

Hungarian Socialist Solidarity with Namibia

Sam Nujoma in Budapest

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Abstract:

As an Eastern Bloc country, the People's Republic of Hungary was engaged with the issue of international socialist solidarity. Except for the German Democratic Republic, none of the Eastern Bloc countries had a considerable colonial past; hence, their anti-colonial point of view seemed credible for the liberation movements in Africa and Asia.

The Hungarian socialist state approved the activities of the liberation movements ANC, FRELIMO, MPLA, and SWAPO in Southern Africa. The right-wing and white supremacist systems of the Salazarist Portugal, Rhodesia, and the apartheid South Africa were seen as obvious enemies and oppressors who were contributing to the functioning of an exploiting and capitalist system based on the rule of a minority group.

The anti-colonial interests of the socialist Eastern Bloc countries had various other aspects as well. In the liberation of Southern Africa, economic interests played a key role. These countries, especially Angola, South Africa, and Namibia have an incredible abundance of resources. Therefore, the Eastern Bloc countries were involved not only in the wars of liberation, but also in the restoration and rebuilding of structures. This meant a practically new market for goods from Africa in the Eastern Bloc countries, and the export of technology and manufactured goods to Africa from the Eastern Bloc countries.

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A Hectic History and the Concept of Solidarity

Hungary was a member state of a high-esteemed empire, even though it enjoyed a limited level of independence in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The unfortunate outcome of World War I made it clear that Hungary can only be a regional power in Central and Eastern Europe. From 1920 to 1944, Hungary was seeking to regain its lost territories and international prestige, but the loss of World War II and the Soviet overlords, who broke the revolution of 1956, smashed all hopes of a democratic and independent Hungary for decades. (Mezey, 2003, pp. 260-263, 364-368, 476-480; Romsics, 2010, 389-395, 512-516)

Namibia's history began with the German colonisation from 1883 that organised the Khoisan and Bantu tribes in one country, which was named German Southwest Africa. The Germans led a colonial war against the insurgent Nama and Herero tribes between 1904 and 1907, which ended with a tragedy, a colonial genocide. After World War I, South Africa became the overlord of the country. (Dierks, 2000, p. 40, 43, 79, 100, 102) However, the South Africans promised more rights for the African Native tribes, and the only change that took place was the removal of 'German' from the name of the country. (Koessler, 2004, pp. 703-708) The Union of South Africa, and from 1961 the Republic of South Africa made several efforts to merge the country as the 'fifth province', but the League of Nations and the United Nations declared these actions illegal. (Dierks, 2000, pp. 150, 159, 182, 190)

Since Southwest Africa was a county of C class mandate, South Africa had the obligation to prepare it for independence. However, the South Africans acted in a totally opposite way: apartheid legislation was introduced in Southwest Africa, which meant racial segregation, legal inequality and white supremacy. (Kössler, September 2004, p. 707) The native tribes found this way of existence a form of injustice; hence, they organised resistance movements. The most important movements were the Southwest African National Union (SWANU), which was dominated by the Herero tribe, and the Ovambo People Congress established by the Ovambos in 1957, which changed its name to Ovambo People Organisation, and then was named South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in 1960. This name was based on the intention of unification of Southwest African people who were unsatisfied with the apartheid. (Dierks, 2003, pp. 130, 163, 173-174, 177. 180)

The Marxist-Leninist doctrine was a theory of a 'class struggle' of the antagonism of the working class and the capitalist bourgeoisie. This theory proposed equality of races and peoples. Although, the old concept of 'class struggle' was not shaped in a way that made the socialist countries eligible to help the liberation movements, since the colonial societies of Africa were not seen as 'full societies', since neither a working class (Angola) nor a peasant class (Southwest Africa) could be developed among the native peoples.

Therefore, a new concept had to be elaborated, which could help the African and Asian liberation and resistance movements more effectively. This new concept was named 'solidarity', a concept that had different meanings and referred to different actions aimed to achieve one goal. It could mean spending financial support, organisation of international

campaigns, direct involvement in the local (predominantly proxy) war, and general help programs. In an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist frame, solidarity was an aid that “[...] was meant to put into practice Leninist principles of solidarity with the ‘oppressed countries’ and the ‘oppressed classes,’ both victims of Western imperialism.” (Katsakioris, 2017, p. 260)

In the case of the Hungarian socialist solidarity, the whole phenomenon meant mostly providing equipment to and participation in the education of young people who were connected to the liberation movement. This pattern can be observed focusing on Namibia. Hungary received young members of the SWAPO in order to provide them technical and tertiary education. These people were called ‘SWAPO scholars’ in the documents preserved by the Hungarian National Archives.

