

# Southern Africa **REPORT**

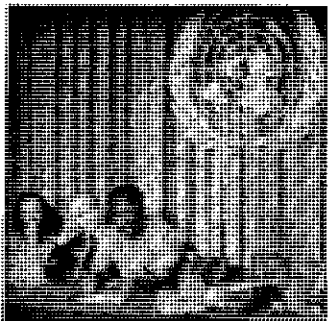
Vol. 3 No. 2

October 1987

## Namibia: The Forgotten Front

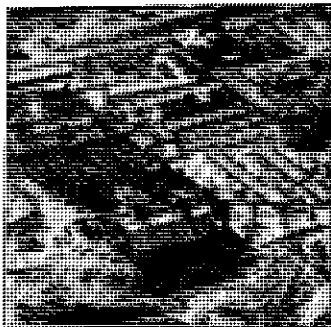
OCT 27 1987

*SWAPO,  
the Commonwealth  
and "the West"*



*by Brian Wood*

*Canada's Policy  
Towards Namibia*



*by Renate Pratt*

*Target Angola:  
The US - SA  
Conspiracy*



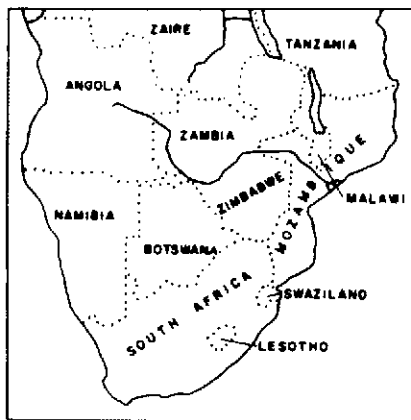
*by Victoria Brittain*

price \$2.00

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 3 No. 2

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## Southern Africa REPORT

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# Namibia: The Forgotten Issue

Namibia – the forgotten issue, the forgotten struggle, the “forgotten front-line”. In Canada, developments inside South Africa have, in recent years, begun to be granted something of their deserved prominence – as have debates about the appropriate response (sanctions? support for armed struggle? and the like). More recently, too, South Africa’s wars of aggression against the independent “Front-line States” of southern Africa have also begun to be exposed to the light of day, and some signs of serious discussion about how best to assist these states are evident. Needless to say, much in the way of public education and positive action remains to be accomplished in each of these spheres. Yet how much more is this true of *Namibia*, a small but cruelly treated country lost, somehow, amidst the

smoke from the more prominent battles in the war for southern Africa.

The suffering in Namibia has been staggering. Since 1966, when the United Nations finally terminated Pretoria’s old League of Nations mandate to govern Namibia “as a sacred trust of civilization”, and the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) launched the war for independence, upwards of 16,000 of the territory’s 1.5 million black people have been killed, the overwhelming majority by South African occupation forces. Between 70,000 and 80,000 Namibians have fled into exile to escape the brutal counterinsurgency, while those who remain behind in the “Operational Area”, a virtual free fire zone that covers the northern third of the territory, are subjected to a blanket

dusk-to-dawn curfew, arbitrary detention, and systematic torture.

In short, it seems necessary to remind ourselves once again of the basic facts of the matter in Namibia: South Africa’s illegal occupation; the on-going efforts by SWAPO to spearhead, on diverse fronts, the struggle of the Namibian people for freedom. It is for this reason that we have built the present issue of *Southern African REPORT* around a lead article (by Brian Wood) which specifies crisply the situation there. Wood, writing from London, also emphasizes the nature of the British connection to Namibia while Renate Pratt, in a second major article, reviews the sorry case of Canada’s own policy towards that country.

Canada and Namibia? By virtue of our brief presence on the U.N.

Security Council in 1977 Canada was thrust momentarily into the big power limelight, as a member of the "contact group" of five western countries. Charged as "honest brokers" with facilitating the observance of various U.N. resolutions on Namibia and easing the termination of the South African presence there, the contact group's initiative broke on the reef of South Africa's intransigence - and of the Reagan Administration's arbitrary proclamation of a necessary linkage between a Namibian settlement and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. (For more on the sordid tale of the "American connection to Namibia and Angola and, in particular, on American intrigue against the Angolan government, we have also included in this issue Victoria Brittain's trenchant survey of the matter.) As Renate Pratt demonstrates, Canada stood mutely by while this U.N. initiative was callously eviscerated. Nor has our government been prepared to launch any other really significant alternative initiative.

Has the time come when Canada could be expected to rejoin the force for a free Namibia? The escalation of Tory anti-apartheid rhetoric in the past year or so - by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in particular - might have led one to anticipate such a development. The most recent indications regarding Canada's approach to South Africa are much less promising; however, we cannot attempt here to analyse in depth Canada's broad policy in this sphere. This topic will be explored at much greater length in our next issue, in the wake of the Commonwealth Conference. Yet in the run-up to the latter Conference there have been some disturbing signs of a toning-down of previous Canadian government commitments to sanctions against South Africa. And when Oliver Tambo came to Canada in August at the Canadian government's own invitation he was, (as another article in this issue documents) received rather churlishly; he was scolded by Mulroney and Secretary of State for External Affairs Minis-

ter Joe Clark for his commitment to "violence" as one necessary tactic to be used in the South African struggle and he was also aggressively red-baited.

How much less likely, then, is Canada to take a firm step forward on the "forgotten issue" of Namibia? Indeed, Brian Wood suggests that Canada may even have been colluding with Britain to keep the Namibia question off the agenda of the Vancouver Commonwealth Conference! Harsh words? Perhaps, yet the fact remains that Canada's overall record on Namibia has not been such as to inspire confidence in our strength of purpose now. Canadians, as others elsewhere, must demand that the fate of the Namibian people be taken seriously and not be treated merely as some marginal side-bar to the larger contestation in southern Africa. We hope that the current issue of *Southern Africa REPORT* will make a positive contribution to the mounting and sustaining of such a demand.



LSM News

# Why Namibia?: SWAPO, the Commonwealth & "the West"

BY BRIAN WOOD

*Brian Wood works with the Namibia Support Committee in London, England and has written widely on southern Africa.*

Will the Vancouver Commonwealth Summit produce anything of significance regarding the burning question of Namibian independence? So far, the leaked agenda indicates that the main southern African issues for action will be aid to the Front-line States, especially Mozambique, and perhaps a mild attempt to challenge the British government once again to agree to effective sanctions against South Africa. Ever since the British government's acceptance of the Reagan diplomacy on Namibia in 1982 (including the arbitrary linkage of Namibia's fate to the question of the presence of Cuban troops in Angola), and especially since the evident failure of that diplomacy to secure the implementation of the UN Plan for Namibia (pursuant to Security Council Resolution 435 calling for free and fair elections in Namibia under UN supervision and control), the Foreign Office in London has maintained a very low profile on Namibia. If London's concern has been not to embarrass Washington, it appears that on the question of Namibia, the Commonwealth consensus has been not to embarrass London. The Canadian government, being the only other Commonwealth member of the now defunct "Contact Group" (see Renate Pratt's article below), has also kept a suspiciously low profile on Namibia – not least within the Commonwealth sphere of action.

The 1983 Commonwealth Summit, aware of the standing invitation to a future Namibian state to join the Commonwealth, had made Namibia a key issue for achieving a

breakthrough in southern Africa. It declared that "if South Africa continues to obstruct the implementation of Resolution 435, the adoption of appropriate measures under the Charter of the United Nations will have to be considered." Yet at the 1985 Summit – occurring just after Washington had moved to repeal the ban on openly arming Unita, combined with its earlier introduction of the linkage policy which effectively deadlocked negotiations – Namibia was hardly mentioned. Not only did this lack of international attention allow Washington and Pretoria to reject the important 1984 proposals made by the Angolan government, but it also allowed Pretoria



leeway to install yet another puppet "interim government" in Namibia, while also moving further to entrench its occupation of southern Angola in conjunction with its surrogate force Unita. (This has particular significance as the proposals entailed the signing of an agreement between the Angolan, Cuban, SWAPO and South African leaders for the implementation of the UN Plan and a phased withdrawal of 20,000 Cuban reinforcement troops from Angola over 36 months.) In each case the actions were taken without countermeasures from the international community.

