

Wheeling and dealing Western foreign ministers fly in and out of South Africa trying to shape a solution to the problem of Namibia, the mineral-rich colony ruled by South Africa. The South African government recently issued an ultimatum: the apartheid regime will hold elections in December 1978. Then the South Africans say they will "advise" the winners to permit a UN-supervised election later. This plan excludes SWAPO, the internationally recognized liberation movement that has fought for independence for the last twenty years. SWAPO is now fighting a widening guerrilla war. The Big Five, the Western countries with large investments in Namibia, seek a compromise "moderate" regime that will protect their interests and end the war.

The following series of articles highlights basic features of the battle for Namibia. "Apartheid Won't Budge" gives a nutshell history and an overview of recent diplomatic maneuvers. "Who Gets the Diamonds?" discusses the foreign grip on Namibia's natural wealth and tactical differences between the plans of South African and Western capitalists.

"Day of the Chameleons" unravels the complex scramble for the post-independence spoils. West Germany, for instance, is already seeking a key role in the upcoming phony elections. "They Went to Windhoek" is a remarkable account by a visitor into SWAPO-controlled parts of northern Namibia where firmly entrenched SWAPO guerrillas prepare to prove that any South African-directed independence is a sham. \_\_\_\_\_

# Namibia is Up For Grabs



## Namibia Is Up for Grabs

On the southern fringe of the "Ovamboland Expressway," units of the South African army poise for another round in their increasingly bloody war against Namibian guerrillas. The "expressway" is a cleared strip of land one kilometer wide - a "free fire" zone that marks Namibia's border with Angola. South of the five-strand barbed-wire fence marking the border, the tall, lush grass should make ideal pasturage. Yet no life can be seen because the edgy South Africans are likely to blast away at the smallest movement in the grass.

The well-equipped soldiers of apartheid outnumber the guerrillas by five to one, and the war costs the Pretoria government \$2 million a day. But containing the enemy is a frustrating task. Many of the freedom fighters are not across the border in Angola, but well established in forests and villages behind South African front lines. The Namibians "are more aggressive, better disciplined and know how to use their weapons better" than any other African liberation army, admits one well-known South African military writer.

### Colonial Beginning and Namibian Resistance

South Africa began administering Namibia - then called South West Africa - in 1919 under a mandate from the League of Nations. Following World War II the United Nations, the League's successor, urged South



SWAPO

"Ovamboland Expressway"

## Apartheid Won't Budge

Africa to move Namibia toward independence. When the apartheid government instead proceeded to annex its northern neighbor, the UN terminated the mandate in 1966 and officially assumed jurisdiction over Namibia.

But the UN lacks the power to enforce its decision, and the South African occupation continues. So the actual liberation of Namibia has been left to the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) which,

since its formation in the late 1950s, has challenged South African rule. When years of peaceful protest proved useless, SWAPO finally opted for guerrilla war in the mid-1960s, though the movement also continued legal political work within Namibia. With support from all corners of the country and weapons from a wide range of socialist and African states, SWAPO fighters are now pushing their South African antagonists hard.

Because of South Africa's great economic and military resources, as well as Namibia's geography and sparsely distributed population of about a million, SWAPO cannot win Namibian independence by military means alone. Therefore SWAPO's strategy includes negotiations and international diplomacy, though it is the guerrilla campaign which gives SWAPO its political clout and forces the South Africans on the defensive.

But SWAPO and the Pretoria regime are no longer the only participants in the dispute. The struggle for control of the mineral-rich country intimately affects the whole of Southern Africa, and thus it is part of the worldwide conflict that pits crude capitalist domination against economic independence for Third World countries. Namibia's African neighbors - the so-called Front Line States - and Western powers with large economic and political stakes in the subcontinent, have therefore joined the UN in the campaign to

bring majority rule to Namibia.

### The Balance Shifts

The white colonial stranglehold on the region was broken by the 1974 collapse of Portuguese colonialism. By the end of the following year, SWAPO's ability to use independent Angola as a base improved its position tremendously. At the same time, African and socialist countries pressed the UN to step up its activities; Security Council Resolution 385 called for complete South African withdrawal from Namibia and for free, secret elections after a transition period controlled by the UN itself.

The UN, of course, is anathema to all right-thinking white South African Nationalists, and their dour denunciations of the world body were predictable. South Africa's Western allies, on the other hand, saw the long-range effects of Pretoria's intransigence: growing hostility from African and Third World countries toward the West and the escalation of the Namibian war. The US, Britain, France, West Germany, and Canada (exactly those countries which control Namibia's economy together with South Africa) consequently launched their own campaign to bring some sort of independence to Namibia.

Discreet discussions aimed at bringing SWAPO and South Africa to the negotiating table alternated with tougher methods. Near bankrupt Zambia, for in-

stance, is so deep in hock to the IMF\* that it has little room left for political maneuvering (as the reopening of the border with Rhodesia demonstrates). Angola, which desperately needs peace to reconstruct its economy, was openly threatened last summer when President Carter's adviser Brzezinski attempted to resume American support for the anti-communist groups waging war on the MPLA government. South Africa, too, was coaxed to modify its stand. But "the Five" carefully avoided applying economic pressure on their recalcitrant ally, nor did they interfere with its stepped-up repression and military build-up within Namibia.

SWAPO certainly received its share of Western pressure, but rejected the Five's early proposals which would have left the South Africans in effective control. "We are willing and prepared to take political risks inherent in negotiations," SWAPO President Sam Nujoma told the UN General Assembly last April. "What we will not do, however, is to commit the crime of national suicide." Nujoma spoke of the dangers of a large South African presence during the transition period and of South Africa's insistence on keeping Namibia's only port, Walvis Bay, which is vital to the country's economy.

