

BLOCKADE NAMIBIAN URANIUM

stolen!



A thousand tonnes or more of uranium from Namibia will be used, illegally, to provide fuels and warheads for the Trident programme. Without this supply Trident would probably be sunk.

The theft of Namibian uranium is by arrangement between the British government and British based multinational Rio Tinto Zinc. RTZ happily flouts United Nations rulings against the robbery of Namibia's resources, because it makes superprofits from its operations under an apartheid regime enforced by South African military occupation.

International law says that South Africa's occupation of Namibia is illegal and that the robbery of Namibia's resources must stop. We agree but we know who will have to stop it. We can act in solidarity with the people of Namibia and can help to scuttle Trident in the process.

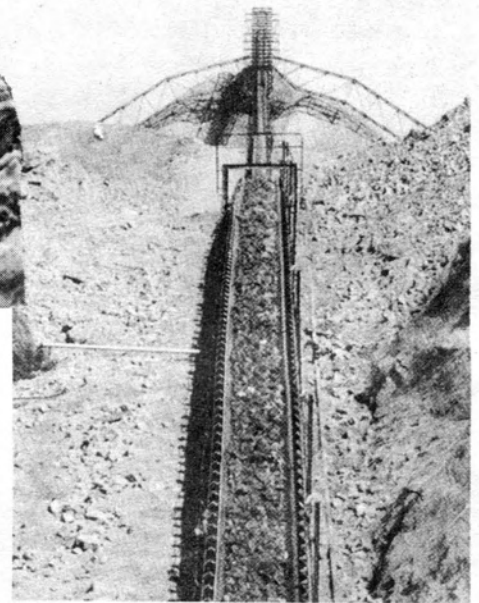
On Friday 2nd November, 1984, mass protest actions have been called by the Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts, focussing on British Nuclear Fuel's involvement in the processing of Namibian uranium for Trident. As well as the BNFL headquarters at Risley (near Warrington, Lancs.), we will be protesting outside BNFL Springfields (near Preston, Lancs.), Capenhurst (on the Wirral, Cheshire), and Chapelcross (Dumfriesshire). These sites are crucial in producing Trident's fuel and weapons ingredients, as this broadsheet explains.



SINK TRIDENT

FROM ROSS

Uranium oxide is extracted in Namibia at the Rossing mine, 45% owned by Rio Tinto Zinc, a British multinational. Ten years ago the UN declared the exploitation of Namibian resources illegal for as long as the country remains occupied by South Africa. This ruling, called Decree No. 1, has the status of international law, backed by Security Council resolutions and International Court decisions. But successive British governments have ignored international law and imported Namibian uranium since 1978. SWAPO has repeatedly called on RTZ to stop the mining. In a recent statement it has made it clear that all parties to this exploitation will be held liable for damages. Current estimates for compensation range from £235-£705 million.



A Third World War

In its new Cold War rhetoric, Washington sees all conflicts as East-West confrontations. The South African regime exploits this view to portray its war against the people of Namibia as essential in defending Western strategic interests. And so, Reagan and Botha insist on linking a South African withdrawal from Namibia with a corresponding withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola (the Cubans remain, at the invitation of the Angolan government, to defend against continual South African invasions). Since Botha's visit to London earlier this year, the British government is more openly backing this linkage even though its consequence

has been to further stall the peace negotiations.

The war in Namibia and Angola has been going on for over a decade. In Namibia there is one South African controlled soldier to every five Namibian adults! An average of 50 Namibians and Angolans are dying every week through South African aggression.

The South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) is recognised by the United Nations as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people. Its armed wing, the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia, is fighting an intensifying guerilla war under very difficult conditions. SWAPO recognises that the West is not using its influence over South Africa to press for peace and is preparing for a protracted war.

"They are trying to find an excuse so that they can justify their failure to get the co-operation of South Africa. They now have the option, either to let South Africa confront the situation alone or to choose to pump more money, agents, weapons into the puppet regime that South Africa is going to set up to fight 'communist infiltrators' from Angola. They have tried that in Vietnam and in many other parts of the world and they failed. The tide of history is on the side of what is right and what is right is that South Africa and its neo-colonial plans in Namibia must be defeated."

BRITAIN SUPPORTS RACIST WAR IN NAMIBIA

DIRECTLY, supplying South Africa with military radar equipment - MARCONI; fuel - SHELL & BP; vehicles - LEYLAND, HAWKER SIDDELEY, ROLLS ROYCE; other armaments and technical expertise.