## Britain's role

Indeed, both the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons' Group mission and that of Geoffrey Howe for the European Community (EC) (with all the media attention which surrounded them) ignored Namibian independence as an issue in dealing with the South African government. Moreover, the British government went so far as to deliberately and quite specifically exclude occupied Namibia from the subsequent EC sanctions package passed in September 1986. As a result, the EC ban on new investment in South Africa does not apply to Namibia – precisely at the time when the "Kudu" gas field 120 km off the southernmost Namibian shore could become a major source of liquid fuel for apartheid. Plans to link this source with the only other field in South Africa – that off Mossell Bay – may enable Pretoria to dispense with over ten percent of its current oil imports and so thwart virtually the only major sanctions measure that does cost the regime dearly. Nor is it coincidental that British and French off-shore engineering companies are already deeply involved in the Kudu and Mossell Bay projects. Of course, this is merely one example of British connivance with Pretoria over Namibia, but it is an example made all the more graphic by the private reception given by Lynda Chalker, Britain's Minister of State for African Affairs, to the minister responsible for the Kudu field within Pretoria's client Namibian regime. The Namibian minister was then given a guided tour of the latest North Sea construction technology!

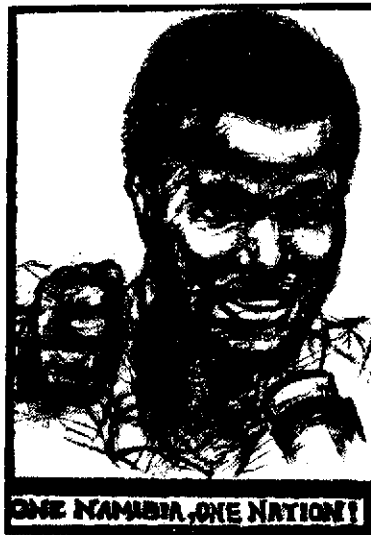
The failure to confront the Tory government over its Namibia policy has already had an incalculable

ble effect on the Namibian people. British investment and trade are currently the mainstay of the Namibian economy and therefore of the public revenues necessary for Pretoria's local occupation regime. Yet none of these economic interests are even remotely "necessary" for Britain, let alone the particular firms involved. The severance of these links until Pretoria implements the UN Plan for Namibia's independence would not affect any of the Front-line States adversely, nor any member of the Commonwealth. Those firms in the other major western states which would stand to gain from such sanctions could easily be prevented from doing so by the British government's undoubted ability to successfully introduce a mandatory ban in the UN Security Council, an action which would reaffirm earlier Security Council Resolutions.

The Tory government has repeatedly attempted to argue that the use of such measures of peaceful coercion will only make Pretoria more recalcitrant. This, however, is to take Pretoria's rhetoric for reality. The only times Pretoria has made significant diplomatic compromises in the region (that is, compromises which would allow neighbouring states a large measure of national self-determination in accordance with principles in international law) have been preceded by effective sanctions measures: the arms embargo of 1977, after which followed substantial agreement on the UN Plan for Namibia in 1978, and the tightening of the oil embargo in 1979, after which South Africa helped facilitate the Lancaster House agreement on Zimbabwe. Contrary to the British government's current claim, it is now openly admitted by ex-Rhodesian businessmen that the international sanctions against the Smith regime proved a significant factor in weakening that economy and forcing its eventual surrender.

### The costs of colonialism

The Tory government has also attempted to argue that sanctions against occupied Namibia will "hurt the very people we are trying to help." Anyone who knows the basic facts about the Namibian economy would not find evidence to support this assertion. Overseas interests syphon off a vast share of Namibia's GDP - regularly over twenty per cent in recent years - and employ very few black Namibians directly (and those few in the most appalling conditions). Yet even this is not the whole picture. Pretoria uses the revenues collected from such economic activity to increasingly militarize its rule in the illegal colony. Between 1983/84 and 1985/86, even the of-



LSM News

ficial data on "security" expenditure undertaken with funds collected in Namibia show increases of over 100%. The Bantustan-style bureaucracy which has been part of the institutionalization of this tyrannical rule also has increased in cost by over 120%. Meanwhile, expenditure on economic affairs, health and welfare, and even agriculture has decreased, the latter by a stunning 485% at a time when there are serious food shortages.

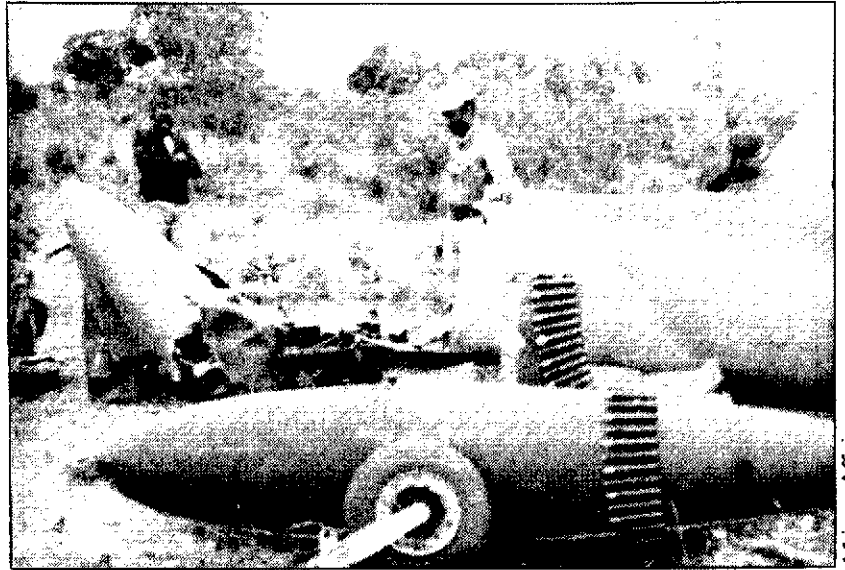
Statistics on the long-term effects of Pretoria's rule on the people of Namibia are even more revealing. Between 1977 and 1985 real production per capita fell by nearly 40%, investment per capita fell by over 60% (there is not one new beneficial investment project to report) and private consumption per capita declined by over 40%. Officially, unemployment increased from 22,000 in 1977 to 102,500 by 1985 out of an economically active population of 640,000. Even these figures understate the scale of misery now endured by the black population given that 77% of black households in 1985 were estimated to receive only one-twentieth of white household incomes per capita. As for the "grant" which Pretoria pays to the Windhoek treasury every year (now cut by 40% in any case) in reality, it is merely a (partial) repayment for South African domination of Namibia's imports (76%) and for the undeclared losses arising from the enforced routing of Namibian exports via South Africa (especially gem diamonds). An economist who has done much to calculate these kinds of statistics and other indices of South African colonial economic control over Namibia has concluded, unequivocally, that "... the longer the South African occupation lasts, the weaker the economy will be."

Militarization of Namibian society has gone hand in hand with a complete breakdown of political legitimacy and the infliction of an almost indescribable degree of cruelty by South Africa's armed forces upon the civilian population. Conservative estimates put the number of the South African-controlled troops and police in Namibia at over 100,000. If one accepts a population estimate of 1.4 million, the reality of present-day Namibia can be epitomized succinctly in the consequent ratio of one armed soldier protecting colonial rule for every five or six Namibian adults!

