OPERATION NAMIBIA

A CALL FOR TRANSNATIONAL ACTION

Now is the time for the world community to respond to the critical situation in Namibia (South West Africa). This promises to be a crucial year — recent events in Namibia and the rest of southern Africa offer some hope that South Africa will lose its grip on that tortured land. But this is not a certainty or even a probability. We need to act now to take advantage of the more unstable and changing situation around Namibia.

OPERATION NAMIBIA is a transnational nonviolent direct action campaign to aid the struggle for freedom in Namibia.

BACKGROUND

South West Africa was under brutal German rule from 1884 to the end of World War I. After the war, the League of Nations gave the territory in trust for South Africa to administer, with the understanding that the trust would be surrendered when South West Africa was "ready for the modern world". Since then, despite UN and World Court orders, South Africa has refused to relinquish Namibia and has wanted to annex it.

South Africa continued the genocidal policies of its predecessor and added a few of its own. Apartheid is more oppressive in Namibia today than in South Africa itself. South Africa's policy of creating "homelands" for the Black Namibians has forced 88% of the population into 25% of that land — land that can't support its inhabitants. Blacks are thus compelled to seek jobs in the White sectors through the contract labor system, which gives them no choice in jobs and sells their labor for extremely low wages to White businesses and industries. Blacks are required by law to carry a pass whenever they leave their compounds. Passes are unavailable except to those on contract.

Conditions in Namibia have been getting worse. Several organizations have been formed inside the country to work for freedom in spite of severe repression. Foremost of these is SWAPO, the South West Africa People's Organization, which has been organizing resistance, including armed struggle, since 1963.
THE SITUATION NOW

We see two main inter-related problems facing Namibia. The first is the grossly inhuman and unjust system of apartheid, which places the Whites (14% of the population) in complete control - causing the impoverishment and virtual enslavement of native Namibians. The second problem is outside exploitation and economic/political domination. Along with being in South Africa’s clutch, Namibia is economically dependent on South Africa, which in turn needs Namibia as a source of cheap labor and raw materials. Presently, in violation of a UN-ordered moratorium on Namibian exports until the political question is solved, Namibia’s extremely valuable mineral resources are being stolen by foreign corporations for the benefit of industrialized Western nations.

The UN Security Council has unanimously ordered South Africa’s illegal administration out by May 31, or else ... (??) Even if South Africa complies (superficially - enough to satisfy the UN), the two main problems we outlined will most likely continue unchanged. Freedom for Namibia still seems a long way off.

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OPERATION NAMIBIA is an independent interventionary force. Through nonviolent direct action we intend to focus world attention on Namibia, thus making it more difficult for South Africa to carry out its nefarious policies. We hope to be catalysts in the Namibian deadlock, putting new impetus into the struggle for freedom as only a third-party force can. OPERATION NAMIBIA is organizing for three transnational actions:

MAY 31 - a "Free Namibia" day with coordinated symbolic and dramatic demonstrations in various cities around the world, at South African Embassies and Consulates, the UN, or other sites suited to the demand that South Africa get out of Namibia.

Walvis Bay Blockade - to focus on economic exploitation, we are planning a nonviolent blockade of Namibia’s main port, scheduled to occur this Winter (Northern Hemisphere!). The blockade in Namibia would best be accompanied by blockades in other ports receiving Namibian exports and encouraging dockworkers to refuse to unload the illegal cargoes.

Freedom March - a march with a significant transnational contingent into a restricted area of Namibia (perhaps from Angola into Ovamboland). This action would dramatize the appalling conditions inside Namibia and might have an aid component to it. The march would hopefully catalyze resistance inside Namibia at a time when the world is paying attention.

TO MAKE THIS ALL A SUCCESS, we need organizers, participants, money, etc.

Can you help?

For more information about Namibia and the campaign, contact:

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