Eager to isolate SWAPO vis-a-vis the West, South Africa expressed agreement with the Five's plan. Then, last June, the

\*International Monetary Fund.

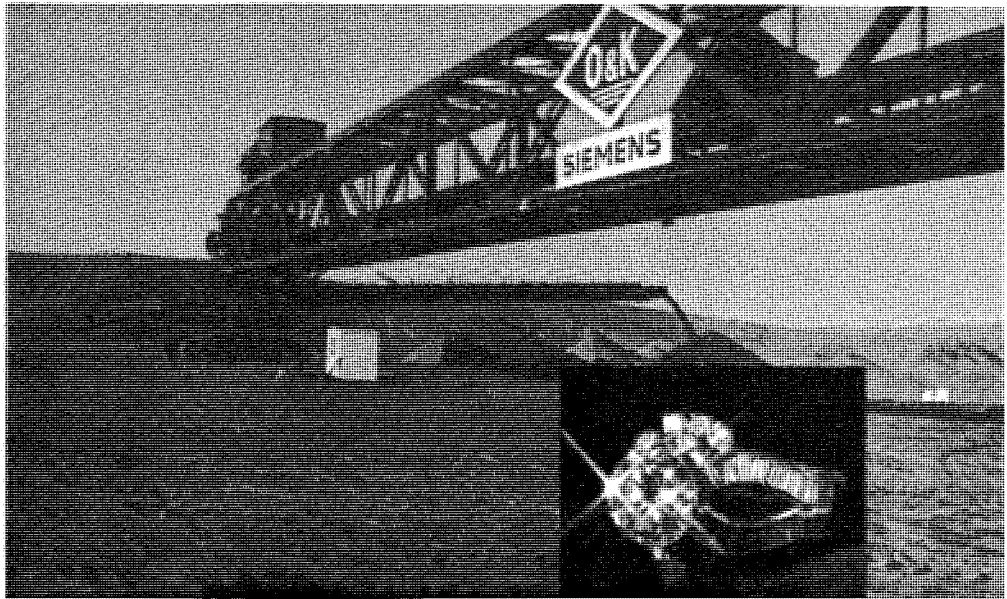
tables suddenly turned when the Front Line States and SWAPO jointly accepted a modified version of the Western plan - despite its falling short of Resolution 385 on several points. The UN Security Council immediately dispatched a delegation to Namibia to work out a plan for elections and the transition to independence.

That plan was approved by the world body and by SWAPO. Now South Africa, caught unprepared by SWAPO's diplomatic flexibility and fearing the movement's election victory, suddenly refused to accept its allies' mediation. "We will negotiate with the West and the UN Secretary-General," said newly elected Prime Minister Pieter Botha, "but we refuse to negotiate on any possible handover to Marxists and subsequent chaos."

That, apparently, was good enough for the Five whose foreign ministers accepted, in mid-October, the South African plan in return for the possibility that South Africa and Namibia's government-to-be might hold UN-supervised elections next year. After all, the West's common economic interests with South Africa and its fear of a radical government in Namibia count for more than any obligations to a small nation.

With SWAPO and the Front Line States' rejection of this "compromise," the Five's diplomatic campaign is likely to lose the momentum of the past year. The people of Namibia are already bracing themselves for another escalation of the war.

# Plunder of a Colony



UN

*Consolidated Diamond Mines at Oranjemund*

## Who Gets the Diamonds?

The diamonds, uranium, and other minerals buried under the Namibian desert make this country one of the richest in Africa. If each of the one million Namibians shared equally in the wealth they produce each year, their income would be four times that of most other Africans. But two-thirds of this wealth leaves Namibia, exported by a handful of giant corporations whose stockholders - South Africans, Britons, and Americans - receive greater profits from

Namibia than do all the people who live there. Neither the corporations nor their governments want Namibia's independence to interfere with this arrangement.

The South African regime cannot afford the breakaway of its colony either. Namibia has been made dependent on the colonial power's goods and administration. South Africa, on the other hand, depends on the natural riches of the "South West" and the revenues they

bring on the international market. Namibia's exports generate huge amounts of foreign exchange to help the hard-pressed South African economy.

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In 1973, a typical year, Namibia's \$190 million surplus more than counterbalanced South Africa's own \$52 million balance of payments deficit. The South Africans also make considerable profit by investing Namibia's surplus tax revenue in South Africa. By 1970, \$100 million had been used this way.

More important still is trade. Namibia imports ninety percent of its goods - from pins to locomotives - from the South. The South Africans, of course, do not like the idea of their trains returning empty, and so they oblige Namibia's white settler farmers to send their cattle to be slaughtered in Cape Town or Johannesburg. The South Africans pay for the meat at fixed prices based on the animals' weight on arrival in the South, ten days after their last feed. The farmers pay the transport. Meanwhile, Namibia's own three slaughterhouses work at half capacity.

In addition to its economic contribution, consider Namibia's strategic importance as a buffer between South Africa and independent black Africa. It be-

comes obvious why the Pretoria government spends \$2 million a day to wage its war against SWAPO.

### The African Economy

Ninety years ago the Namibians, from the Ovambo tribespeople in the north to the Namas in the south, lived off their cattle and their fields. The German occupation at the turn of the century decimated the southern peoples, killing over 150,000 people or more than half the population in the south, and forced them into barren "reserves" where even subsistence farming was impossible. In order to survive, African men migrated to work in the Police Zone, the vast and rich area expropriated by the European masters.

The South Africans, who took over in 1919, continued what the Germans had begun. The Boers destroyed what was left of the independent African economy because the opportunity for self-employment merely "affords these vagrants and loafers an easy means of livelihood which relieves them of any need to work," according to a 1921 government report. Using political and economic pressures, the new regime then set out to strangle the self-sufficient regions in the north.

