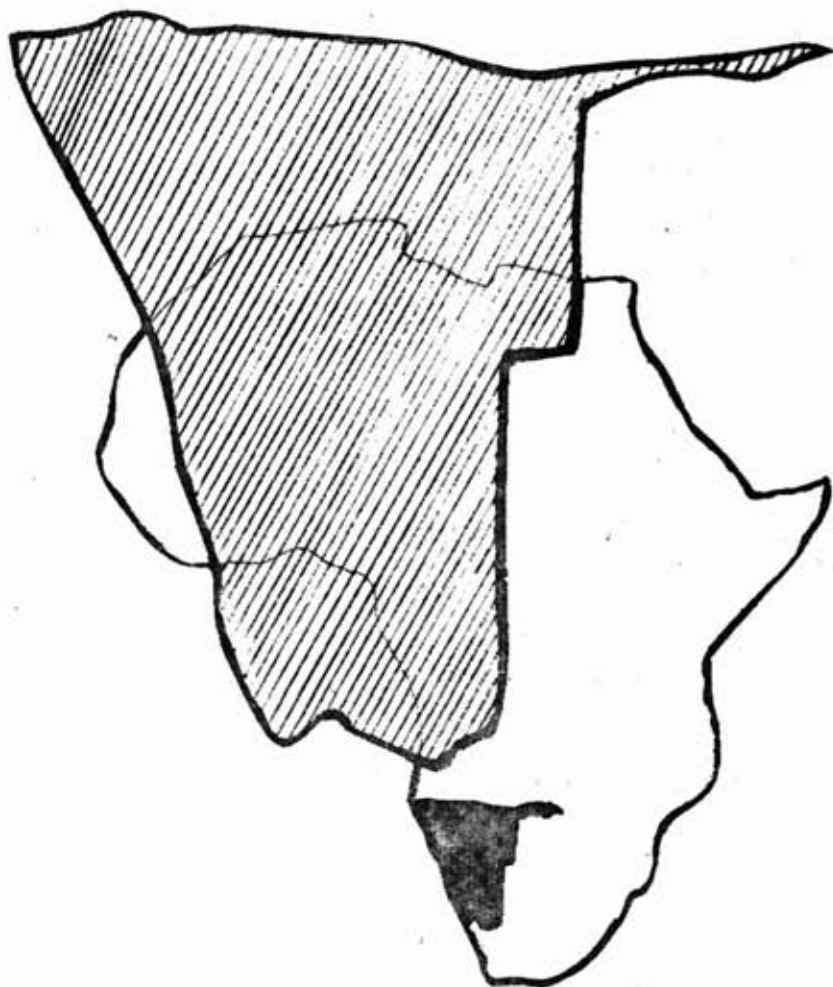


# THIS IS NAMIBIA...



**SWAPO** IS THE **U**NITED **N**ATIONS-  
RECOGNIZED REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE

*Created by SASC*

## THIS IS NAMIBIA

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If you are Black and you live in White-minority-ruled Namibia (South West Africa), you do NOT have:

- the right to live where you choose,
- the right to work where you want or to negotiate the wages for which you are willing to work,
- the right to freedom of speech,
- the right of freedom of assembly, or
- freedom of the press.

In other words, Namibians are deprived of all the basic human rights. As soon as you reach 16 years of age, you must leave school -- if you've been fortunate enough to go to school at all -- and register for work. You are given a "passbook" which, for the rest of your life, you must carry or risk being imprisoned. Your children will not be able to look forward to a better life; in fact, it will likely be worse. If you protest your job, or leave a job without permission, your employer will have you returned and flogged. Protests about living conditions are met with equally harsh treatment.

Since 1884, when Europe divided up Africa and Germany received South West Africa as part of its territory, the indigenous people have had bad times. The German colonial government appropriated the arable land for European settlement; if the local people wouldn't move, they were killed. There were almost no schools, little health care, and only menial jobs were given to Blacks who were expected to work for pennies a day.

After World War I, the League of Nations permitted South Africa to administer Namibia. Instead of things getting better, South Africa instituted the same minority-rule system that had been developed in South Africa. The entire country was divided into ten Black homelands and the majority of the country was reserved for Whites. The Bantustan (Homeland) policy, with its attendant apartheid and con-

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tract labor systems, was instituted. Bantustans have been called independent countries, and it has been said that people are not forced to work on the European ranches and farms and in the mines outside the Bantustans, but this is contrary to the economic reality. Ovamboland (Homeland), for example, in northern Namibia, is a dry area where very little food can be grown unless there is an unusual amount of rainfall. There is no industry or any other kind of job in the area. A family has to pay taxes (head tax, land tax, whatever it is called) and people have to buy necessary items. For these things the local people have to have cash; thus they accept contract labor jobs. They are somewhat similar to contract labor in the United States except that usually only men (heads of families) contract for work in Namibia. The contract may be for six months but it is usually for two or three years. During the duration of the contract, a man cannot visit his family, he lives in a dormitory room, sleeps on a concrete bunk, has no running water, has little food and clothing and is often exposed to dangerous levels of cancer-causing agents in the mines. This latter situation is particularly true at the Rossing (uranium) Mine, near Swakopmund, where the workers wear their work clothes to the residential compounds. There are few safety precautions and medical care is insignificant.

The League of Nations Mandate became defunct when the League ceased to exist, but South Africa continued to administer Namibia. Finally, it came to the attention of the United Nations that South Africa had failed to bring South West Africa to free and independent status. As a result, on October 27, 1966, the United Nations General Assembly resolved that South Africa had no further right to administer the territory. In June 1968, the UN Council for Namibia became the body with overall legal and administrative responsibility until such time as the country achieved independence, which was to be brought about as quickly as possible. The Security Council endorsed the termination of the Mandate and called on South Africa to withdraw from Namibia immediately. South Africa's refusal prompted the Security Council to seek the opinion of the International Court of Justice. On June 21, 1971, the Court upheld the Security Council position, but still South Africa continued to control Namibia.

