise of a socialist revolution.

Comrade Tsvangarai, secretary-general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, is a reserved compeer of his flamboyant counterpart in the MUN. Unlike the extroverted Ulanga he has been grinded to the point of conservatism by almost a decade of scientific socialism.



In Lusaka . . . Alfred Nzo, secretary general of the ANC, and ANC treasurer general Thomas Nkobe talks with Hannes Senekal of a financial institution in Cape Town.

Tsvangarai makes no secret of the economic and judicial constraints under which his trade unions labour. But there is no doubting his loyalty to the system being forged under the respected leadership of President Robert Mugabe.

In Zimbabwe the Cold Comfort Farm Trust are our hosts; the welcoming party consisting of West German citizen Helmut Orbon and Moeletsi Mbeki, younger brother and lookalike of another Mbeki, a compatriot awaiting us in neighbouring Zambia.

We are introduced to people like businessman and government critic Willie Musarurwa; parliamentary Speaker Didimus Matasa; members of the wealthy but griping Afrikaner farming community in Bindura; Western and Eastern diplomats; clergymen and local academics under the leadership of Rob Davies of the department of economics at the University of Zimbabwe.

It is soon clear that Zimbabwe is a country with many problems. But it is also clear that there is a collective will to tackle these problems; nine years of peace have not extinguished the pride of a hard-won independence. In parliament a white member of Zanu-PF, Andre Holland, tells us that the attitude of former Rhodesians are changing slowly. Himself an old Rhodie, a member of Smith's Rhodesian Front, Holland incites intense displeasure from female parliamentarians with a chauvinistic slip-up: "Whites are beginning to realise that they can't keep on moaning like old women — they should join the party."

A veteran of the bush war, Ndana Mudo-kwenyu, tells of the disillusionment with the Lancaster House Agreement. "We felt we were being sold out. We wanted to take Salisbury with guns blazing." Ndana was a guerrilla instructor in Mozambique during the last eight years of the war. She is a petite woman, only 34 years old. When she left home to take up arms she must have been a girl of 16. Eight years in the bush, sleeping on the ground night after night with a heavy AK 47 clinched between the legs . . .

Just before we leave for Zambia we hear that President P.W. Botha and Mr Nelson Mandela

had met for talks at Tuynhuis. Our war can still be avoided, we think despondently as we head for our meeting with members of the ANC in Lusaka. It is like meeting old friends. There is Steve Tshwetete with his customary pipe (careful now — he may not be quoted at home, being "listed" by the government); there is Ruth Mompoti, 63 years old, one of three women in the national executive council of the South African liberation movement; and Penuel Maduna (the fiery one); and Tom Sebina with a hat like Fred Astaire (also "listed", despite the innocent flamboyance); and oubaas Alfred Nzo; Edwin Mabitse; Zola Skweyiya (the clever one); Max Sisulu (father Walter in Pollsmoor, mother Albertina and brother Zwelakhe restricted); Pallo Jordan (cynical, sharp as ever — and "listed"); Lindelwe Mabandla with his posh English accent; serious young Monde Keke . . . On the last night the imperturbable Thabo Mbeki appears to say "hello".

They say there are 5 000 South African exiles living in Zambia. The ones we meet all want to go home. We talk. We laugh. There are also serious discussions: the armed struggle; the economy; local government; a future political system. We eat together. In the evenings we drink and joke together.

After two days the "passport-carrying South Africans" leave for the airport to go home. Those without passports stay behind.

In Zimbabwe the young and beautiful Ndana, toughened by eight years of bush war, had exclaimed with some amazement: "We never had any discussions with whites before our liberation." Even up to today, she said, the only whites with whom she had ever discussed politics, apart from Europeans, were those brought by IDASA from South Africa.

We are utterly exhausted when we land at Jan Smuts, in icy weather. It has been a long but satisfactory journey: a chronology of perhaps unattainable expectations, of modified but happy realism, of joyful reunion with estranged compatriots in another land. Yet somehow a sense of pending tragedy prevails.

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