This ratio is, of course, higher in the northern war zones, but it must

be remembered that martial law regulations cover about 80% of the population. South African troops and police have extremely wide powers of arrest and detention without recourse to the courts, as well as immunity from prosecution in carrying out their "duties." Accurate data on the use of these powers is not easy to obtain, especially since February 1983 when the South African Defense Force (SADF) imposed strict censorship of all media reporting. An indication of the extent of these powers was given by the Report of the Van Dyke Commission released in October 1986, which reported over 5,000 black Namibians detained under the draconian security laws between 1977 and 1983, but even this represented a significant underestimation since the Commission found that SADF records of detentions were not adequately kept. The situation has now deteriorated even further, and it is no surprise that the SA Police Headquarters refuse to disclose the total number of detainees held under the "security" laws. Moreover, it is not simply that black Namibians sympathetic and supportive to SWAPO are regularly imprisoned without charge; it is well documented that in most cases the police and army use a wide array of torture techniques.

Furthermore, there is an increasing tendency on the part of the illegally occupying forces to abduct civilians and disclaim all knowledge of them when distraught relatives seek their whereabouts and inquire after their safety. This has gone hand in hand with the increasing use of "vigilante" bands who physically attack civilians, especially at SWAPO gatherings and rallies, while the police simply ignore their activities. Indeed in a number of such incidents, these vigilantes have been traced directly back to South African army or police bases. In the northern "operational" areas in particular, there are increasing reports through the churches of indiscriminate SADF beatings, abductions,



African Affairs

*SWAPO guerrillas with remains of downed SA aircraft.*

killings and destruction of peasant property and even of church property as a form of reprisal. When the SADF announces killings of SWAPO combatants in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the figures are so incongruent with reports of actual military encounters, by PLAN and other sources, that most of the dead are believed to be unarmed civilians - a reality confirmed in court evidence in a number of recent cases where relatives have taken soldiers to court for damages.

#### **SWAPO fights back**

South African propaganda attempts to portray PLAN as an ineffectual fighting force wholly dependent on foreigners, Angolans or Cubans, "the dark forces of communism." To this end the SADF has attempted to recruit civilians in the north to various "Christian" cultural organizations which present the SADF as a "protective force." However, so tarred with the SADF brush, bodies such as Etango and Ezuva (like the "interim government" in Windhoek) are completely discredited amongst black Namibian civilians, with their activities directed mainly towards Pretoria's few thousand black troops as part of an attempt to bolster their loyalties. While the SADF's main

unit in Namibia, the South West Africa Territorial Force, admits to never revealing its losses, its own figures show that armed contacts with PLAN rose from 176 in 1986 to 118 in the first three months of 1987. These figures tally closely with those released by PLAN, whose figures also include sabotage action against South African "security" and strategic installations. PLAN reported 130 "combat actions" in the first quarter of 1987, including 50 sabotage actions and twenty attacks on SADF bases. Given the somewhat disadvantageous geographical conditions for guerrilla warfare in Namibia, and the vast numerical imbalance in troops and equipment between the SADF and PLAN, this continued level of armed struggle by the nationalist movement is impressive. Equally noteworthy is the fact that it would be impossible without massive sympathy and widespread active support for PLAN amongst black Namibians.

A wave of public rallies and popular organizing by SWAPO supporters has been unprecedented in its scale during 1985-87. This activity was sparked off by Pretoria's attempt to renovate its earlier collaborationist political crea-

ture, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), in the form of a new "Multi-Party Conference" (MPC) and an (unelected) "interim government." While some ultra-right wing Parliament and Congressional members in Western capitals have been gullible and cynical enough to believe Pretoria's glossy hype about the MPC as a supposedly "moderate and democratic" alternative to SWAPO and the UN election plan, Pretoria itself harbours few such illusions about its appointed puppets. The only major new faces in the revamped DTA show, Shipanga and Katjuingua, cannot muster enough support to stage a credible public rally. In contrast, not only has SWAPO itself organized the largest rallies ever witnessed in the capital and in smaller towns, SWAPO supporters have also given birth to a range of trade union, student, women's and community organizations inspired by parallel developments in South Africa itself.

Perhaps the most impressive development has been the mushrooming of workers' committees in most of the larger workplaces across the country and the subsequent formation between September 1986 and May 1987 of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN), the Namibian Food and Allied Union (NAFAU) and the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU) under the umbrella of the revived National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW). Since July 1985 the students in the SWAPO Youth League have moved to create and consolidate the new Namibian National Students Organization (NANSO), an organization which has had a major impact on the politicization of the next generation of leaders and in anti-conscription campaigns. Similarly, SWAPO formed the backbone of the coalition of church, political and community organizations brought together in June 1986 by SWAPO supporters in the churches around the demands of the Ai-Gams Declaration (a pro-UN Plan platform).

In one sense this overt radicalization is nothing new in Namibia. It is common knowledge in the colony that the nationalist movement turned to armed struggle as a last resort in the 1960's and that the major Western powers, especially the governments in London and Washington, contributed to this by repeatedly refusing to use their economic links as a means of peaceful coercion against the occupying racist regime - even when such measures were agreed upon in the UN Security Council. The open tilt towards Pretoria by the Reagan administration through its "linkage" policy and the arming of Unita has merely deepened the popular distrust of "Western" politics. As the



head of Namibia's largest church, Bishop Kleopas Dumeni, told US audiences this year:

*It should be clear to you that your government does not want us to have our independence. It has placed an irrelevant precondition in the way of UN 435; then it has provided arms to Unita, which makes it impossible for even the irrelevant precondition to be fulfilled. This is clear to the Namibian people. The United States is supporting South Africa's foreign policy. The United States is supporting the killing of my people. ... It is well known that SWAPO, the Namibian Liberation Movement, receives aid from Eastern countries. It should be known that SWAPO receives aid from many Western countries. SWAPO is the*

*people of Namibia, most of them Christians. SWAPO has churches in their refugee camps. The churches send chaplains to preach to the people in exile. Many SWAPO freedom fighters have been baptized and confirmed in military camps. Even you have chaplains in your own army. Does this sound like communism?*

What is especially impressive, however, is the extent to which the new popular democratic, united front, organizations, mentioned above, which mobilize explicitly around radical social demands, are being created by SWAPO supporters in the teeth of extreme military repression. Recent attempts by Pretoria to stop such activity by arresting national leaders and using vigilantes against SWAPO supporters have mainly had the effect of radicalizing the movement even further and strengthening its underground. Moreover, the failure of Western governments to speak out and act forcefully against instances of such repression has served to accelerate the process of popular alienation from the machinations of such governments (e.g., the five nation "Contact Group" initiative, discussed by Pratt below).

While Pretoria has been able to do very little to stop this mobilization for democratic national self-determination or to defeat PLAN militarily, it has, as noted earlier, raised dramatically the direct human costs of resistance for civilians in northern Namibia and in southern Angola. Yet Pretoria has also succeeded to an unfortunate extent in preventing news (especially television news) on this horrific war from reaching the Western public; indeed, with help from the Heritage Foundation and other ultra-right groups like the International Society for Human Rights, the South Africans have distributed lavish propaganda materials to the offices of those in power in Western capitals, materials which totally misrepresent SWAPO as undemocratic and (once again linking Angola's fate to

*continued on page 18*



# Murder is Our Business: SA's Hit Men in Namibia

BY JOHN EVENSON

*John Evenson is the director of the Namibia Communications Centre in London, England.*

When off-duty, members of Koevoet, South Africa's police counter-insurgency unit in Namibia, sometimes wear t-shirts proclaiming "Murder is our business - and business is good." For once, South African propaganda has the ring of truth. In the eight years since Koevoet was let loose on northern Namibia it boasts of killing 25 people to every one killed by the army.