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The South West Africa Peoples' Organization (SWAPO) was formed, in 1960, to bring about independence for Namibia through peaceful means. By the mid-1960s the Namibian people realized they were going to have to defend themselves. They formed the Peoples' Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) in order to defend themselves against South Africa's armed forces and to secure the total independence of Namibia. As a result of the mass support for these organizations, the United Nations General Assembly, on December 13, 1973, recognized SWAPO as the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people, and gave the organization full observer status in the General Assembly and rights of participation in all UN agencies. In September 1974, UN Decree No. 1, for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia, was established. The Decree stated that not only were all multinational mining operations in the territory illegal, they were also liable to claims for damages from a future, internationally-recognized government of Namibia.

After all this, South Africa still refuses to recognize the United Nations' authority in Namibia. The primary reason lies in Namibia's enormous mineral wealth: diamonds, lead, tin, zinc, copper and the world's largest open-cast uranium mine. In order to develop these resources originally (1966), South Africa accepted capital from many transnational companies; some examples include: Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ, a British-based multinational corporation) to develop the Rossing Mine; Tsumeb Corporation (a U.S.-controlled company) to mine copper, lead and zinc; and Consolidated Diamond Mines (a subsidiary of Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa), which holds a monopoly over diamond mining in Namibia. West German, French and Japanese companies also contracted to buy uranium from Rossing and put up funds to guarantee these contracts.

Under South Africa's Atomic Energy Enrichment Act No. 37 of 1974, the country's Uranium Enrichment Corporation can step in at any time and avail itself of all the uranium resources in its area of control. Thus, as long as South Africa controls Namibia, its uranium supply is assured through the Rossing deposits. At the same time South Africa insures its own supply, it can guarantee uranium to the Western

countries who are importers, such as the Federal Republic of Germany, France and the United Kingdom. South Africa's nuclear capability was stepped up after the Shah's government was over-thrown in 1978, and the new Iranian government cut off South Africa's supply of oil. South Africa now not only has the capability to use enriched uranium in nuclear reactors to produce energy, it has the capability of making atomic weapons. This is particularly dangerous to world security because South Africa is NOT a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Also in 1978, the South African government set up elections in Namibia, to retain control while appearing to give the Namibian people the right to choose their own government. These elections went unrecognized by the international community. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) is regarded simply as a front through which South Africa is attempting to extend its illegal control of Namibia.

South Africa has also intervened militarily in Namibia and has violated Angola's borders in pursuit of Namibian refugees. This was brought to international attention during the Cassinga Massacre (May 4, 1978) when the South African Defense Force killed over 700 Namibian refugees, most of them women and children. The South African regime now has an occupying force of over 70,000 troops in Namibia. The SADF invaded Angola on June 7, 1980, with a force of at least eight infantry battalions. This continued violation of national boundaries is an indication of the regime's desperateness to destabilize SWAPO, and to retain control over Namibia. There are increasing reports that SADF members are deserting rather than serve in Namibia (the situation is beginning to be compared with VietNam). White South Africans are becoming draft resisters and deserters rather than fight an unjust war.

Since 1978, the United Nations has convened several special sessions to deal with the Namibian situation. From July 7 to 11, 1980, hearings were held, by the UN Council for Namibia, on the subject of Namibian Uranium (who controls it, how it is shipped, who enriches it, what safety controls do or do not exist, how dangerous the mining is to the people of Namibia, what South Africa's nuclear capability is at the present time and who is responsible for that capability). On September 11,

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12 and 13, 1980, the International Conference in Solidarity with the Struggle of the People of Namibia was held in Paris. Representatives from 60 government groups, 25 international organizations and 160 non-governmental organizations attended. Support efforts are being emphasized because the United Nations General Assembly is to meet again, in Fall 1980, on the question of total economic sanctions against South Africa.

While South Africa has been doing all of these things in Namibia, negotiations (under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council) have been going on between five Western powers (Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States) and the South African government to bring about free and independent elections in Namibia. Since companies in four out of five of these countries have been or are involved in the exploitation of Namibian uranium and other resources, it appears that the negotiations, under the guise of bringing about a peaceful solution, have been used to prolong the exploitation at the expense of the Namibian people. Starvation, disease and cancer-causing working environments are wrecking the people physically, mentally and emotionally. At the present rate, by the time the Namibian people control their own government, there won't be any resources left to use to up-grade the quality of life.

The next time you pick up a newspaper, notice the words used to describe SWAPO, if indeed there is anything about Namibia in the newspaper. In the U.S., SWAPO is inevitably referred to as a guerilla force instead of being described as the ~~United Nations-recognized~~ representative of the Namibian people. This is a subtle way of supporting South Africa's position. Advocating the Sullivan Principles, which are supposed to regulate the way Black South African workers are treated in various industries in South Africa, instead of advocating withdrawal of United States' industry from South Africa, is another way of protecting American investments and supporting the South African government. Because labor costs are so much lower, owners of industry are able to make much higher profits by taking their plants to places like



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South Africa and Namibia. This strengthens the South African economy and South Africa's control over Namibia, and takes jobs out of the United States.

Americans, who want to see South Africa's exploitive, apartheid regime ended in Namibia, are joining the Divestment movement, supporting total economic sanctions against South Africa, expressing concern about nuclear proliferation and South Africa having the bomb, telling other Americans what is happening in Southern Africa, and are helping to organize material support for SWAPO. If you would like to help, or for further information, call:

Namibia Peace Center at 394-5008, or

the Southern Africa Support Coalition at 232-7012.

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