INDIRECTLY, through taxes on British companies operating in Namibia (last year RTZ paid Pretoria R30 million corporation tax - about £15 million), through finance - BARCLAYS BANK, STANDARD CHARTERED etc.

HOW DOES URANIUM MINING AFFECT NAMIBIAN WOMEN ?

"... all the mines have far-reaching effects on women as well as male miners... For example, the biggest problem is contamination from uranium. When the men return to the reserves they pass on the contamination. Diseases such as tuberculosis spread and speculation has it that men can often become impotent. One paper referred to Namibia as "the land of sterile women" because of the alleged effects on fertility. There are few health clinics or hospitals and treatment costs money. So the women bear the burden of looking after the sick, are forced to walk for days and weeks in search of the few doctors available. Lack of money and food means that children die of malnutrition. So the mines affect everyone."

- Pendukeni Kaulinge, SWAPO Secretary for Women.

ING TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Open trade union organisation is no longer possible in Namibia and in mines and factories black workers are not covered by safety regulations, so they work in extremely dangerous conditions. Arthur Pickering, a former worker at Rossing, described conditions there: "It is extremely dry and very dusty, especially in the summer and there is always a cloud of radioactive dust, especially in the work area itself — in the open pit. Then you have the sulphuric fumes and fumes from the tailings (loose waste dumps) further up the mine. These are the real problems as far as I am concerned. It is what you actually inhale and there is, as far as I can see, absolutely nothing that Rossing does about that."

The British government has announced that the contracts to supply the CEGB (Electricity Board) with 7,500 tonnes of uranium oxide from Rossing will expire this year with "no plans" for renewal. These contracts were previously between British Nuclear Fuels and Rio Tinto Zinc. According to Tony Benn, they were extended in 1975 beyond 7,500 tonnes. While admitting that other contracts exist to import Namibian uranium for processing and re-export, the government has made no mention of any possible military applications. But the Ministry of Defence needs uranium to fuel its submarines and to make its nuclear weapons. Where will this come from?

The MoD buys uranium from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. BNFL buy it from RTZ, who mine it in Canada and Namibia. The other possible sources are the US, Australia and South Africa. But the US

categorically refuses to sell anyone else any uranium for military purposes — it has too many needs of its own. Canadian and Australian government policy, implemented through EURATOM (EEC) agreements (1981), prohibit any weapons-manufacture using their nuclear exports. Even the use of Canadian or Australian uranium for Trident submarine fuel would cause a scandal. So if the EURATOM agreements and governmental policies are to be seen to have any credibility, then Namibian or South African uranium will be used for Trident fuel and warheads, either from fresh (secret) imports or from existing stockpiles. As far as we know the UK does not buy any South African uranium for its own use. And the government has stated that its uranium stockpiles are all from Canada and Namibia. The finger points to Namibian uranium for all military applications.

Trident Guzzles Stolen Uranium

But how much uranium does the Ministry of Defence actually need for Trident? The estimates range from 600 to several thousand tonnes, and whatever the figure it is a significant amount. Most of it will be used for making the warheads.

Reactor Fuel

Trident will be powered by a nuclear reactor burning "highly enriched uranium" (HEU), Uranium oxide delivered to BNFL Springfields (see map, page 4) will be converted to uranium hexafluoride (hex) and transported by road to BNFL Capenhurst for enrichment in the new centrifuge plant under construction. Initially the enriched hex will be sent on to the US for further enrichment before returning to Springfields to make up the submarine fuel rods. After five years, Capenhurst will handle the full enrichment process.

Each Trident will consume about 20 kgs of HEU a year. But it takes 180kgs of uranium oxide (as delivered) to produce 1kg of HEU. And so the four Tridents will use about 14 tonnes/year. The submarine fleet also includes "hunter killers", and during the 1990s with 20 subs the total uranium fuel requirement will reach 70 tonnes/year.

Weapons manufacture

The H-bombs carried on Trident will contain natural uranium, tritium, plutonium and probably HEU as well. These substances all require uranium oxide as raw material, though the first two use very small amounts per warhead.