During recent decades, at any given time about half of all Ovambo men were working "on contract" in the white-settled Police Zone. By the mid-50's all of Namibia's African "homelands," including fertile Ovamboland,

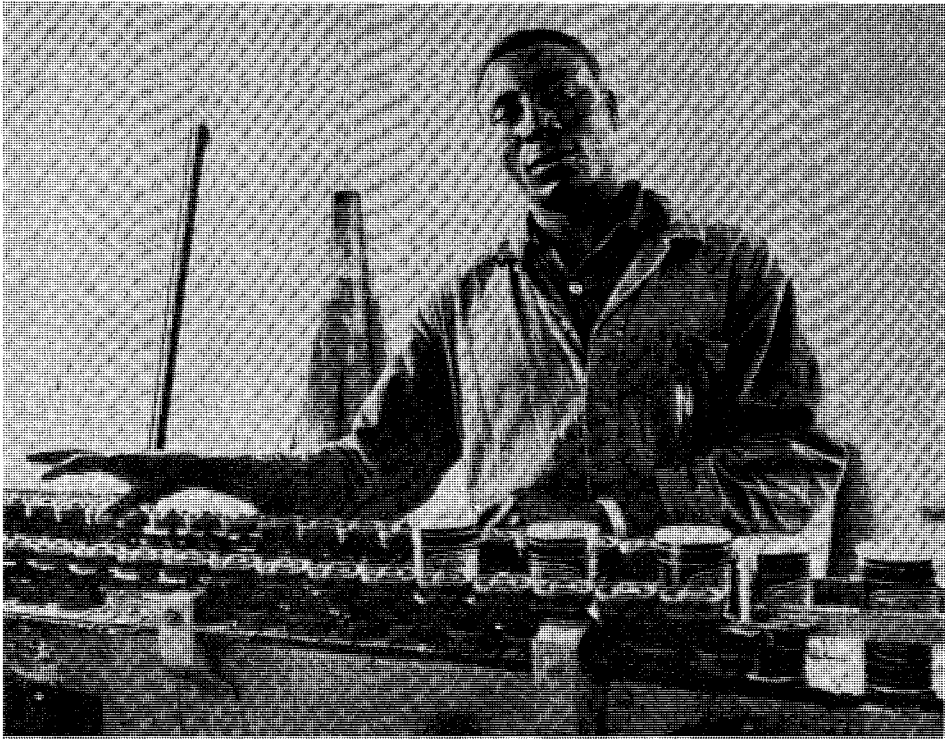
had to import food. Their contribution to the official 1967 Gross Domestic Product was 3 percent, compared to the 70 to 80 percent earned by the foreign-run export sector. African commercial activity is now monopolized by the government's Bantu Investment Corporation whose biggest project to date is a soft drink factory!

But though Namibians were reduced to cheap labor and marginal consumers in their own country, even the white economy did not immediately flourish. The Germans dug out many gem diamonds but did little else. The South Africans suppressed the South West's mining activity to protect their own from competition. And though the government encouraged Afrikaners to settle in the new territory, agricultural production grew slowly for the first 20 years. In fact, agriculture - mainly raising cattle and karakul sheep for fashion clothing - remains a neglected sector of the economy. Equally important is the fishing industry, which since World War II has harvested the sardines and crayfish that thrive off the ports of Walvis Bay and Luderitz. A half dozen South African companies control fishing and canning operations which, like agriculture produce almost entirely for export. In the US, Namibia's fish are marketed by Del Monte. While Walvis Bay's cannery workers live on corn meal, the protein-rich sardines they process are shipped overseas as delicacies or animal feed.

But it was riches from the mines which propelled Namibia out of its prewar backwaters. Rapid economic expansion in South Africa and throughout the capitalist world multiplied demand for the country's minerals. The South African government built roads and gave generous land concessions to mining companies. Tax rates were low and restrictions on profit repatriation few. Super-cheap labor was an added attraction for the Western corporations which rushed in to tap the wealth. Until recently, Namibian contract workers earned only half as much as their South African counterparts. By the late 1950s, mining had become the country's largest economic activity and in 1975 mineral production was worth twice that of fishing and agriculture combined.

Namibia's mining industry is remarkable for its concentrated ownership, its complete control by foreign companies, and its great profitability. Of the fourteen concerns - South African, American, British, Canadian, French, and West German - that take part, the three or four largest take more than half the total profit.

Their traditional leader is the South African-owned Anglo-American Corporation which mines Namibia's high-grade gem diamonds through its De Beers subsidiary. Each year its net profits "exceed investment capital by far" in the estimation of a West German economist. Profits for 1974 were \$96 million, none of which was distributed or re-



*Cannery worker*

invested in Namibia. Starting wage for black workers in the diamond fields is \$3.50 a day.

Anglo-American also controls the SWACO company which mines zinc, lead, tungsten, vanadium, and tin in its Berg Aukas and Brandenburg concessions. In anticipation of Namibian independence, Anglo-American is reportedly stepping up production everywhere. When the firm considered buying into the Tsumeb Corporation a few years back, management looked for a 20 to 25 percent annual return on investment. "It was felt that a quick payback would be desirable in

view of the general uncertainties," their report stated. The same approach is taken by the South African owners of the Klein Aub copper mine. They recovered their initial \$6 million investment in two years!

Copper, as well as zinc, lead, silver, arsenic, and cadmium, has brought wealth to Newmont Mining and American Metal Climax (AMAX), the American owners of the Tsumeb Corporation, who bought their Namibian property, the famed "Jewel Box" mine, for \$3 million at a government auction in 1945. With total capital investment at \$70 million,



Tsumeb's 1974 net earnings were \$19 million - a profit rate of nearly 30 percent. Its high dividends were distributed in the United States, Britain, and South Africa - not at the mines, where the starting wage is \$1.25 a day, rising to \$3.50 after four years.

