

FREE NAMIBIA



NAMIBIA: AFRICA'S LAST COLONY

Although South Africa dominates the news, it is in Namibia that the conflict over apartheid is in many ways the most intense. In the struggle to end the South African occupation of their land, Namibians have suffered at least ten thousand dead. One out of ten Namibians has been forced into exile. Much of the country is under martial law. Apartheid has devastated the country; poverty and unemployment is rampant.

Namibia is a country ravaged by war and military occupation. It has suffered over a century of colonialism, first under the Germans, who carried out a campaign of genocide, and then under the South Africans who have extended apartheid to the territory. Namibia's riches have been plundered by South African, British and other multinational companies. Its people have been driven off their land and displaced to the vast desert margins, where they are forced to live in impoverished 'homelands' or bantustans.

REIGN OF TERROR

South Africa maintains its occupation of Namibia by force and terror. An estimated 100,000 troops are based in the territory. With a population of only 1½ million, this means that Namibia is under a particularly intense military occupation. South African police and troops carry out what the British Council of Churches has called 'a reign of terror'. They detain and torture people, round up whole villages for interrogation, shoot people on sight at night for breaking the curfew, and carry out rapes and murders. Thousands of people have been detained without trial. Many have simply 'disappeared', others have suffered appalling torture and brutality.

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

South Africa's occupation of Namibia is illegal. In 1966 the United Nations terminated Pretoria's right to control Namibia as it was extending its apartheid policies to the territory and trying to incorporate it into South Africa. This decision was later endorsed by the International Court of Justice.

For 20 years the international community has been demanding that Namibia be allowed to become independent. A UN plan for independence was set out in Resolution 435, providing for UN supervised elections and then independence under a democratically elected government. South Africa agreed to this plan in 1979, but since then has found a variety of excuses for refusing to allow the implementation of Resolution 435.

Pretoria has continued to rule Namibia illegally and has tried to foist a succession of different administrations on the Namibian people, hoping to establish an 'internal settlement' which would give Namibia a status similar to one of South Africa's so-called 'independent' bantustans. At present, South Africa rules Namibia through the Multi-Party Conference administration – a group of several tiny political groups with virtually no support in the country. The Namibian people have refused to accept South Africa's continued occupation of their land. They have fought back, holding mass political

demonstrations, forming trade union, student, women's, youth and other organisations and uniting under the national liberation movement SWAPO. Since 1966, the Namibian people have also been fighting an armed struggle against the South African military occupation. The armed wing of SWAPO, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), ties down thousands of South African troops and carries out daily attacks on South African convoys, military bases and strategic installations. Despite the massive South African military presence and the widespread use of terror and intimidation, PLAN cannot be defeated because it fights with the support of the Namibian people. South Africa refuses to allow UN elections and independence because it knows that SWAPO will win free elections and has the support of the majority of Namibia's people, who have refused to bow to apartheid divide-and-rule policies. Pretoria has shamelessly defied world opinion and international law by continuing its brutal colonisation of Namibia. In this, it has been supported by the British government.

BRITISH COLLABORATION

British-based corporations, such as Rio Tinto Zinc and Barclays Bank have huge investments in Namibia. Their activities there are illegal, as the United Nations has ruled that the wealth of Namibia should be held in trust for the people until after independence. Despite this, the CEEB has bought Namibian uranium mined by RTZ, Namibian products such as karakul lamb furs are sold in this country, and British firms like Barclays continue to do business in Namibia, even servicing South African troops.

The present government has a shameful record on Namibia and has failed in its international responsibilities towards the Namibian people. For more than five years, Britain was a member of the Western Contact Group which undertook to negotiate with South Africa to get it to agree to Namibian independence. For six years, Pretoria strung the Contact Group along, inventing one excuse after another, which the Contact Group seemed only too willing to take on board. Now the Contact Group has collapsed; Pretoria remains intransigent. P.W. Botha, supported by Ronald Reagan, insists that there can be no independence for Namibia until Cuban troops stationed in neighbouring Angola have been withdrawn. But the Cuban troops are only there to protect Angola from massive South African invasions which have been carried out over the past ten years.

The UN General Assembly and almost every country in the world have demanded that meaningful pressure be put on Pretoria to force it to end its occupation of Namibia. But Reagan and Thatcher have time and time again vetoed resolutions proposing sanctions against South Africa in the UN Security Council. The Thatcher government has stood, with the US, virtually alone in the world as the protector of South Africa and its ruthless repression of the Namibian people.

SOLIDARITY WITH SWAPO

Through their liberation movement SWAPO, the Namibian people are fighting for freedom from occupation by racist South Africa. They are fighting for basic democratic rights and the right to determine their own future. Today, SWAPO is stronger than ever before. Throughout this year, it has been carrying out a sustained guerilla offensive in northern Namibia. Tens of thousands of Namibians have shown their support for SWAPO by attending huge rallies in different parts of the country. The churches, youth, women's community organisations and other Namibian political groups are united with SWAPO in demanding the immediate implementation of UN Resolution 435 and then independence.

But as long as Britain, the US and other western powers prevent the imposition of sanctions against South Africa, the apartheid regime will continue its war and repression in Namibia. For this reason, the Namibian people have demanded sanctions.

Show your support!

- ▶ Don't buy Namibian and South African goods
- ▶ Don't bank with Barclays bank
- ▶ Boycott Shell products
- ▶ Disinvest from companies operating in Namibia
- ▶ Campaign for the release of Namibian political prisoners
- ▶ Raise funds and collect material aid for SWAPO
- ▶ Join the Anti-Apartheid Movement



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I enclose £..... for membership plus a donation of £

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Cheques etc should be made payable to the Anti-Apartheid Movement

Please return to: **Anti-Apartheid Movement, 13 Mandela Street, London NW1**