One of Koevoet's "kills" was Kudimu Katanga, who crossed the Kavango river into Angola to cut poles for his hut. On his return he was assaulted by a white Koevoet officer, then kicked by black constables and forced to run 10 kilometres in front of an armoured vehicle. Mr. Katanga fell down and was hit

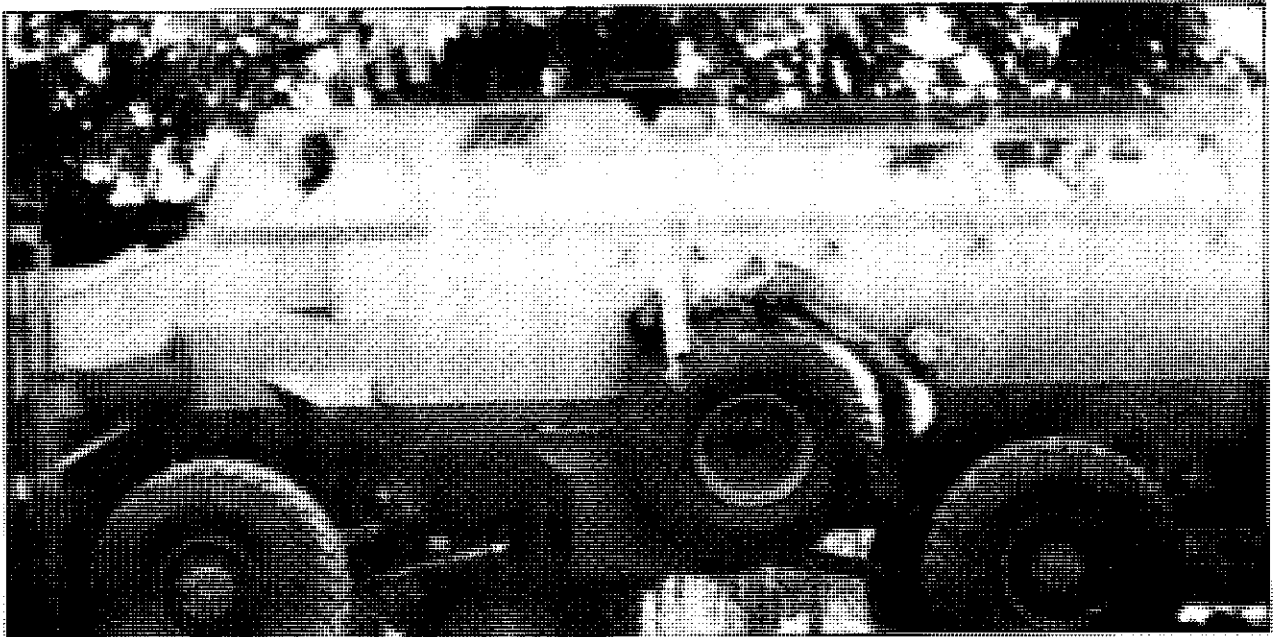
over the head with an ox yoke. He died. The white magistrate thought the policemen had acted "over enthusiastically", fining one of them 5 (British) pounds, and another 30 pounds for common assault.

Some of Koevoet's victims are indeed SWAPO Freedom Fighters, but the vast bulk are the elderly, young children, housewives, ordinary villagers going about their lawful business, who have been shot in cold blood or tortured to death. Nor does Koevoet's white South African commanding officer, Brigadier Hans Dreyer, publicize the considerable number of Koevoet policemen killed by SWAPO.

Koevoet (pronounced coo-foot) was created in 1979 at the instigation of general Magnus Malan, then Chief of the Defence Force, now Minister of Defence. He was worried about the growing success of the

SWAPO guerrillas in Ovamboland, where half of Namibia's population lives and the people are especially sympathetic to the liberation movement. Dreyer recruited 200 white South African police officers and 800 black Ovambo and Okavango special constables, as well as some members of UNITA and the FNLA, who were on the losing side in the Angolan Civil War.

Many of the black recruits are school drop-outs, some with criminal records, all without any hope of jobs in an economy wrecked by the 20 year war. They are paid far in excess of the wages received by migrant workers in the south. There is a large bonus, known as "koppeld" or head money, for each insurgent they kill. The result is that off-duty Koevoet members must keep themselves fully armed 24 hours a day to protect themselves against the hatred of the ordinary people.



*Corpse of a dead freedom fighter paraded on a Cooper in Outaba, Northern Namibia.*

The Namibian/NCCCT

But they are policemen in name only. They shoot first, ask questions later. Their whole purpose is to intimidate Namibians into rejecting SWAPO. The main line South African newspaper, *The Cape Times*, admits that "Koevoet is a military unit performing military tasks ...." The reason they are still called police is that under the United Nations Independence Plan (the one now being held up by South Africa and its Western allies) all but 1,500 South African soldiers would have to leave the colony before elections. Police would be allowed to stay, however, in order to maintain law and order. In those few, vital months the Koevoet "Police" would be able to wreck havoc with the truce. And after independence, Koevoet constables could be used by Pretoria to destabilize a SWAPO government.

With the whole country tied up by a curfew at night, and access tightly controlled by the South African military, Ovamboland offers unlimited opportunities for terror. But occasionally reports of Koevoet activities filter to the outside world. The policemen raid hostels to rape the schoolgirls, they go into hospitals and drag wounded guerillas out of the grasp of doctors and nurses, they dress in SWAPO guerilla uniforms and shoot up unsuspecting villagers.

Two years ago sisters at the Roman Chihulio Mission Hospital at Oshikuku found the partially decomposed remains of eight Namibian men in a trench nearby. The assailants were never found, but three years before there had been another mass killing at Oshikuku when eight members of a family died. Koevoet boasted of those killings.

Koevoet achieved public notoriety through the trial of Jonas Paulus, who spent a weekend on leave disguised as a guerilla, rampaging through villages raping, killing and looting. A former UNITA soldier, Paulus was later hanged for his crimes, but he had

told the court that "we are called members of the Police, but we are only taught to wage war ... to find SWAPO and wipe them out." A psychiatrist explained that Paulus began life normally, but indoctrination by UNITA and Koevoet destroyed his "sense of moral responsibility".

In a major anti-SWAPO "terrorism" trial this year, a white Windhoek Supreme Court judge recommended that a Koevoet officer be investigated for his "inhumane behavior" and his "unmerciful" treatment of a badly wounded man. Captain Frantz Ballach had torn a strip from the arm of the man before flogging him with a hosepipe. As a result a "confession", extracted later during solitary confinement, had to be withdrawn by the prosecution lawyers.

It is this continuing and irrefutable catalogue of violence which led Denis Hurley, Catholic Archbishop of Durban, to go public on Koevoet. He was prosecuted by the South African Police, but the charge was withdrawn and Hurley received a large payment in damages for malicious prosecution.

Despite its killer reputation, black members of South Africa's "Transitional Government of National Unity" in Windhoek support Koevoet to the hilt. The best-known of these, former SWAPO member Andreas Shipanga, has inspected a Koevoet contingent and praised their performance. David Bezuidenhout, a coloured (mixed-race) member of the "Cabinet" attended another Koevoet parade.

In June, Mrs. Monica Kamulungu was inside the walls of her kraal, holding her two year old daughter Marcelina in her arms. Mrs. Kamulungu was five months pregnant. Suddenly a Koevoet Casspir, a heavy armoured personnel carrier, broke through the walls of the kraal. Tearing baby Marcelina from her arms, the Casspir knocked Mrs. Kamulungu to the ground, run-

ning over her leg as it tore through the family home. When Mrs. Kamulungu looked up from the ground, she saw her daughter lying dead, crushed by the Koevoet vehicle.

Then, after killing a male adult near the kraal, the Koevoet attackers moved on almost immediately. Mrs. Kamulungu was taken by friends to the hospital, where she was treated for a broken pelvis.

From the standpoint of the vast majority of Namibians, South Africa is occupying their country illegally. Police like Koevoet are protectors of this occupation, and their presence is itself an evil, even without the violent acts they commit in the name of law and order. As Lutheran bishop Kleopas Dumeni said following the Kamulungu kraal horror, many civilians die as a result of the "deliberate and calculated violent actions of security force members against local inhabitants."

And it is this killing that continues, far from the eyes of the Western television cameras, far from the concerns of parliaments and corporation board rooms. There have been twenty-one years of illegal occupation enforced by brutality beyond belief. The Western nations still veto sanctions whenever the illegal occupation of Namibia comes once again to the attention of the Security Council. The United States and Great Britain seem always to have a reason to prevent measures that might bring Namibia its independence.