The attraction of diamonds and copper has been dwarfed by the recent discovery of uranium in the desert sands near Walvis Bay. The scarcity and growing demand for the strategic element in the Western market drove prices up four-fold between 1974 and 1976, with the three main producers - Canada, Australia, and the United States - using their uranium exports for political purposes. By 1980 Namibia will be able to supply enough uranium to supply 10 to 15 percent of the Western countries' energy requirements.

The first company to sniff the uranium scent was the British Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), which now, together with a French firm and a South African state company, operates the Rossing mine. RTZ has wasted no time; in February 1978 the first load of Namibian uranium ore was air-freighted to Britain for processing and re-export by the British government. Other buyers include French and West German private companies. Rossing will reach full operating capacity by the end of this year; shortly thereafter it will have paid back the undisclosed, though necessarily huge, initial investment. Black workers' wages range from \$2.25 to \$14 a day.

## The West Enmeshed

By this open door policy, the Pretoria government has involved the major capitalist countries in the struggle for Namibia, much as in South Africa itself. But while both South Africa and its Western allies want a Namibia friendly to private enterprise and foreign investment, they differ on important questions. For reasons of self-preservation, the Afrikaner Nationalists insist on continued *political* control of the conglomeration of economically impotent "homelands" they plan for the future Namibia. Tribal administrations would be guided by Boer bureaucrats, police, and troops until a class of African officials and businessmen has been reared in the master's image. South Africa would retain the power to intervene politically and militarily in the new nation if the South African government feels its national interests threatened.

Western governments and corporations, supported by a few "liberal" South Africans such as Anglo-American boss Harry Oppenheimer, have more confidence in *economic* power. They argue that a Namibian government, regardless of political orientation, will be in no position to make revolutionary changes. How will it replace South Africa as a source

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"The sooner the fighting stops and the trading starts, the quicker we win." - Andrew Young

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of imports? Who will provide jobs if not the giant corporations? "We don't have to fear communism in the area of economic competition," Andy Young said last year, speaking of Southern Africa. "The sooner the fighting stops and the trading starts, the quicker we win."

Corporations such as RTZ have even sought out SWAPO in attempts to come to an understanding with the liberation movement. Having failed to do so, they simply shrug it off and wait for another opportunity.

The United States and the European countries feel that peace and political stability will promote, not obstruct, their long-range interests in Namibia. It is time for South Africa to relax the reins. For instance, a policy paper from the corporate-sponsored (West) German Development Institute of Berlin concludes that "the ties of the Namibian economy to South Africa obstruct the development of the former." What independent Namibia "requires," the re-

port goes on, is a government which, "rejects any political experiment aimed at altering the economic order" since this would "scare off private economic initiative . . . and overseas capital." The future Namibian government must also "prevent rises in the factor costs - especially rises in wages and salary costs - which endanger the competitiveness of Namibian products." National independence is inevitable - but it must be kept within bounds.

Rich and diverse natural resources do not guarantee the Namibian people a better future. South African-imposed and controlled "independence" would not much alter the lives of the majority of peasants and migrant workers. For SWAPO, the nation's wealth does lend hope to the vision of "building a classless, non-exploitative society." To return Namibia's wealth to Namibians is the towering challenge of the country's liberation.

## Namibia: SWAPO Fights for Freedom

In the mineral-rich colony of Namibia, apartheid rule is being viciously defended by 50,000 South African troops. But 5,000 guerrillas are winning the war with the support of the Namibian people. Interviews, articles, and documents about and by SWAPO's president, Central Committee, guerrilla commander, women militants, and labor organizer provide the most current in-depth information on the war in Namibia. Map, photos, 124 pp. 1978. \$2.95

Namibia:  
SWAPO Fights  
for Freedom



Edited by  
LIBERATION SUPPORT MOVEMENT



*Turnhalle Constitutional Committee led by Dirk Mudge.*

## **Namibian Politics: Day of the Chameleons**

Cheering throngs greeted United Nations Commissioner for Namibia Martti Ahtisaari last July as he arrived in Windhoek, capital of Namibia. Thousands of SWAPO supporters, sporting red, blue, and green T-shirts and slogans such as "Black Power" and "We Stand Behind Nujoma," lined one side of the street, facing off against Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) sympathizers, dressed in black and white, on the other. Though a carnival atmosphere prevailed, armed white policemen with dogs

nervously patrolled the street separating the rivals.

Confrontation between these two groups has not always been so peaceful. After the shooting death in March 1978 of DTA leader and Herero chief Clemens Kapuuo, bands of DTA members with old British .303 rifles attacked the contract workers' quarters in Windhoek's Katatura township, a SWAPO stronghold. Forty people were killed. "At the moment it's too risky for us to start campaigning," said SWAPO's Lucia Hamutenya. "DTA supporters have

threatened to shoot one of us in revenge for Kapuuo."

In northern Namibia, South Africans command the black troops of the Owambo bantustan army fighting against SWAPO guerrillas. Owambo Prime Minister and tribal chief Cornelius Ndjoba welcomed South Africa's May attack against SWAPO bases in Angola. Ndjoba is also a member of the DTA Executive Council.

Is civil war brewing in Namibia? South Africa intends to let the blacks of the bantustan governments increasingly take the front lines in the war against the liberation movement. In this way, the 50,000 South African troops and police in the country will appear to simply maintain "law and order" amid bloody infighting between black Namibian factions. South Afri-

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SWAPO's political and military strength dwarfs that of any other Namibian organization.

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ca's problem, of course, is that SWAPO's political and military strength dwarfs that of any other Namibian organization. Thus South Africa is forced to stay on as occupying power. The "elections" planned for December will not change this reality.