The Namibian freedom fighters were able to establish contact with Hungary in the 1970s. Even though the Hungarian press showed interest in the African liberation movements from the 1960s, official meetings with high-ranked Hungarian politicians took place much later. Firstly, the Hungarian Solidarity Committee welcomed SWAPO-functionaries in Hungary. The Hungarian Solidarity Committee and the Patriotic People Front were the umbrella organisations responsible to emphasise the general interest in the liberation of oppressed peoples. Secondly, meeting functionaries of the MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers Party) and especially its Central Committee meant the increasing importance of a certain international issue.

Thereafter, meeting the dictator János Kádár was the ultimate goal that could be achieved. As it would be proven, the SWAPO leadership climbed up on this ladder in the 1970s and 1980s. Sam Nujoma, the head of SWAPO, had this opportunity. The outcome was a very positive one: the mutual trust, which developed between the parties, led to the request of the SWAPO to Hungary for participation of Hungarian forces in the process of asserting Namibian independence and the first democratic elections in Namibia.

Angola: The Bridge between Hungary and the SWAPO

Antonio Oliveira de Salazar and his successor Marcelo Caetano decided to centralise the Portuguese colonial administration. The right-wing regime of Lisbon intended to resist the aspirations for independence of the colonies. Portuguese settlers arrived in Portuguese Africa in masses, and the imperial centralisation made it clear that the leadership in Lisbon had long-term plans with the colonies. The leaders of the native movements did not approve this idea, since it meant an increased level of exploitation. (Castro Leal, 2016, pp. 130, 143)

Salazar’s *Estado Novo* was described as a right-wing authoritarian system, although it did not necessarily mean racism. Within the Angolan Population, racism occurred only in a cultural sense, since mixed marriages were quite prevalent, especially in the cities. This feature of the Portuguese system was very different from the neighbouring apartheid systems of Rhodesia and South Africa. (Ehnmark, 1968, p. 35)



The Angolan War for Independence broke out on 4 February 1961. Portugal was supported by South Africa, and the insurgents enjoyed support from different countries: the Marxist-Leninist MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) received supply from the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China stood on side of the historically Maoist UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), and the FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) was helped by anti-communist countries, i.e. the USA. The Angolan people mostly supported Agostinho Neto and the MPLA. The UNITA, which was led by Jonas Savimbi until his death, seemed to be popular in the province, and the FNLA and its chairman, Holden Roberto, could gain popularity in the larger cities, especially among intellectuals and mixed-race people. (Pearce, July 2012, pp. 442-443, 450-451, 456)

This long war was ended by the collapse of the Caetano-government in Lisbon: the Carnation Revolution smashed the right-wing system on 25 April, and the new left-wing government decided to withdraw the Portuguese troops from the colonies. To bring the decolonisation entirely into effect, the Portuguese troops brought back the white Portuguese settlers to Europe; nevertheless, it should be noted, that many of them went to South Africa instead. The old, allied neighbour received the white settlers with open arms, even though the South African government remained reticent. (Pearce, July 2012, pp. 446, 451-452)

The collapse of the Caetano-government in Europe meant freedom for Angola. The only question was which party would become the leading force in the new government. Meanwhile, celebrations were taking place in Luanda, and the three parties planned a total takeover. Almost a year later, the Angolan Civil War broke out on 11 November 1975. The MPLA managed to take control over the capital city. The UNITA changed its ideology and became an ally of the USA and Mobutu's Zaire, which practically meant that they gained the support of South Africa. The new Neto-government received Cuban troops with the help of the Soviet Union, and established a military basis for the ANC (African National Congress) and the SWAPO in the southern regions of Angola. (Pearce, July 2012, pp. 444-452)