Another of Koevoet's blood-thirsty actions has been to parade the corpses of dead freedom fighters through the villages of Ovamboland. (It had happened for years, but now an anonymous photographer had captured the scene and it was seen across the world.) As an attempt to win over the hearts and minds of the people, the ghoul-like incidents are a complete failure. They are also a reminder that South Africa's occupation of Namibia rests on force and force alone.

# The Costs of Procrastination: Canada's Policy Towards Namibia, 1966-87

BY RENATE PRATT

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The world community has ill served the people of Namibia. In 1920 the mandate for implementing the League of Nations' 'Sacred Trust' was conferred upon South Africa on behalf of Britain in order to "promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and social progress" of the people of Namibia. The choice of custodian of the 'Sacred Trust' could not have been more calamitous. Over the decades, and particularly since 1948 when the National Party in South Africa came to power, South Africa has proceeded to integrate the mandated territory into its apartheid system. Neither Britain nor any other Western power had sought to intervene in this betrayal of the 'Sacred Trust'. In 1966, only after years of pressure from Namibian nationalists and the determined and persistent efforts of newly independent states, the United Nations finally terminated South Africa's mandate for Namibia. However, the integration of Namibia into the apartheid state bedeviled all subsequent efforts to bring independence to Namibia. Western political and economic links with South Africa had become so indistinguishable from those joining Namibia to the West that policies regarding Namibia were constantly examined and modified lest they jeopardize commercial relations with South Africa itself.

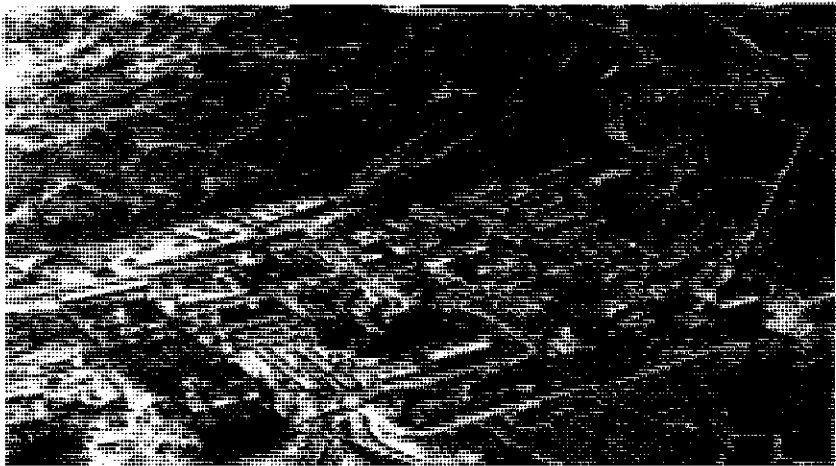
Until the Mulroney government came to power in 1984, Canadian policy with regard to South Africa clearly reflected such considerations. But Canadian policies were and still are marked by something else as well. This is an implicit and misplaced trust that South Africa will yet yield to patient coaxing. Canadian policy makers and their civil servants at External Affairs continue to use as reference points not the sufferings, aspirations and struggle of black Namibians, but the vague twists and turns emanating from the white minority government of South Africa. They characterize as 'ideological', and reject as unacceptable, any military support for SWAPO's struggle which is undertaken for a cause that Canada rhetorically supports. In addition, they shy away from any serious international effort to challenge South Africa's occupation of Namibia. Canada prefers to ignore the geo-political, racist and military nature of South Africa's occupation of Namibia. These three flaws - protection of Canadian commercial interests, an unwillingness to challenge South African occupation effectively and a failure to choose the side of black Namibians continue to characterize Canada's position and have involved it in serious contradictions, omissions and subterfuges.

## Rhetoric and reality

Although Canada voted for the termination of South Africa's mandate in 1966, it took no action with regard to Canadian enterprises which had contractual relations with a regime that was from then on illegal. In a 1967 follow-up to the removal of the mandate for Namibia from South Africa, the United Nations transferred authority for this mandate to the United Nations Council for Namibia. Canada, together

with the other Western powers, did not support granting this authority of the Council. Instead, Canada abstained from voting, and argued that the Council be restricted to an educative role alone. The failure to support the Council was a decisive omission. Canada became associated with those major Western powers who were not prepared to create an instrument within the United Nations that would assume authority for Namibia. Had the Council in 1967 received such backing it could have become a vigorous implementor of the 'Sacred Trust' for Namibia. Many of the subsequent efforts to dislodge South Africa from Namibia might have been less haphazard and less futile.

The reasons for the unwillingness to give authority for the Namibian mandate to a United Nations body are not difficult to find. A large number of Western-based resource industries had located in mineral-rich Namibia. The giant Rössing uranium mine, to give but one example, with interests from the UK, France, Canada and South Africa, had obtained mining rights in 1966, the very year South Africa's mandate over the territory had been terminated. The mine's development had been facilitated by major long-term contracts offered by the UK, France, West Germany, Japan and others, while Canada's Crown corporation, Eldorado Nuclear Ltd., was to become one of the first-stage processors of Namibian uranium before re-export for further enrichment in the USA and Europe. None of these states was willing to press the case for Namibian independence in a Council for Namibia. In 1974 the Council issued Decree Nr. 1 which sought to prohibit the extraction of, the prospecting for, and the use



Mining mine, the largest open-pit uranium mine in the world, is partly Canadian owned.

and sale of Namibian resources without the Council's' permission. But Canada (and others) was able to dismiss this Decree as not applicable to itself since it had not recognized the authority of the Council to issue such measures.

In 1970-71 a series of steps was taken by the UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), each confirming the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia. Security Council Resolutions 276 and 283 explicitly asked states to end commercial, industrial and investment activities in Namibia by their state-controlled companies; to withhold government loans, credit and other forms of financial support from other companies involved in trade or commerce with Namibia; and to discourage companies from investing or obtaining concessions in Namibia. The ICJ's advisory opinion of 1971 declared that South Africa's conduct in Namibia constituted a denial of fundamental human rights and that it was in flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Court advised that:

*Member states of the United Nations are under obligation to recognize the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia and the invalidity of its acts on behalf of or con-*

*cerning Namibia, and to refrain from any acts and, in particular, any dealings with the Government of South Africa implying recognition of the legality of or lending support or assistance to such presence and administration.*

The ICJ also confirmed that it was the United Nations that had to assume responsibility for Namibia. The Security Council subsequently endorsed the ICJ advisory opinion.

It was only after these decisions were taken that Canada informed South Africa in 1971 that it no longer recognized Pretoria's authority over Namibia. Nevertheless, Canada took no action at all with regard to Canadian companies operating in Namibia on the grounds that the Security Council Resolutions had not been phrased in mandatory language under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. While legally correct, this sophistry confirms that Canadian commitment to the Namibian cause ends at precisely the point where it might be effective, particularly if it would offend South Africa or oblige Canada to terminate the operations of Canadian interests in Namibia.

At the time these interests involved Falconbridge, Noranda, Rio Algom, Hudson's Bay and Brillund Mines. All of these continued to

be entitled to tax deductions under Canadian tax law for taxes paid to the illegal regime in Namibia. These tax credits constitute a *de facto* Canadian government recognition of South Africa's jurisdiction over Namibia in contravention to the ICJ's ruling and Canada's own stated policy. Although the number of Canadian enterprises in Namibia has declined substantially since 1971, leaving Rio Algom's participation in Rössing and an indeterminate number of other ventures, these Canadian tax provisions continue to be in force today. Explaining the Canadian position in 1977, Donald Jamieson, then Secretary of State for External Affairs, made this comment:

*We want to be very sure that we do not penalize Canadian companies that may have been active in that country for legitimate and perfectly acceptable purposes . . .*

The import of Namibian uranium from Rössing for processing and re-export by Eldorado Nuclear was uncovered in 1981. This importation and processing directly involved the Canadian government, not only because Eldorado is a Crown corporation but also because the government determines uranium import and export regulations. By this time Canada had elected to serve on the Contact Group of States seeking a just settlement for the Namibian people. How the government could simultaneously help itself to Namibian depletable resources while also recognizing South Africa's presence there as illegal, is best left to be explained by External Affairs' prose:

*Canadian Crown Corporations like Eldorado Nuclear, are also entirely free to handle Namibian origin uranium, as long as their activities do not stand in contravention of the government's policy not to recognize South African jurisdiction over and occupation of Namibia. (emphasis added) (Letter to the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility, 8.12.81, from J.R.*

Groves, Director, International Energy Policy Division, Department of External Affairs.)