Plutonium: Plutonium is produced by any nuclear reactor. But warheads use "weapons-grade" plutonium (94% pure Pu 239). And if the government play by their own rules they must make their military plutonium exclusively in the military Magnox reactors (Chapelcross and Calder Hall). Uranium oxide delivered to Springfields will be made into Magnox

fuel rods and burned in the military reactors. Plutonium will be extracted from the reactor wastes at Windscale, and the spent fuel can be recycled through Springfields and Capenhurst.

To make 1kg of weapons-grade plutonium requires 400 - 700kgs or more of uranium oxide, depending on the level of recycling. Each warhead will contain a

minimum of 2kgs of plutonium

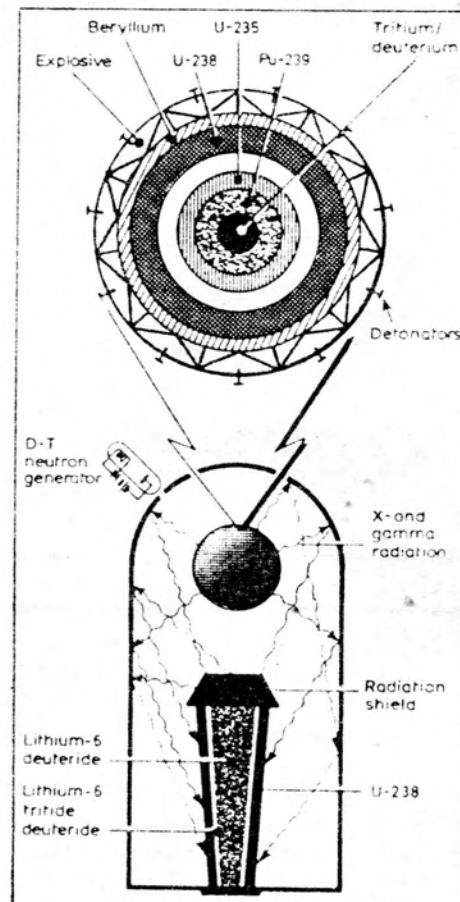
HEU: As in submarine fuel, HEU produced produced via Springfields, Capenhurst and the US will use 180kgs uranium oxide per kg of HEU. A very conservative estimate is that each warhead will contain 2kgs HEU.

How many weapons?: The government says each Trident will be able to hit at least 96 targets, i.e. at least 384 warheads for the four Tridents. But each Trident is actually designed to carry a total of 224 warheads (on 16 missiles), and this is how they are deployed by the US. This would mean 896 warheads on four Tridents.

How much uranium for Trident?: We won't know until we find out how many warheads, how much plutonium and HEU in each warhead and the exact production cycle for plutonium. But fuelling the Trident subs during the 1990s will use 140 tonnes of uranium oxide. And the lowest estimate for warheads is 384 warheads each with 2kgs HEU and 2kgs of plutonium produced on the most efficient cycle. This totals 445 tonnes of uranium oxide to make the warheads, or nearly 600 tonnes including the fuel.

A more likely estimate is 896 warheads, with plutonium produced on a less efficient (but quicker) cycle. This totals 1,700 tonnes. Taking into account the "hunter killers", the MoD would need over 2,000 tonnes for the decade. And the figure could be much higher if the warheads use more plutonium and/or HEU.

While RTZ and the South Africans will profit, black workers and their families will continue to endure the hazards of mining uranium. And if strategic minerals for their first-strike weapons system are secure, the British government is content to watch the war in Namibia drag on. Are we?



Modern fission weapons are made up of concentric spheres (top). The radiation can be used to trigger a fusion weapon