Suddenly, Angola was sieged by the European socialist countries intending to help rebuild the country. Among the many Eastern bloc countries, Hungary also participated in this new scramble for Africa. István Salusinszky, the governor of the Hungarian National Bank at the time, elaborated in 1965 on a full plan what Hungary can gain from the economic relations with the independent Angola: „In order to build up and to develop the Angolan iron mining, the Portuguese government intends to take out large investments. In the frame of this, Hungary could transport mining equipment, sheller machines, vehicles, machine factories for the food industry, glassworks, power plants, etc. via the prime contractor General Trade Co. [...] In return, the following Portuguese goods can come into question: coffee, tea, sisal, suber, iron and manganese ores, tuna, mill-cake, cashew nut, tropical wood, or perhaps cotton, etc.” (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j/1965/7-57/22) Hungarian foreign policy treated Angola as a priority in the region, since Frigyes Puja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary at the time, emphasised Angola's importance: „Angola will gain its independence on 11 November, [...] Its economic importance and our solidarity justifies paying special attention to building relations between

our countries. [... therefore,] we share [...] our goals to create embassy-level diplomatic relations..." (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j/1965/7-57/22)

The Hungarian foreign policy was able to shun the pressure from Moscow, which wanted to persuade Hungary to avoid involvement in the Angolan Civil War. Thus, Hungary chose to cooperate with the German Democratic Republic in order to ensure its presence in Angola. Márton Szabó, who was then the ambassador in Lagos of the People's Republic of Hungary, participated in the independence parade in November 1975. Szabó openly condemned the opponents of the MPLA, namely the FNLA, the UNITA, South Africa, and Zaire. (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j/1965/7-57/22)

Agostinho Neto died in the Soviet Union in 1979, and José Eduardo dos Santos became his successor. This change did not cause any problems in the Hungarian-Angolan relations, which were lucrative ones. The equatorial African country, which was attacked by South Africa, was able to grant bases for the SWAPO. The Hungarian foreign policy had long-term plans in decolonised Africa. The Hungarian embassy in Luanda saw great chances for both Hungarian foreign affairs and state companies to build new relations in the region.

The SWAPO in the Hungarian Media and the Hungarian Solidarity

The People's Republic of Hungary had a limited level of media pluralism. For a casual observer, the content of articles in popular daily newspapers may seem very similar; nevertheless, there were differences in approach and organisational background. The MSZMP had *Népszabadság* ('Freedom of People') as a central daily newspaper. The *Magyar Hírlap* ('Hungarian Times') shared the news based on the point of view of the government. The *Magyar Nemzet* ('Hungarian Nation') was established as an anti-Nazi right-wing and classical liberal journal. The communist regime allowed the existence of the latter because of the strong name, but the Patriotic People's Front, the umbrella organisation of the socialist system, was its owner; hence, it was also a very loyal newspaper. As the oldest daily newspaper of the Hungarian labour movement, the *Népszava* ('People's Voice') should be also involved in this analysis. (Horváth, 2013, p. 73)

The *Népszabadság* was the first among these daily papers that published an article about the SWAPO. Their journalist made an interview with Emil Appolus, the secretary of the liberation movement. They were talking about the history and the economy of Namibia; besides, the Odendaal Plan and Verwoerd's apartheid policies were also mentioned by Appolus, as well as labour contracts and monopolies in the mining industry of Southwest Africa. The secretary expressed optimistic views in spite of the conflicts with the Southwest African National Union, a party that trusted the United Nation more than the fight. (*Népszabadság*, 16 February 1966, pp. 2-3)

Since the MSZMP was mainly directly involved in the primary goals of the international socialist movement, solidarity remained the issue the Patriotic People's Front was standing



for. Thus, in general it was the Patriotic People's Front that initiated contact with the SWAPO. Therefore, the *Magyar Nemzet* had the opportunity to publish a short report about the current situation in the United Nations. Since Ethiopia and Liberia – and the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU), which had its the member in Africa of former colonies – accused the Republic of South Africa about its illegal rule on Southwest Africa, the final vote of this case led to an answer to the question. The voting at the Court of Justice in Den Haag resulted in a draw of seven votes for each side, which meant a rather positive outcome for Hendrik Verwoerd and South Africa. The aforementioned article of the *Magyar Nemzet* shared the complaint of the African countries that South Africa introduced the apartheid legislation in Southwest Africa and militarised the country. (*Magyar Nemzet* 26 July 1966, p. 2) This meant a key issue in the change of overlordship in 1919, when Germany was condemned about its racial policies and atrocities committed against the colonial native population.

