



Windhoek: Protest against Botha's visit to Namibia, April 1988

continued to support UNITA, providing it with extensive funds, weapons, training and direct troop support.

With the coming to power of the Reagan administration, support for UNITA became open. The Clark amendment, adopted by Congress in 1976 and forbidding open or covert support for UNITA and other counter-revolutionary groups, was suppressed in 1985, and interference in Angola's affairs became the «legal» policy of the US administration. J. Savimbi, UNITA's leader, visited the US, and was welcomed there as a head of state and granted extensive financial support and modern armament.

Nevertheless, the initiative for a negotiated settlement was taken by Angola. In the middle of 1987, the Angolan government went into a military and diplomatic counteroffensive. Angolan troops launched an offensive against UNITA in the southeastern part of the country. As happened before, South African troops intervened to help their puppet. At the same time, in July 1987, the MPLA resumed talks with the US, which had previously been stopped because of the US support for UNITA. The Angolan government remained firm on its position that the condition for Cuban withdrawal from Angola was the independence of Namibia, because only an independent Namibia could guarantee Angola's security and peace; yet Angola was flexible concerning the timing of such a withdrawal.

While certain progress was made in the US-Angolan discussion, South Africa proved to be the biggest obstacle to a peaceful solution. An Angolan-Cuban proposal for a peaceful settlement, presented in March 1988, was rejected by South Africa. The Pretoria regime declared it was not ready to implement resolution 435 and demanded UNITA participation in the government of Angola. Some weeks later however, it changed its position, making possible the first round of negotiations that took place between South Africa, Angola, Cuba and the US on May 3-4, 1988 in London.

Finally, after several months of negotiations during which South Africa repeatedly tried to link the timing of its withdrawal from Namibia with that of the Cubans from Angola, and to include UNITA participation in the Angolan government in the settlement, an agreement was reached in December 1988.

South Africa's sudden willingness to negotiate and to make compromises stems from both internal and external factors. The heavy military losses it suffered in Angola in 1988 forced South Africa to agree to a cease-fire and withdraw its invasion troops. At the same time, the half-hearted sanctions of the Western countries, and the costs of war and occupation, were harder to cope with economically. Internal resistance against the policy of occupation, expressed by the growing number of draft resisters, has increas-

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 435

The Security Council...

2. Reiterates that its objective is the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration from Namibia and the transfer of power to the people of Namibia with the assistance of the United Nations...

3. Decides to establish under its authority a United Nations Transitional Assistance Group in accordance with the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General for a period of up to 12 months in order to assist his Special Representative to carry out the mandate conferred upon him by the Security Council... to insure the early independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations;

4. Welcomes the preparedness of the South West Africa People's Organization to cooperate in the implementation of the Secretary-General's report, including its expressed readiness to sign and observe the cease-fire provisions as manifested in the letter from its president of 8, September 1978;

5. Calls upon South Africa forthwith to cooperate with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;

6. Decides that all unilateral measures taken by the illegal administration in relation to the electoral process, including unilateral registration of voters, or transfer of power, in contravention of resolution 385 (1976), 431 (1978) and the present resolution are null and void...

ed. Finally, the atmosphere prevailing in world politics, the trend of replacing military confrontations by negotiated political settlements, certainly played a role.

PERSPECTIVES

According to the timetable set by the UN, South Africa is supposed to withdraw all but 1,500 of its troops from Namibia by June. Their place will be taken by an international UN peacekeeping force in charge of overseeing the direct vote to a constituent assembly, due to take place on

Democratic Palestine, March 1989