ACTIONS

on Nov. 2

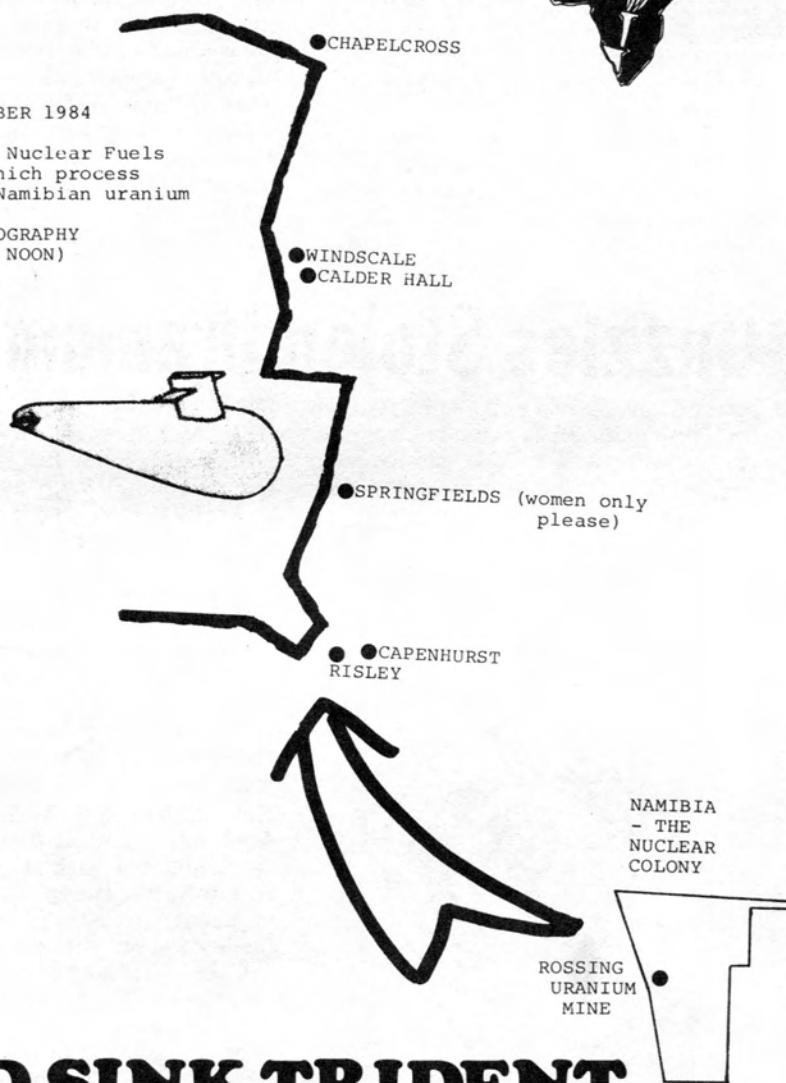
BLOCKADE ^{ILLEGAL} / NAMIBIAN URANIUM! SOLIDARITY WITH SWAPO!



on FRIDAY,
2 NOVEMBER 1984

at British Nuclear Fuels
sites which process
stolen Namibian uranium

(MASS PHOTOGRAPHY
AT 12.00 NOON)



AND SINK TRIDENT

Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contract (CANUC),
53 Levertton Street, London NW5 (01-267 1941)

Start working now to build support for the Autumn actions. Contact local women's groups, CND, anti-nuke, Anti-Apartheid, miners support groups, trade unions, political parties, church groups, etc.

Contact:

**CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE
NAMIBIAN URANIUM CONTRACTS**
53 Levertton Street
London NW5 2NX.
Tel: 01-267 1941/2

CANUC can provide information and speakers — there may already be someone in your area involved in the campaign.

If you are peace campers are there any ways you could link your protest to the CANUC actions, during the week starting October 27th?

Picket your local electricity board showrooms — Namibian uranium is also used to generate electricity.

The actions on November 2 will highlight the terrifying and completely illegal connections between uranium mining in Namibia and the Trident programme, particularly those in Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumbria and Dumfriesshire.

SPRINGFIELDS (near Preston, Lancs.)

This BNFL site receives Namibian uranium imports, processes uranium before enrichment at Capenhurst (see below), and manufactures fuel rods for nuclear reactors. This action will be for women only.

CAPENHURST (in Cheshire, on the Wirral)

The centrifuge plant under construction for BNFL and the MoD, will produce highly enriched uranium to fuel submarines and to make weapons. Women peace activists are currently on trial for highlighting this fact through direct actions at the site.

CHAPELCROSS (Dumfriesshire)

This BNFL/MoD reactor burns uranium in order to produce weapons-grade plutonium. The plutonium is extracted at Windscale, which also houses another military plutonium reactor, Calder Hall.

RISLEY (near Warrington, Lancs.)

The BNFL headquarters. This vast complex contains reasearch and administration controlling every aspect of the nuclear company. In nearby St. Helens coal mining communities are fighting for their lives. Namibian uranium stockpiles are powering nuclear reactors running at twice their normal level during the miners' strike.

November 2 will show the links between Namibian people fighting for their freedom and peace activists resisting the Nuclear State. We hope these actions will open up a mass campaign, involving trade unionists, the black community, and anti-racists, to blockade the import of Namibian uranium.

JOIN US !