### Turnhalle Turncoats

Ruling Namibia is no longer easy for South Africa. Popular resistance, international pressure, and changes throughout Southern Africa following the collapse of the Portuguese em-

pire have all contributed to the Pretoria government's admission that the old form of control will no longer work. The Turnhalle Conference was launched in 1975 to prepare the ground for some form of South Africa-directed self-rule. The Vorster government appointed delegates from Namibia's eleven population groups, including whites, to the conference.

The Turnhalle Conference was to implement South Africa's bantustan policy in Namibia. This policy was to set up "self-governing homelands" for each black "nation" on a total of 40 percent of the land, while reserving the rest - the most fertile and mineral-rich parts - for white control. Investments were to consolidate the scheme. "The Republic [of South Africa] has much interest in all the schemes for great developments there [Namibia], because it will benefit from them, both economically and politically," stated then Prime Minister Verwoerd.

The Turnhalle delegates bickered among themselves for two years before South Africa demanded a conclusive independence proposal. The final plan recommended a weak multiracial central government, designed to please the Western powers. Most administrative and legislative powers would be divided according to "ethnicity"; i.e. each racial and tribal group was to be responsible for its own affairs with little say in the development of the country as a whole. The tribal leaders would maintain their authority and

privileges, while the tiny white minority together with the foreign corporations would continue the extraction of Namibia's natural wealth. Independence day was set for 31 December 1978.

To oversee Namibia's political emasculation the Vorster government appointed a South African judge, Marthinus Steyn, as Administrator-General. Steyn was given dictatorial powers which he has since zealously applied. Scores of SWAPO members have been jailed without charges; prison terms of three years plus \$4,000 fines have been set for anybody who "discourages" or "intimidates" voters in the upcoming election.

Responding to Roman Catholic Church complaints of violence by police under his command, the judge lamented: "A few cases of torture against prisoners will unfortunately happen from time to time; human beings are what they are."

### Campaigning in Style

South Africa's search for indigenous caretakers for its Namibian estate opened the floodgates to self-serving and opportunist politics. Overnight the rush for collaborators' crumbs was on as scores of ambitious petty bourgeois, black and white, each gathered a few friends and formed a political "party." Between them they covered the range from the white-supremacist right to SWAPO defectors now weary of the liberation struggle. Some of these parties lasted no more than a

week; others joined together in blocs to stay in contention.

Luxuriously appointed aircraft for in-flight conferences, helicopters and light planes for fast cross-country travel, a fleet of trucks with mine-detecting equipment, a bullet-proof Mercedes and flak jackets to protect top officials, closed-circuit television in the main shops of the capital: are these the resources of a government or a multinational corporation? No, just the campaign accessories of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, the prime contender in the planned elections. If Namibia had more rivers and lakes, the joke goes, the DTA would certainly have submarines at its disposal.

The DTA was formed in late 1977 as an alliance of the Turnhalle delegations. Strongly pro-South Africa and in favor of racial and tribal separation, the alliance nevertheless "planned to reach across all racial barriers to keep SWAPO out of power," wrote the *Johannesburg Star*. Its leaders include Dirk Mudge of the white Republican Party, Owambo head Ndjoba, and Herero chief Kuamina Ruruako, who recently left his home in the US to take the position left vacant by Kapuuo's death.

In rural areas the DTA relies exclusively on South African-financed tribal administrations to drum up support. Huge amounts of money have been spent - on planes, cars, and fancy parties - to sell the bantustan idea. In the towns, those whites of South African descent who suddenly see



Cornelius Ndjoba

the need to establish some kind of "Namibian" identity are now joining Mudge's party, as is the powerful Interessengemeinschaft, the German-speakers' Representative Committee.

Through the German-language committee the DTA has close ties with the conservative West German CDU-CSU\* political parties which have opened an office in downtown Windhoek. The function of this office, says one of its staff, is to "give political and technical training" to the DTA groups and to "join in the politics of the country [Namibia] by financial aid and political advice in the election campaign." CSU election posters, models for local adaptation, are stacked high in DTA offices. The West Germans have large investments in Namibia and close ties to the

\*Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union.

approximately 20,000 German descendents there.

CSU leader and big-game hunter Franz Josef Strauss had this to say during his recent visit to Namibia: "I've heard nothing to indicate that the South African security forces interfere in the domestic politics of the country. On the contrary, their task is to provide law and order, to prevent the population from being terrorized." And who does the terrorizing? Strauss describes "an organization led from abroad, namely from Moscow" whose goal is "to establish a police state largely dominated by the Soviets."

Not all the West Germany money flows through the overt CDU-CSU conduit. Six months ago an obscure Westphalian publisher suddenly bought Namibia's two largest daily newspapers, the German-language *Allgemeine Zeitung* and the English-language *Windhoek Advertiser*, and promptly turned them into straight DTA mouthpieces. "I take my orders from Bonn," the German blurted out when criticized for the heavy-handed takeover.

Though the DTA is the strongest of the anti-SWAPO parties, observers predict it could win no more than 20 to 30 percent of the vote in an open election (with SWAPO winning more than 50 percent). To strengthen its position, the alliance has resorted to intimidation. Two Finnish researchers who visited Namibia last May observed the following: "Outside the Onandjokue missionary hospital DTA men distributed

membership cards to incoming patients, saying that they would not be treated unless they took the cards. In other places people have been threatened with the loss of their pensions, cattle, jobs, etc. unless they take DTA cards. When we visited some very poor families on a farm near Windhoek, the people showed us DTA cards saying that the farmer compelled them to take the cards. Those people actually thought that they had already voted." Some Namibians who objected to the cards were told: "Go ask SWAPO for a job."

With a DTA ballot victory, South Africa and the giant corporations will have set up their Namibian front. On the other hand, the alliance's close association with Pretoria serves to undermine its popularity with most Namibians. If it formed a government would it be any more capable than Rhodesia's "Internal Settlement" regime of ending the guerrilla war?

