
CHILDREN-APARTHEID & REPRESSION IN NAMIBIA



CHILDREN
APARTHEID &
REPRESSION
IN NAMIBIA

A one day seminar to highlight the
plight of children in Namibia

Saturday October 29th 1988 • 11am-4.00pm
National Union of Teachers' Headquarters,
Mabledon Place, London WC1

Seminar Objectives

'Children-Apartheid & Repression in Namibia' is a major Seminar following on from the International Conference on Children and Repression in Harare and the subsequent London Conference in April. A clear need was identified to specifically highlight the plight of Namibia's children and the immense suffering caused by South Africa's continued illegal occupation of Namibia.

The Seminar is convened under the auspices of SATIS-Southern Africa the Imprisoned Society; and organised by the newly formed SATIS Committee on Children.

The specific objectives of the Seminar will be:

- To highlight the plight of children in Namibia, in particular the nature of repression there; the effects of South Africa's apartheid policies; and the military occupation of the country.
- To publicize the efforts made to protect and provide care and education for Namibian children inside Namibia, in the Frontline States and elsewhere, in order to counter South Africa's policies.
- To mobilize support for the children of Namibia; and action to end South Africa's illegal occupation.

Agenda

MORNING SESSION

11.00-12.00pm

Opening session with keynote speakers to include Hidipo Hamutenya, SWAPO Information Secretary.

12.00-1.15pm

Discussion groups led by experts from inside Namibia, who will provide an opportunity to hear first hand from those working with Namibia's children in the following areas:

- 1) Health
- 2) Education
- 3) Law

1.15-2.15pm

LUNCH

2.15-3.15pm

Campaign workshops, to focus on what can be done to ensure the objectives of the Seminar are achieved, with experts leading sessions on the following subjects:

- 1) Mobilizing against repression of children in Namibia
- 2) Support for children's projects inside Namibia and the Frontline States
- 3) Action in Britain and internationally to end South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia

3.15-4.00pm

CLOSING SESSION

Children in Namibia

On a daily basis the life of Namibian children is distorted; their rights violated and their freedom denied by the illegal occupation of their country.

Many children have been killed, maimed and left orphans by the war, others have been arrested or detained. A report from the Namibian Council of Churches stated that children had been forced to spy on their parents, priests and teachers and if they refused, they were beaten, kicked and roasted over fires. Young girls have been brutally raped and shot by soldiers; their 'arms broken and heads beaten' when refusing to submit to sexual intercourse. The list of atrocities against the children of Namibia is long and disturbing.

The majority of children have also long suffered disadvantage, indignity and under-development as a result of a repressive education system. Education for white children is both free and compulsory, education for black children is grossly inferior, teachers badly trained. South African army personnel are present in the classrooms, fully armed to intimidate teaching staff. Subjects are not taught in English but Afrikaans, a tool of oppression. Schools in the north have been closed because of the war, and buildings for new schools stopped. As a result only 1% of black adult Namibians have completed secondary education. Opportunities for further education are very limited.

The United Nations Institute for Namibia has estimated the infant mortality rate for black children in Namibia to be 155 per 1,000, seven times higher than for whites. A survey by Oxfam of 714 pre-school children found 25% to be underweight, 15.3% stunted with evidence of chronic malnutrition and 11.4% showed evidence of wasting and recent malnutrition. Children in Namibia still die from preventable diseases. Black infants are 40 times more at risk of dying from gastroenteritis, meningitis and tuberculosis than white infants.

Information on Namibia

Namibia is a country ravaged by war and occupation. Firstly the Germans in the nineteenth century carried out a campaign of genocide against the Namibian people. After the First World War, having invaded Namibia on Britain's behalf in 1915, South Africa was granted a mandate by the League of Nations to administer the country 'in the best interests of the indigenous population'.

South Africa's approach to its Mandate was to impose the policies of white domination on Namibia. She then refused to enter into a trustee agreement when the United Nations was formed and, with no resolution possible, in October 1966 the UN General Assembly terminated the mandate, from which time the occupation has been illegal. The UN Security Council in 1969, and the International Court of Justice in 1971, have affirmed this decision.

South Africa's response has since been brutally explicit. Over 100,000 South African troops maintain the occupation by sheer force: Namibia's population is only one and a half million. One in ten Namibians has been forced to flee into exile. Much of the country is under martial law and has been since the 70s. The British Council of Churches has described the occupation and activities of the South African troops and police as 'a reign of terror'.

SWAPO of Namibia, the national liberation movement founded in 1960, has united and led the overwhelming majority of the Namibian people in the struggle for independence. That's why the UN has recognised SWAPO as the 'sole authentic representative' of the Namibian people. Since 1966 SWAPO has embarked on an armed struggle against South Africa's occupation after the failure of diplomatic and legal efforts. Additionally, growing mass opposition to the occupation has involved students in widespread boycotts; the youth organizing against conscription into apartheid's army; and the development of militant trade unionism through the National Union of Namibian Workers and its growing number of affiliates.

The agreed basis of a settlement is UN Security Council Resolution UNSCR 435. Adopted back in September 1978, it set out the framework for transition to Namibian independence. South Africa, despite agreeing to the plan in 1979, has blocked its implementation -backed by the use of the veto by Britain and the US against mandatory sanctions in the UN Security Council, and by US insistence on linking the issue of Namibian independence with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Today, 10 years later, Namibia is still not free.

The current negotiations to resolve the conflict in Angola and Namibia will only have a successful outcome if the international community brings pressure to bear on South Africa to implement UNSCR 435.

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Registration Form

I/we wish to attend the
Children-Apartheid & Repression Seminar

Name _____
Organisation _____
Address _____

I/we would like creche facilities
I/we are unable to attend the Seminar but would like to be
kept informed of the work of the SATIS Committee on
Children (please tick box)

Registration Fee

£10 organisations, £5 individuals
£2.50 students, nurses, unwaged

The SATIS Committee on Children urgently needs financial
and human resources to promote the campaign to free
children from apartheid. All donations are welcome.

I enclose the fee of _____
Donation of _____ Total sum of _____
(please make cheques payable to SATIS)

Return completed application forms to:
SATIS (Southern Africa the Imprisoned Society)
13 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DW