Sam Nujoma, who had been living in exile since 1 March 1960, managed to make the SWAPO the only representative of the Namibian people in the international organisations. (Dierks, 2003, pp. 180-182) Firstly, the SWANU was expelled by the OAU; secondly, the United Nations declared the end of the South African rule in Southwest Africa: the Resolution 245 (1968) abolished the right of South Africa to administer South West Africa (Security Council of the United Nations, 1968). This new position and the guerrilla war on the Angolan-Southwest African border increased Nujoma's importance. With the process of decolonisation, the influence of the African countries showed a growing tendency. Therefore, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution on 12 June 1968, which changed the name Southwest Africa to Namibia. (Bruhács, 1970, pp. 25-26). Furthermore, the Security Council of the United Nations passed Resolution 264 (1969) on 20 March 1969, which not only recognised the right for independence, but called for the withdrawal of the South African troops from the Namibian territory. (United Nations Security Council Resolution 246 (1969))

The 1970s made it possible for the SWAPO to approach the Hungarian socialist leadership. In the policy of the countries of the Eastern Bloc towards Africa, the dissemination of Marxist and socialist ideas played a primary role. Namibian independence seemed an event of the near future. The Border War between South Africa and Angola increased the SWAPO's importance. The *Népszava* issued an article about the fight for Southwest Africa. The author János Jankovszky emphasised obvious sympathy toward the SWAPO, but also mentioned that the liberation movement was not a communist one, as it was always referred to by the members of Vorster-government. (*Népszava*, 7 August 1976, p. 2)

Although Mandela and Nujoma were seen as prominent figures of the anti-apartheid resistance, the neighbouring Rhodesia was about to gain its independence in the late-1970s. The country was already formally independent, albeit its independence was not recognised by other countries and international organisations. The 'internal settlement', a form of decolonisation based on white minority rule implemented by the Rhodesian Front and Ian Smith led to the Bush War in Rhodesia. The idea preserved the rule of British settlers, since the Rhodesian voting system favoured more educated and wealthier people. To solve the

problem and to mediate between the United Nations and the insurgent groups, the USA, the UK, Canada, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany created the Western Contact Group in 1977. (Melber and Saunders, 2007, 78) The same applied to Southwest Africa, where the South African authorities prepared a general election, which pushed Dirk Mudge and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) into power in 1978. (Trainor, September-October 1989, pp. 2-5)

To achieve the independence of Namibia, the Security Council of the United Nations passed a new Resolution No. 435 (1978). This resolution became the blueprint of Namibian independence. The legal document declared that the SWAPO is the only legitimate representative of the Namibian people and called on South Africa to hand over the power to the Namibian people, cooperate with the United Nations and to implement this resolution. (UN Security Council Resolution 435 (1978))

Even though the SWAPO labelled this election as a comedy, Mudge's party could gain support among the black native population. The DTA formed a grand coalition with various representatives of Namibian tribes. Even a SWAPO-functionary, Andreas Shipanga left his party and established the SWAPO-Democrats in order to be able to participate in the DTA-government. (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j 1980/101/106-20/001566/2). South Africa declared the independence of Southwest Africa, and the 'internal settlement' was completed. The frontline states of the apartheid protested, and their arguments were right: Namibia remained under South African rule because of the units of Koevoet, an army with a considerable number of Black soldiers. (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j 1983/93/106-11/001540)

Nujoma needed to exploit every opportunity to talk about this situation in Namibia. The president of SWAPO approved the invitation of the Patriotic People's Front and visited Hungary in June 1979. On 25 June, he met with Béla Kovács (head of the National Peace Committee of the Patriotic People's Front), István Sarlós (member of the Central Committee of MSZMP), and an under-secretary of Ministry for Foreign Affairs, namely Róbert Garai. On the first day of his visit, Nujoma was talking about the current situation in Namibia and the abundance of natural resources (diamond, uranium, etc.) which he intended to utilise for the wealth of the Namibian people. (*Magyar Nemzet*, 26 June 1979, p. 3). The Hungarian socialist leadership showed solidarity with Namibians, although prospective economic interests also played a primary role, just like in the case of Angola. Therefore, Nujoma and a SWAPO-delegation was brought to Fejér county. (*Magyar Nemzet*, 27 June 1979, p. 3)

When Nujoma visited Hungary, the *Magyar Hírlap* had the opportunity to interview him. Nujoma was presented to the readers as "a fifty-years old, energetic and suggestive phenomenon, [...] commander-in-chief of the People Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) [...] and a father of three." (*Magyar Hírlap*, 5 July 1979, p. 5) The article begins with a preface about decolonisation; after that, it talks about the successful guerrilla actions in North Eastern Namibia, which forced a number of white farmers to move into cities. At the end of the



interview, Nujoma categorically refused negotiation with the DTA-government, only considering the possibility of negotiations with the South African government from Pretoria.