To its credit, the Mulroney government announced in July 1985, that it will terminate all toll-processing of Namibian uranium after the present contracts run out which, according to government information, will be sometime in 1988. But this decision is itself an unmistakable admission that the practice had been wrong from the beginning.

In 1973 Canada voted against a General Assembly resolution that granted observer status to the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) as "the only authentic representative" of the Namibian people. SWAPO had established itself as the most effective and popular nationalist organization, devoting decades to peaceful protests within Namibia and at the United Nations and increasingly paying with life and liberty for these efforts. After exhausting all means of peaceful redress, SWAPO had begun its armed struggle. Canada, however, shied away from giving recognition to this authentic Namibian force whose cause it had endorsed in practice seven years earlier when it voted for the termination of South Africa's mandate. Typically, Canada demonstrated its lopsided view of what constitutes "a peaceful solution" for a people faced with apartheid's military and police apparatus.

### Enter the Contact Group

Canada's most serious engagement on behalf of a settlement for Namibia came during the 1976-77 session of the United Nations when it was a member of the Security Council. Canada had argued successfully against proposals to impose mandatory sanctions against South Africa and had played an active role in the formulation of Security Council Resolution 435 which was adopted in 1978. 435 called for an early independence of Namibia through free and fair elections un-



der United Nations' supervision and control. Canada was instrumental in the establishment of the Contact Group of States comprising Britain, Canada, France, the USA and West Germany who volunteered to obtain South Africa's cooperation for the speedy implementation of 435. Their argument, that negotiations and cooperation would be more effective than sanctions, cannot but be seen as a precursor to President Reagan's policy of 'constructive engagement' which was soon to follow. Nevertheless, the very power and prestige of the members of the Contact Group had raised real hopes and expectations among independent African states and in Namibia, and had created a willingness on all sides to cooperate. South Africa had just experienced strong international criticism for its brutal and callous response to the Soweto uprisings in 1976 and was facing a relatively hostile US administration. It looked as if a determined Contact Group had a fair chance of success.

As we now know, the expectations raised by the Contact Group remained unfulfilled. With an eye on the incoming Reagan administration, South Africa scuttled the

1981 pre-implementation conference in Geneva. Whatever was left of the original letter and spirit of Resolution 435 was left in suspense. In April of that year Michel Dupuy, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations, appeared before the Security Council and expressed Canada's regrets over the failure of the Geneva conference. He correctly predicted that, "without an internationally accepted settlement in Namibia, the situation can only deteriorate, leading inevitably to an intensification of the armed conflict and growing regional instability."

In a slightly petulant vein, he suggested that, "progress towards a settlement can only be made if the transitional process is fair and the results satisfactory to and respected by all Namibians."

Finally and surprisingly, instead of announcing the dissolution of the Contact Group on the grounds that it had failed in its mission despite its sincere efforts, Dupuy announced its continuation. His most irritated remarks were reserved for those who had resurrected the 1976 mandatory sanctions proposal now that the promise of the Contact Group to

make such sanctions needless had been totally unfulfilled:

*... we contemplate with deepest concern the call for sanctions before this Council. Such a course, we believe, would probably put an end to the United Nations' efforts and could indefinitely delay progress towards Namibian independence.*

tiated and South Africa welcomed the so-called Cuban linkage, the demand that a settlement in Namibia be dependent upon the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. This move effectively shifted the issue of Namibian independence to the US preoccupation with 'fighting Communism' in Angola. The Reagan

It has made no further contribution to discussions in the Contact Group but maintains that it adheres to Resolution 435.

West Germany has completely divorced itself from any attempts to further Resolution 435 within the Contact Group. It welcomes a Namibian Information Office in Bonn, which is in fact a South Africa-funded propaganda network promoting the 'interim government'. Major aid programs are funded in Namibia in conjunction with the First National Development Corporation established by the South African administration.



Namibian mass rally on June 1985 protesting the official inauguration of the SA controlled interim government.

Until 1985, periodic Canadian External Affairs communiques maintained a note of unflagging optimism about the outcome of the consultations of the Contact Group. Finally, however, even these communiques ceased to be issued. Despite the obvious demise of the Contact Group, Canada continues to insist that its membership prevents the government from offering any comments in the General Assembly or voting with respect to Namibia resolutions.

It is perhaps instructive to examine just what has become of the members of the Contact Group.

Since 1981 the Reagan administration has adopted the policy of 'constructive engagement' and has dominated whatever discussions were taking place within the Contact Group. In 1982 the US ini-

administration implicitly legitimized South Africa's increasing attacks on Angola and has resumed US military support for the UNITA rebel movement in Angola. Since 1986 the US has become South Africa's partner in equipping these surrogate forces, who have received \$15 million in military aid, including sophisticated anti-aircraft Stinger missiles. Even more military aid is promised. The US can hardly any longer be regarded as a member of the Contact Group in terms of Security Council Resolution 435.

France officially announced in 1983 that it had suspended its participation in the Contact Group.

Britain is pursuing its own policy in Southern Africa by increasing its contribution to the SADCC efforts and by training Mozambican troops.

Thus when Canada, now 'a majority of one', is silent in the United Nations on Namibian debates on the grounds that its intervention would jeopardize the chances of success for the Contact Group, one must doubt either its sense of reality or its candor. The Contact Group has failed and is now inactive. Canada must stop the pretense of its membership which serves only as a convenient excuse for doing nothing. Instead, Canada must declare its immediate withdrawal from the Contact Group and become an active advocate for the end of South Africa's occupation of Namibia.

The Mulroney government has at least taken some limited steps regarding apartheid South Africa. It must now recognize that for the time being, Namibians and South Africans share the same oppressive system, even if Namibian liberation will probably take a different form from that of South Africa. It is the apartheid system that Canada needs to confront and challenge in both countries. The government should search out like-minded allies in the Commonwealth and among the Nordic states who might, through the United Nations or other alliances, make an urgent and fresh start to save Namibians from encroaching genocide and restore to them their birthright.

# Target Angola:

## The US – SA Conspiracy

BY VICTORIA BRITTAIN

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Of all its 11 years as an independent state, Angola has this year suffered its heaviest pressures yet – militarily, economically, diplomatically and politically.

The Angolan people, the MPLA government, and the ideals of social transformation within a Marxist-Leninist framework have been systematically battered beyond recognition by the United States' struggle to maintain both direct and proxy control of the region. But the country and its ordinary, unknown citizens living in the ruined countryside and provincial towns remain moving testimonies to the tenacious inspiration of the liberation movement led by Agostinho Neto.

Last year on a visit to Luanda, Zaire's head of state, President Mobutu Sese Seko, presented the Angolan authorities with four tons of malachite to build the mausoleum which is to be the permanent memorial to the first president of the People's Republic of Angola, of such a gift to his old enemy may have escaped the former sergeant in the Belgian army, though not the MPLA leadership.