### SWAPO's Program

In contrast SWAPO's goals and methods are clearly enunciated in the movement's program. Its tasks are outlined as "(a) The liberation and winning of independence for the people of Namibia, by all possible means, and the establishment of a democratic people's government and (b) The realization of genuine and total independence of Namibia in the spheres of politics, economy, defence, social and cultural affairs." SWAPO

pledges to battle exploitation and "ensure that all the major means of production and exchange in the country are owned by the people."

By offering this striking alternative to South African rule and foreign economic domination, SWAPO has won the majority of popular support even in the view of most neutral observers. Many small parties, from all ethnic groups and all parts of the country, have allied themselves with the movement.

But though SWAPO has been able to work legally aboveground inside Namibia at the same time as it prosecutes the military struggle, this situation will not likely last for long. Harassment, arrests, and murders of SWAPO militants are on the increase - one price paid for legal political activity. And

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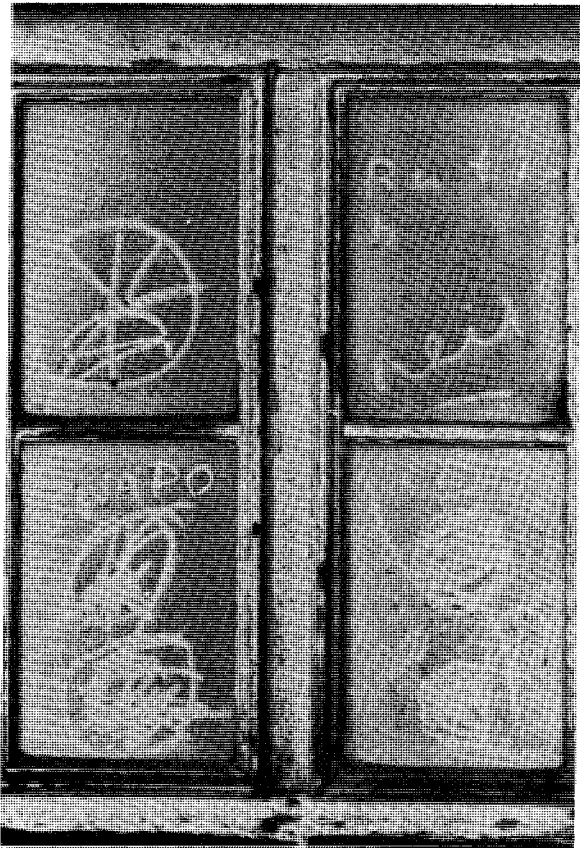
The liberation movement has no choice but to step up its guerrilla war.

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many expect that immediately after the South African election, from which SWAPO is barred from participation, the winners will immediately outlaw SWAPO. Thus the liberation movement has no choice but to step up its guerrilla war.

### Room in the Middle

With the advocates of revolution and reaction locked in battle, a "third force" inevitably sees its chance. The Namibian National Front (NNF) is a loose alliance of liberal whites in



*SWAPO's initials scrawled on a window in Swakopmund.*

Bryan O'Linn's Federal Party, a few returned exiles calling themselves SWAPO-Democrats, and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), a small group of black intellectual radicals-turned-moderate.

The NNF presents itself as the reasonable alternative to right and left extremism. "We are opposed to anything that smacks of racism and ethnicity," says SWAPO-Democrat Othilie

Abrahams, just returned after fifteen years in Sweden, commenting on the DTA. On the other hand, according to lawyer O'Linn, who serves as the front's secretary-general, SWAPO will only substitute a black dictatorship for the present white one. The NNF partners also stress the need for individual liberties and a "mixed economy."

The NNF hopes to rally much-needed support through the prominence and gregarious personality of Andreas Shipanga, head of SWAPO-Democrat. Shipanga is one of the founders of the Namibian nationalist movement and during his early years as a SWAPO organizer traveled a great deal in the country. As a member of SWAPO's leadership abroad, he later established wide-ranging contacts throughout Africa and Europe, contacts which he used in his 1976 attempt to undercut SWAPO's guerrilla war and take the movement into a compromise with South Africa. Expelled from SWAPO and jailed for two years in Tanzania before returning to Windhoek last August, he now pursues this same course in the NNF. "It's dangerous nonsense to believe that the South African army can be defeated militarily," he told a Swedish journalist. "If we today can achieve the same by diplomacy as by armed struggle, then why not?"

According to some reports, Shipanga has been in touch with UNITA to "borrow" some guerrillas to be presented as SWAPO



defectors who have rallied to the NNF. (UNITA is a South African-backed rebel group fighting the Angolan government.) "His sole aim was to come and split SWAPO, but he doesn't stand a chance," said the movement's vice president.

Trying hard to find its place between SWAPO and the DTA, the NNF has been careful not to alienate South Africa and Western economic interests. A Front delegation visited West Germany last July while the leader of the German-South African Association promised funding for the NNF as well as the DTA because "the outcome of the forthcoming struggle between liberal democracy and marxist dictatorship [in Namibia] will have a bearing on the destiny of Southern Africa as a whole."

Heavily dominated by intellectuals and without an apparent mass base, NNF's domestic support remains untested. The Front needs more time to organize and says it will boycott the South African-organized elections set for December. The South African plan "will certainly lead us to another Rhodesian, Angolan, or even Vietnam situation in this country," O'Linn warned in September.

But whatever NNF's approach to elections, the main question remains: In a country run by foreign capital and internally polarized by civil war, how much middle ground is left?

### SWAPO Perserveres

While the DTA, NNF, and others jockey for positions through the ballot show, Namibia's main political force - SWAPO - is everywhere and nowhere. Its official leaders are either in exile or in prison, locked up on special order from Administrator-General Steyn. "We'll beat them," he crowed after dispatching his security squads last April, "and we'll beat them again until they no longer have any power."