The early 1980s were not favourable for the SWAPO. The USA had a new president after Jimmy Carter (Democratic Party), namely Ronald Reagan, and vice-president George H.W. Bush (both from the Republican Party), who became president after Reagan. These statesmen seemed to be devoted anti-communists. The Africa-related issues were handled by Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. South Africa's role in the global fight against communism increased in the eyes of American foreign policy, and therefore the Reagan-administration created a way of dialogue, the 'constructive engagement'. This meant practically a slow cutback of White minority rule in South Africa and establishing contact with Black anti-communist leaders. The other goal was the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. (Clough, Winter 1985-1986, pp. 4-5)

The leaders of the SWAPO felt that the change in the international environment had no positive effect on their goal; nevertheless, they participated in the Namibia Conference, which took place in Geneva between 1979 and 1981. Participants at the conference included all members of the Western Contact Group (USA, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany), South Africa, the DTA-government from Southwest Africa, and the SWAPO. The conference came to a halt, and the outcome was basically favourable for South Africa, since the SWAPO was negotiating with the Mugde-government during the conference, which meant recognition of its legitimacy. (Melber and Saunders, 2007, pp. 84-86)

Strengthening positions seemed the only way for the SWAPO. Their delegation, led by Sam Nujoma, visited Hungary in August 1981. Representatives of the Patriotic People's Front, General Secretary Béla Molnár and Gyula Sütő, head of the Solidarity Committee of the organisation, invited the delegation to Hungary's capital city. (*Magyar Hírlap*, 13 August 1981, p. 4) After that, Miklós Óvári, the Secretary of the Political Committee of the MSZMP received Nujoma. (*Magyar Nemzet*, 18 August 1981, p. 3) The delegation was thankful for the Hungarian solidarity, and they shared their plans to increase the level of fight for freedom at the press conference. (*Népszava*, 19 August 1981, p. 2) Nevertheless, the Hungarian socialists became dissatisfied about Nujoma's attitude: Nujoma paid a visit to Bonn, the capital city of the Federal Republic of Germany, where he identified himself as a Christian, and the West German leaders welcomed him as the new leader of Namibia. (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j 1980/101/106-25/006170)

To ensure that the SWAPO remained on the side of the Eastern Bloc, the socialist countries maintained good relations with the leaders of the Namibian liberation movement. The Secretary of the Central Committee of MSZMP, Mátyás Szűrös invited him to Budapest. Szűrös, formerly Hungary's ambassador in the Soviet Union, was one of the most influential politicians of the MSZMP. Nujoma emphasised in Budapest that the SWAPO could only deal with the Namibian independence based on the UN Security Council Resolution 435 (1978), and the

South African government was a hindering force in this process. (*Népszabadság*, 1 October 1983, p. 5)

1983 and 1984 brought a drastic change in the apartheid. Dirk Mudge, who was under pressure from the guerrillas waging a war in the Northern part of the country and from the United Nations, resigned from power on 18 January 1983. To replace the government and implement the 435 (1978) Resolution, various parties of South West Africa established the Multi-party Conference (MPC). This political organisation was functioning as a transitional government between 1984 and 1989. (Dierks, 2003, pp. 236-237) However, another event meant a radical turning point in the history of Southern Africa and the apartheid. Desmond Tutu, the widely-known Anglican bishop of South Africa visited the USA, and here he held an emotional speech about the apartheid, called the Africa-policy of the USA 'immoral, evil, and un-Christian'. Thereafter, the American banks decided to defund and restrict South Africans. (Clough, Winter 1985-1986, pp. 14-15.) Regardless of the parliamentary reforms, which were implemented by President PW Botha, the collapse of the apartheid was only a question of time. Hungarian diplomacy felt the new waves and proceeded by visiting Africa.