During the liberation war against Portugal, President Mobutu did everything possible to facilitate the US and South African attempt to destroy Neto's MPLA. He even used his own troops to aid the hopeless cause of his brother-in-law Holden Roberto's FNLA. Since Neto's death, and especially since the advent of the Reagan administration, Zaire has been moved into the forefront of a US attempt to

crush the MPLA. The new machinations are even more subtle and many-faceted than the CIA operations of the 70s (well described by John Stockwell in his 1978 book *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story.*)

### CIA keeps on trucking

In recent months, three or four times a week in the early morning, US military C130s and C141s or Hercules and Boeing 707 transport planes have been landing supplies for Jonas Savimbi's Unita in Zaire. Over the past year the military section of Kinshasa's airport and the old Belgian airbase of Kamina in Shaba province have become regular stops along the CIA's lifeline to the most ambitious "contra" operation run by Washington in Africa. Indeed, a US administration's plan substantially to rehabilitate the run-down facilities at Kamina with Pentagon money, to formalize existing US military cooperation and to undertake occasional joint exercises with Zaire – all with the aim of turning the remote base on the fringe of the frontline states into an American facility – was leaked in February 1987.



This revelation was probably no accident, but rather another strand in the long-standing attempt by the US to coerce the MPLA government into accepting the departure of the Cuban troops *without* demanding a corresponding withdrawal of South African troops from both Angola and Namibia as directed by UN Resolution 435. Needless to say, a South African withdrawal would deprive Unita of its supplies, logistics, air cover and the like which it receives from the illegal South African bases in northern Namibia and the Caprivi strip.

### Ten years in the cold

For more than a decade US administrations have withheld diplomatic recognition from the MPLA government. At the centre of the many duplicitous arguments for this unique US policy which have been advanced by different US administrations – paradoxically, often in response to queries by the major US oil companies working in Angola – has been the critical question of the Cuban defence forces. As all parties know it is the Cuban presence which alone prevents the South African military from tipping the regional balance of power back to where it was a decade ago. (For a well documented discussion of this issue see *King Solomon's Mines Revisited* by William Minter, published by Basic Books, New York.)

On the fringe of the the Iran-gate revelations, US officials have disclosed that in early 1984 a plan was approved by both Secretary of State George Schultz and the CIA chief William Casey to involve South Africa in training and equipping Nicaraguan contras. Although that plan was apparently dropped after the CIA mining of Nicaraguan harbours had caused a public outcry, the other face of the exercise in US-South African military cooperation went ahead. This was the US provision of intelligence and other support for Unita channelled through South Africa. At that time

US law - the Clark amendment - prevented aid to Angolan anti-government forces. Meanwhile Dr. Chester Crocker's diplomatic pressures for concessions from Luanda on the Cuban issue as part of his "constructive engagement" plan for the region meant that Washington was publicly showing only the face of conciliation towards the MPLA.

#### US double-barrel diplomacy

But since 1982 the US has been actively engaged in secret support for both Unita and FNLA. South Africa, Zaire, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Israel became involved in logistics, financing and training. The Israelis, after Defence Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to Zaire in January 1983, not only trained dissidents from Unita and FNLA but also provided Soviet-made weapons captured from the Palestinians in Lebanon. US equipment for Unita was brought into Matadi port and Kinshasa airport as supplies for Zaire's armed forces. Western reporters taken to Jamba to interview Jonas Savimbi and so build the credibility of Unita as part of the propaganda jigsaw crucial to Dr. Crocker's constructive engagement policy were shepherded secretly through Kinshasa airport. Angola, which was pursuing diplomatic initiatives with a series of meetings with US officials in Cape Verde and Washington undertaken in the hope of seeing South African

aggression reduced, chose never to make public either Zaire's role or the US's second track of policy.

But the repeal in 1985 of the Clark amendment, which had since 1976 prohibited US military support for opposition movements in Angola, marked a new and more open stage in the hostility of the Reagan administration towards Luanda which escalated rapidly.

The following year Jonas Savimbi made an official visit to Washington where he was received by President Reagan and promised substantial military aid worth \$15 million, including Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. The anti-communist worldwide mafia, from Nicaraguan contras to Afghan guerrillas, were flown by the Americans to Jamba, the South African-protected Angolan headquarters of Unita. And Savimbi's diplomatic profile was raised further by his appearance along with Chief Buthelezi in Capetown in the swearing in of the new minority South African government. As part of the same process, Savimbi has visited Europe and has been received by right-wingers in the European Parliament. He was even unofficially received by senior French officials. An influential biography was simultaneously launched in English. ("Savimbi, a Key to Africa," by Fred Bridgland, published by Mainstream Press, Edinburgh and reviewed in *Third World Quarterly*, July 1987 by Victoria Brittain.)

#### Angola laid waste

Behind all this diplomatic activity, Angola for years has been militarily and economically laid waste. In August and September of this year the MPLA government applied for admission to membership of the International Monetary Fund, and at the same time requested over US\$100 million in food and other aid for a "severe emergency." Half of Angola's urban population of 2 million people, and the estimated 700,000 displaced, face "acute shortages of staple foods, a situation which may

deteriorate into near famine," according to a joint report by the government and the UN. The government has asked the international community for 245,000 tons of food, reflecting the virtual collapse of marketing and communications structures under the pressure of sabotage and war.

Oil income, virtually the only source of foreign exchange, dropped from \$2 billion a year in 1985 to \$1 billion last year and the world oil price has not subsequently recovered. Coffee and diamonds, which make up about 10% of export earnings, are far below their potential mainly because of the war. In a recent speech President Dos Santos was sharply self-critical of inefficiency, corruption and other negative trends within the Angolan bureaucracy which, he said, had added to Angola's current problems. The president said the financial cost of the war has been about \$12 million and an estimated 60,000 people have been killed.

The flapping of empty trouser legs against wooden crutches, the lines of peasants learning rehabilitation exercises, and the hospital beds full of traumatized children with missing limbs are the true costs of the grinding war of attrition Washington and Pretoria are waging to break the MPLA. At least 20,000 Angolans have lost limbs - mostly to land-mines while planting or harvesting in their impoverished villages.

During the last year, as South Africa's constant occupation of Cunene province has bitten deeper into Angola and US operations through Kamina to Unita have increased, the MPLA leadership began a new regional initiative with the other front-line states.

#### The MPLA and the Front-line States

In the time between the summit of the Non-aligned States in Harare in August 1986, and the death of president Samora Machel in a still-



Africa News

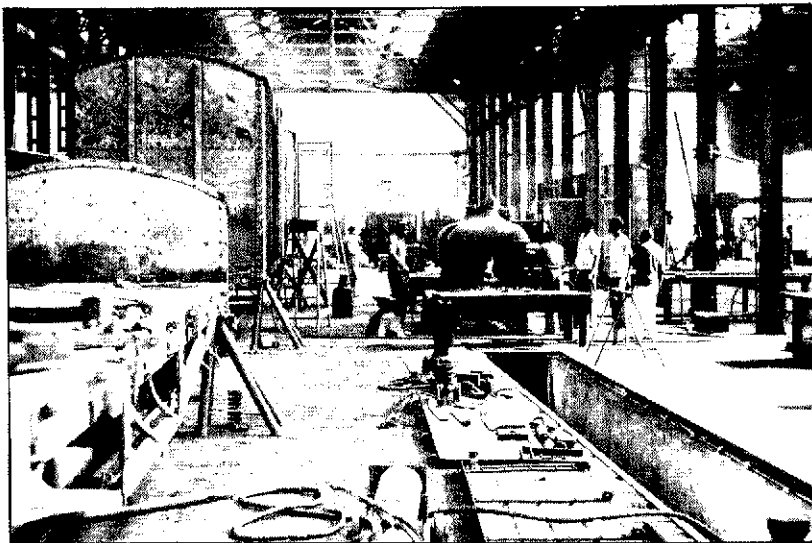
Chester Crocker on US aid to UNITA: "The decision has been made and the process is in motion."



unexplained plane crash in South Africa in mid-October, the front-line state presidents decided on a diplomatic and economic attempt to detach Malawi and Zaire from their supporting roles in South Africa's destruction of Angola and Mozambique. Malawi, under pressure from Zimbabwe and Tanzania which control important access routes to the country, signed a defence pact with Mozambique in December, 1986, which hindered South African access for the infiltration of MNR guerrillas into Mozambique.