But the administrator-general may be beating little but empty space. Seemingly spontaneous workers' strikes, flash demonstrations, and a general air of contemptuous indifference toward those who play South Africa's game clearly show the liberation movement's omnipresence. With DTA cards in their pockets, SWAPO organizers move about the country, preparing the population for true independence, free of South Africa, the Western Five, and the multinational corporations.

## Namibia is up for grabs

In March a Swedish TV film crew marched into Namibia with combatants from PLAN (SWAPO's army), filming their work among the people in SWAPO-controlled areas in the north. Per Sanden, who led the film crew, had been in the operational area before, in 1973-4. He writes of the developments in the war of liberation in the last four years.

The commander came in his red cap with the Lenin badge on it. He had just been to inspect the border. We were waiting for him, hiding in a ditch. Some miles away was Elundu, under heavy fire from a PLAN unit who had gone with the commander. He ordered our defence to take their positions. We were on our way into Namibia.

With Elundu under heavy attack, our unit expected to cross without any problems. We were given our positions in a line. In front of me was Comrade Peter Nanyemba, SWAPO Secretary for Defence, and behind me was Comrade Jesaya Nyamu, SWAPO Deputy Secretary for Information and Publicity. In a wide circle around us were our defence - 250 well-trained and heavily equipped guerrillas of PLAN - the People's Liberation Army of Namibia.

When I swam across the Cuando river into Namibia on the last day of 1973, there was no frontier to be seen - no fence, no guard towers and no sound of heavy artillery fire. This time, here in the Kaokoveld area of Ovamboland, there was all of that. We walked for some four

# They Went to Windhoek



SWAPO

SWAPO Secretary of Defence, Peter Nanyemba, with Per Sanden.

hours. The blasts from the South African artillery and SWAPO mortars increased in strength all the time. We were definitely into the war of liberation in Namibia.

There is a stretch in the northern part of Namibia, close to the Angolan border, where the South African military presence is considerable. We were told that we would be safe as soon as we got through that area, and

into a SWAPO liberated area, further to the south. That became apparent to us ten hours later. But with 250 dedicated guerrillas from PLAN, the crossing of the border seemed no more dangerous than the crossing of any street in a crowded city in Europe - probably far less so.

We crossed the border in broad daylight. What the South African regime had planned to be a wall against "black Africa" is no longer in their control. The South African troops in the far north of Namibia stick to their bases. They dare not venture out into the Ovamboland countryside unless there are many of them, and they have the full protection of armoured cars, tanks and air-borne support. The day we crossed into Namibia, they must have thought that they were safe in their base at Elundu.

At the point where we crossed there used to be a South African base until November last year, when it was attacked and destroyed by SWAPO forces. Signs of the South African presence were still visible. Army food and Fanta cans glimmering in the sun. And the trees and bushes around us were all distorted by bullets and grenades. Comrade Petrov, one of the PLAN guerrillas accompanying us was there that day in November when PLAN decided to clear the area of the occupying forces. He knelt down beside me and said: "I aimed at that tree with my bazooka," pointing at a stump in the middle of the former base. That became a signal for the rest of the PLAN unit to open fire. Cartridge

shells were lying all around. Many of them had been fired by FAR automatic rifles, weapons used by the South African troops, supplied to them by NATO-member countries. Something else was also noticeable in the area of the former base - ant-heaps where the ants were tunnelling down into the earth. They marked the spots where there were graves. The South Africans bury their dead on the spot. It would be too embarrassing and demoralising for them to take back to South Africa all their men killed in action. Their numbers are in the hundreds.

Walking along, I noticed an open tin, and reached down to check what it had contained. A comrade from PLAN hastily grabbed my hand to stop me, explaining to me that the tin was a trap. It was a grenade that would have exploded as soon as someone picked it up. The South Africans have long been using this kind of warfare against the local population - tactics which they themselves describe as terrorism, and blame on SWAPO. As well as planting anti-personnel mines, they poison the water supplies.

We crossed a major road linking Oshakati with the Angolan border. The fighting at Elundu had died out. Two days later, we met the captured Boer soldier, Johan Van der Mescht. He was lucky. He survived the attack at Elundu and became the first white South African soldier to become a prisoner of war in the Namibian war. He had served guarding the water supply

to the base of Elundu. All his fellow soldiers at that post were killed. With three slight wounds, he had laid down his rifle and given himself up to the unit that had gone with our commander the night before we crossed into Namibia. Johan Van der Mescht is 24. When his base was attacked, he did not expect to become 25. Even after he was captured, he thought he was finished. But SWAPO recognises the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war. Van der Mescht had his wounds attended to by a SWAPO doctor, and he was brought out of the war zone. We later met him in Luanda, where he was presented at a press conference, looking very much at ease. He had been given facilities to communicate with his wife and family in South Africa. If and when he is released is up to the South African government. A prisoner of war is freed in exchange for other prisoners of war. But will South Africa give up SWAPO militants in South African prisons?

Continuing our journey southwards after the border crossing, the African night swallowed us up, and we had not yet reached the SWAPO base that was our goal the day of our crossing. The rain came, welcomed by the farmers in Ovamboland, but not so welcomed by us. When it rains in Africa, it rains a lot. But we had to proceed. Would we find the base? Could we avoid getting trapped and ambushed? I did not feel my best as we made our way through the darkness. Not so our defence. They were

very much at home - they probably knew every tree and bush in the area. I walked into a thorn, the kind the Boers call "wait a minute." There was no time to wait! It went into my eye, which I covered with my hand, only to notice no difference. I closed the other eye, and found that whether I kept my eyes open or closed, there was nothing to see. It was completely dark in Ovamboland that night. A guerrilla soldier took hold of my hand, and holding it we marched for another five hours. I came to think a lot, holding his hand.