The meeting with Nujoma took place in Luanda. Hungarian TV broadcasted Pál Losonczi's visit. This event remained memorable because of the dance show, presented by an Angolan dance group, which was joined by Losonczi, chairman of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic of Hungary (practically the president). However, the meeting with MPLA- and SWAPO-functionaries was even more remarkable. Economic issues remained relevant in the case of Angola. Hungary exported telecommunication instruments and Ikarus buses, but the most considerable business was connected to the Medicor and Medimpex, companies that sold medical instruments to Angola for 2 million US dollars in 1981. (MNL-OL XIX-J-1-j/1981/7-51/002678/2) While Losonczi was staying in Luanda, Nujoma could meet him and the Hungarian delegation. The Hungarian leader expressed that the country and its socialist leadership was devoted to help the fight against international imperialism and neo-colonialism, condemned South Africa, and assured the Namibian people about his support. (*Magyar Hírlap*, 28 September 1985, p. 3)

Namibian independence became a key issue of Africa-related foreign policy of Hungary. Solidarity meant a well-working frame for SWAPO when it came to providing education in Hungary for SWAPO-scholars and supporting the troops of PLAN. The more open support, which came from an even higher level of Hungarian politics, reached its peak in 1988: János Kádár, the dictator of the People's Republic of Hungary invited and welcomed Sam Nujoma in Budapest. The latter event became the most important. Kádár was 76 years old in 1988, and the younger functionaries were seeking to replace him. However, Kádár assured him about the support of Hungary, the meeting with Szűrös was of a higher importance. (*Népszabadság*, 17 September 1988) As a sign of trust, Nujoma asked Hungary and Sweden to join the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG), a military unit that controlled the democratic transition in Namibia.

While Nujoma's star was rising in international politics, socialism collapsed in Hungary. The MSZMP held an extraordinary caucus in May and June 1988. The economic circumstances were catastrophic, and the leadership resigned to full employment of the population. Reforms were more than needed, even though the turbulence accelerated the democratisation process. The MSZMP released Kádár on 22 April 1989. The one-party system also broke up, and the MSZMP had to involve the liberal and right-wing opposition in the reforms. Szűrös, who had a sense for tactic, became the first president of the third Republic of Hungary, which was declared by him on 23 October 1989. The first democratic general elections were held in the spring of 1990 (Romsics, 2010, pp. 538-540, 549-551)

Namibia also became independent in 1989-1990. The first Cuban troops were withdrawn from Angola in January 1989. The transitional government declared its end in February, and the SWAPO members were allowed to go home in April. The first democratic general elections were organised in November, based solely on ballot votes and party lists. According to the expectations, the SWAPO won the elections with 57,3% of votes, and DTA became the second with 28,6%. The other parties received 0,1-5,6% of the votes. The last UNTAG-troops were withdrawn on 28 December. Nujoma declared independence on 21 March. (Dierks, 2003, pp. 248-254)

„[From Hungary,] 11 state security officers, 11 foreign policy experts, and only three real police officers [participated in the UNTAG-mission].” (Besenyő, 2019) Nujoma invited Szűrös, but the Hungarian state was represented by József Bényi on the day of declaration of independence. (MNL-OL XIX-j-1-j 1990/50/106-107/00702/3)

Conclusion

Hungary was always supportive of Namibia. The frame of the socialist solidarity constituted a good base for cooperation between the Hungarian socialist leadership and the SWAPO. However, the Hungarian foreign policy also intended to gain market share in the independent Southern African countries, especially in Angola, and the opportunities of this socialist cooperation were exploited by the People's Republic of Hungary, the MPLA, and the SWAPO.

After the 1990s, the fruits of this broad-based solidarity have not been harvested. The Hungarian Africa-policy established an embassy in South Africa and closed embassies in other Southern African countries, which meant a long-term break in the relationship with the latter.

The conservative government, which has been leading Hungary since 2010, explored the opportunity of building relations with the 'Global South', based on old ties. The former colonies have a friendly attitude towards Hungary. László Kövér, speaker of the Hungarian parliament and one of the most influential people in the Orbán-government, met his Namibian colleague, Peter Katjavivi, in 2016 in Namibia, and then Katjavivi visited him in Budapest in 2019. Rebuilding relations with these countries can hold good cooperation in store.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

László Pálfi is a Hungarian historian. He wrote his doctoral dissertation about the history of the German-Namibian relations at Eötvös Loránd University. He wrote his bachelor thesis about the history of Namibia, and his master's thesis about the history of the apartheid in Rhodesia and Southwest Africa, both written at the Eötvös Loránd University. His main field of interest is modern history, especially the history of Africa and Central Europe. He has a master's degree in Public Policy and Management at the Corvinus University of Budapest, and his thesis is about the private security companies in South Africa. Currently, he is working as an external researcher of the Pilecki Institute.

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