Opposition parties are in disarray, horribly humiliated and hopelessly un-
sure of their future. Having just emerged from a stunning defeat in the last
National Assembly and Presidential elections last year, the future looks so bleak.
With the Okahandja by-election just around the corner, none of the opposition
parties is eager to face SWAPO Party alone. For many of them, there is just no
pleasant future to look forward to.

While some opposition parties are boycotting the by-election because they have
“lost faith” in the Electoral Commission of Namibia, ECN, others are
frantically trying to cobble together a coalition to prevent a SWAPO Party
victory. But, by all standards, SWAPO Party’s victory in Okahandja is guar-
anteed. About that, there is no doubt.

The DTA, created by the former South African colonial government with
handpicked puppets, says it will not take part in the by-election because it has
“lost faith” in the ECN. Technically, that may sound plausible, if only it was the
real reason for boycotting the by-election. Unfortunately, it is not the case. The
DTA is only trying to avoid another humiliating defeat. It lost to SWAPO Party
in the 1989 elections when its masters were in charge.

In the 1989 elections, it only managed to win 21 seats, despite the state ma-
chinery at its disposal, capped with the N$100 million “shush funds” given by
the then apartheid regime to win the “hearts and minds” of the Namibian
people. With their masters gone, those handpicked puppets could not manage
on their own. When the master is gone, things simply fall apart.

In 1994, it again lost to SWAPO Party, with its seats dropping from 21 to 14.
In 1999, it again lost to SWAPO Party. Its seats dropped from 14 to seven. In
2004, it lost again and its seats dropped from seven to four. After last year’s
elections, it only won two seats. So, when the DTA says it has “lost faith” in the
ECN, it may sound as if it really stands a chance to win the election.

Not at all. Its decision to boycott the by-election is informed by its poor per-
formance in the past, as chronicled above. The DTA is on its death-bed. It
should not fool anybody. All the intravenous infusion solutions are off. Rather
than risking another stunning defeat, it chooses to avoid the race altogether
die peacefully, with the last surviving puppets on its bedside.

As for the other four opposition parties which have banded together to back
one candidate, there is still just no hope. The modalities for such a coalition are
not clear. The squabbles are just raging on. In fact, it is an exercise in futility.
How can one person represent four parties? Which party’s interest will she
serve? Which manifesto will she hold dear? To whom will she be accountable?

The Rally for Democracy and Progress, RDP, has chosen its candidate, the
disgraced former Mayor of Okahandja, Christophina Kiito Paulus. Three op-
position parties – the All People’s Party, AP, Republican Party, RP, and the
National Unity Democratic Party, NUDO — have chosen to back the RDP
candidate, thus dissecting their own manifestos and virtually telling their mem-
bers, who have supported them for years, that they cannot find a suitable
candidate from them. What an insult! That is naked political prostitution.

I thought these people were members of those parties out of principles. I also
thought that their leaders were men and women of principles who would
sacrifice and, if possible, die for those principles which have distinguished them
from other political parties. With the new political arrangement, that does not
seem to be the case. They have ditched their own principles and embraced
those of RDP. How their members will react to this nonsensical political ar-
rangeement will only be clear after the election. The results will be disastrous.

This is a marriage of convenience driven by self-serving individual interests.
When individuals’ interests overshadow those of the party, the result is a loose
arrangement like this one, which has no reason for existence. The four parties
have only one thing in common — their hatred for SWAPO Party. Beyond that,
there is virtually nothing that binds them together. They are poles apart. How
Christophina Paulus hopes to represent such diverse political interests defies
logic. Obviously, RDP will call the shot. The other three parties are just being
used by RDP’s Hidipo Hamutenya like pawns on a political chessboard. He is
good at that. And they will only learn that later, much to their disappointment.

But fielding the disgraced Christophina Paulus as RDP’s candidate surely
comes as a blessing in disguise for SWAPO Party. The Party must really be
smiling at the RDP’s foolhardiness to pick Paulus, just as it did when RDP
fielded the despised Erasmus “Kaptein” Hendjala as its candidate in the Tobias
Hayincky constituency by-election in 2008. Who in Okahandja does not know
how Paulus has messed up things there? There is just no credible person left in
RDP. But whether opposition parties agree on one candidate or not, SWAPO
Party will knock them out hands down. As they squabble over the new political
arrangement, unpalatable though it is, SWAPO Party is cruising to an undis-
pputed landslide victory. About that, we are convinced.