I come from Stockholm in Sweden, one of many industrialised countries with electricity, flashlights and all other kinds of commodities. Here, in the bush of Ovamboland, I of course could not switch on my flashlight. But neither could the South Africans. They must feel even more deserted in the world than I felt that night. I was with the guerrillas. And the night belongs to them. It made me even more convinced that this war will never be won by South Africa.

We did reach the SWAPO base. No search for it - we went right into it, passing into the liberated areas of SWAPO in Ovamboland. The base is not very far from Oshakati. Close enough for us to reach a shop selling beers - Windhoek lagers. Comrade Nanyemba bought it for me, and it was very welcome that night.

In 1973-74, we once approached a village in the Kalonga district of the Caprivi region. It was not far from a village that had



SWAPO

*Namibian villagers greet SWAPO militants.*

been burnt out by the South African troops, and 150 people massacred. The villagers of the still-existing village saw us coming. They saw two white men, and even though we were accompanied by black people, they fled, as white people in that area meant terror and bloodshed. After a while, the SWAPO officials who were with us calmed them down and they returned to the village. I noticed one of the small children staring at me. He said something and everyone laughed. He had asked his mother: "Does it hurt?" The mother asked what, and, still staring at me, he replied: "to be without skin."

In the village that we stayed in this time, the villagers had been warned that we were coming and the children were used to white people. But a similar incident did happen in another village. The South African troops had just made a raid outside one of their bases, with armoured cars and artillery, on

a village near Kongo in eastern Ovamboland. It was not completely destroyed, but five people were killed and all the crops burned. We arrived at this village the day after this attack. The villagers first made an attempt to flee, until they realised that we were with a PLAN unit, and then they stayed on. Indeed they gave us a very warm reception, which included omaongo, a very tasty drink made from Marura. Omaongo is served at most of the PLAN bases in Ovamboland. Wheat is grown at SWAPO agricultural schemes all over the north of Namibia. Today, PLAN are so many that they cannot possibly rely on feed supplies from the civilian population. So they grow their own crops and raise their own cattle. It is probably more common for PLAN to provide the local population with food than the reverse.

Where SWAPO is operating militarily, in northern Namibia, is also the area that is most

densely populated. This is a significant fact. A guerrilla war must rely on intimate relationships between the people and its armed forces. Where there are many people living is where PLAN is strongest and SWAPO politically well-rooted. The task of PLAN, as the military wing of SWAPO, is primarily to defend the people against terrorism of the occupying South African forces. This is most important in the north since that is where the majority of the Namibian people live, and also where the majority of the South African troops are. It is where SWAPO has created large liberated areas, and succeeded in its first task.

A PLAN officer, Comrade Pondo, who had just joined us at the base where we were, pulled a packet of cigarettes from his pocket. Lexington. Where did you get those from? I asked. "From Windhoek," he replied matter-of-factly. "That is where I spend a lot of my time! You see our enemy still fight in our territory (the north) and then return to the safety of the cities. We cannot allow him any rest wherever he goes in our country. We have to follow him where he does not expect to hear about the war. And that is right there, in the beer halls of Windhoek. If our land, our trees, our waters are destroyed during the course of this year, it will have a crucial effect on the future free Namibia. But if we move the battle into the beer halls and the streets of our enemies, that is better. The Namibian people can do without beer halls after independence,

and we can rebuild our own streets. I only return to these areas from time to time to replenish our ammunition supplies."

SWAPO President Sam Nujoma said to me in 1973-74 that "this will be a long and bitter war, but we will go on fighting for centuries if necessary to achieve our independence from fascist South Africa." In 1974 in the Caprivi, he asked me my impressions. I said, "you will not have to fight for centuries, one generation will do." Now, in March 1978, right in the centre of Ovamboland, the night before President Nujoma had to start his journey out of Namibia to get to Lusaka for a meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia, he asked me if I still believed it would take SWAPO a generation to achieve their goal. I said I felt ashamed for what I had said only four years ago. He replied: "Don't feel ashamed. Sometimes progress is made very quickly, sometimes progress takes a long time. But what is important is the people's willingness to sacrifice for freedom and independence. And this I think we are, so the end will be what we want it to be." I could only say "Yes, I think that I have to hurry back to Sweden to complete our film before you are already in Windhoek.

Next morning he had gone. So had Comrade Pondo. "Where is Pondo?" I asked.

"He went with Comrade Petrov and his unit."

"But where? I would like one of his Lexingtons."

"They went to Windhoek."

# SWAPO Printshop Training Begins

LSM is pleased to announce that two comrades from SWAPO arrived at our printshop in California in October and have begun training in graphics skills. This project would not have been possible without the support of many people, including our readers; we know those who have contributed to the printshop project share our excitement and enthusiasm.

As much as possible, training will be done on publications prepared by SWAPO. Areas of training to be covered include design and layout; litho camera; stripping; plate burning; printing; and the final stages of folding, binding, and trimming. The objective is to develop two cadres capable of running a printshop on their own, producing complete books, and training others.

LSM and SWAPO had determined that LSM's printshop would be the best place for the training to take place. The process of obtaining visas was time-consuming, but the visas finally came through in September.

## MORE FUNDS NEEDED

We slowed fundraising work while we waited for the visas. Enough money had already been raised for supplies, airfare, and the equipment for SWAPO's printshop which is waiting to

be set up in Luanda, Angola. Now that the training is underway, we need your help to raise additional funds to cover subsistence for the two trainees while they are in the United States. You can help in several ways. LSM will be organizing benefits. Groups can organize their own events and publicize the renewed fundraising campaign. But we also need an increased flow of contributions; we would like to revive the idea of donating one day's pay per month, perhaps for six months. You can also help by purchasing and distributing SWAPO posters and T-shirts; proceeds go directly into the project. Your support now will help push the project over the top.