Equivalent pressures on Zaire were more complicated, mainly because of its closer integration into wider US operations in Africa. A project was launched for the re-opening of the Benguela railway to increase economic cooperation between Zaire, Zambia and Angola and, in theory, to free Zaire from its dependence on South Africa for the export of Shaba's copper. But almost all parties involved in Benguela saw it as an opportunity for pursuing hidden and contradictory agendas. What for Angola and Zambia was a way of neutralizing Zaire's support for Unita was something very different for the European and US state and business interests, which backed the project as a possible way of getting Luanda to negotiate security along the line with Unita.

On the 20th anniversary of Zaire's sole political party, the Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution (MRP) in late May, 1987, President Mobutu spelt it out. He announced that "in the name of my front line states' colleagues" he had put forward the Benguela project. "The money is there, the only problem is one of security. Approaches had to be made to Unita to accept the neutralization of the railway. We got that agreement. There is in fact a sort of indirect agreement between Unita and the MPLA to keep the line secure." (*Le Monde*, 30 May 1987.)



*Repairing sabotaged railway cars on the Benguela Railway.*

At a meeting that month in Lusaka the Angolans, no doubt unwittingly, gave added credence to the idea that they were making concessions, an idea which had sprung from a meeting they had had with Dr. Crocker in Brazzaville officially at the behest of the Congolese president Sassou Nguesso in the wake of a trip the latter had made to Washington. In Lusaka the Angolans signed a joint communiqué with Zaire and Zambia which provided for the Benguela rehabilitation to go ahead on the understanding that the railway would not be used for military transport. Savimbi was quick to claim this as a victory for Unita and effectively a limited ceasefire. It was left to Angola's ambassador to Algeria, Colonel Iko Carreira, a member of the Central Committee and a longtime head of the airforce, to prick the propaganda balloon by spelling out in a long interview with the Algerian press that the agreement only meant no transit of Zairean and Zambian military equipment on the railway inside Angola.

Dr. Crocker on a recent visit to Luanda set a new harsh and undiplomatic tone as he characterized the visit as "a waste of time." But despite Crocker's highly pub-

licized briefings to the effect that the MPLA had new initiatives in mind, President Dos Santos, in Cuba on a visit immediately after the MPLA/US meeting in Luanda, did announce new "flexibility" by the Angolan and Cuban leadership on the timetable for Cuban troop withdrawals from the southern part of Angola, a proposal which was presented to the UN Secretary General in late 1984. On August 5 the new Angolan proposals were formally given to the Americans. But the old sticking points of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia and southern Angola, and of SADF aid to Unita, has been further complicated by the Reagan administration's open commitment to Savimbi since last year and the threat of a US operational base being installed at Kamina. The Cubans and Angolans now back the idea of an international conference to bring together South Africa, the US, Havana, Luanda and Swapo. But there seems little chance that Reagan's Washington would agree to an open discussion of some of their most destructive secret policies which, once aired, could lose them control of the agenda just as happened with the peace plan for Central America.

# Destabilization: A Grim Balance Sheet

BY DAN O'MEARA

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Angola has been continuously at war since 1961, Mozambique since 1964, and Namibia and Zimbabwe since 1966. While the impact of destabilization has been uneven, it has forced all countries of Southern Africa into heavy military spending. The 1985 SADCC estimate put "extra defence spending" at US\$3,060 million 1980-1984. By the end of 1986 the figure was probably well over US\$5,000 million or more than the total cost of all projected SADCC development projects. Using 1983 figures - i.e. when the war was still relatively "contained" - one estimate puts the total military spending of the 9 SADCC countries at US\$2,106 million or 7.1% of their combined GDP. This compares with 3.5% for all of sub-Saharan Africa.

The combined SADCC military spending in 1983 was still US\$854 million less than that of South Africa. More significantly, the proportion of GDP consumed by military expenditure in industrialised South Africa was just over half that in the underdeveloped SADCC countries. Other comparisons are equally instructive. Military expenditure per capita in South Africa stood at \$92, compared with \$32 in SADCC - and \$16 for all of sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa's expenditure per soldier was 2.5 times that of SADCC (\$34,878:\$13,765) while the SADCC figure is almost twice as high as in all of sub-Saharan Africa (\$7,415).

Comparisons of the size of military establishments are more problematic, as few countries publish this information and estimates vary wildly. The most authoritative source on the South African Defence

Force puts its Standing Force in 1983 at 166,000. However, when all reserves are included, South Africa is capable of fielding a force of 613,000. The SADF has 372 combat aircraft plus over 100 armed helicopters. The Combined Standing Forces of the nine SADCC countries are usually estimated at between 150,000 and 170,000. However, the number of available trained reserves of these nine separate forces is nowhere near as high as South Africa's, and the equipment of all SADCC armies is radically inferior to the SADF. The nine SADCC countries between them have 331 combat aircraft. While Angola's MIG-23s - and certainly the MIG-29s which Zimbabwe is reportedly soon to acquire - are equal to the SADF's Mirage F1 and the new "Cheetah" fighter developed from it, these aircraft have neither the same cadre of trained pilots nor maintenance.

The overall military balance between South Africa and SADCC is thus hopelessly unequal. South Africa's industrial economy is increasingly strained by this heavy military commitment. Business leaders have warned that the present conscription system places a heavy drain on skilled personnel. Yet very little military damage has yet been inflicted on South Africa. The huge strain on the underdeveloped SADCC economies is compounded out of all comparison by the devastating damage of six years of destabilization - just as many of these economies were trying to overcome the costs of years of war for their independence.

The human casualties of a generation of war have never been reliably measured. Close to two million people have been displaced as refugees. Almost 10% of the popula-

tion of South Africa's illegal colony, Namibia, are either refugees or in exile. Adding estimated famine and war deaths to a UNICEF comparison of the pre-1980 and present rates of infant mortality, Joseph Hanlon estimates the number of deaths due to destabilization of *Angola and Mozambique alone between 1980 and 1986* at staggering 735,000. The break-down of these deaths is shown in the box.

## DEATHS 1980 - 1986

Mozambique war	50,000
Mozambique famine	100,000
Angola war & famine	50,000
Mozambique children	215,000
Angola children	320,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>735,000</b>

Rates of infant mortality in these countries fell rapidly between 1975 and 1980 as extensive immunization and rural health programs were introduced. After 1980 these rates escalated dramatically as health posts were systematically attacked and health workers killed. UNICEF has calculated that, without South African destabilization, infant mortality rates in Angola and Mozambique would have fallen to that of Tanzania.

The figures for the economic consequences are a little more precise - though they do not always tally. In 1985 SADCC estimated that "South African aggression and destabilization had cost the nine member countries in excess of US\$10 billion" between 1980 and 1984. The break-down of this sum is shown in the box.

## NINE COUNTRY COSTS; 1980 - 1984

	million US\$
Direct war damage	1,610
Extra Defence expenditure	3,060
Higher transport/energy costs	970
Lost exports & tourism	230
Smuggling	190
Refugees	660
Reduced production	800
Lost economic growth	2,000
Boycotts & embargos	260
Trading arrangements	340
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,120</b>

Destabilization actually escalated after 1984. The additional costs for 1985-86 alone have been estimated at US\$15 billion, bringing the total cost for 1980-86 to over US\$25 billion.

This staggering damage is twice the combined total foreign aid received by all nine SADCC members during this period. It equals half the total SADCC exports; is five times the projected cost of all proposed SADCC projects; and is roughly equivalent to the total 1984 GDP of the SADCC countries. Significantly, six of the nine SADCC members are among the 25 poorest countries on earth, and moreover, the overwhelming bulk of these costs have been born by just two states, Angola and Mozambique.

Official Mozambican figures show that between 1981 and 1983, 140 villages were destroyed, together with 900 rural shops, 840 schools and over 200 health posts. The total cost was estimated at \$3.8 billion, or roughly twice the pre-1975 GDP.

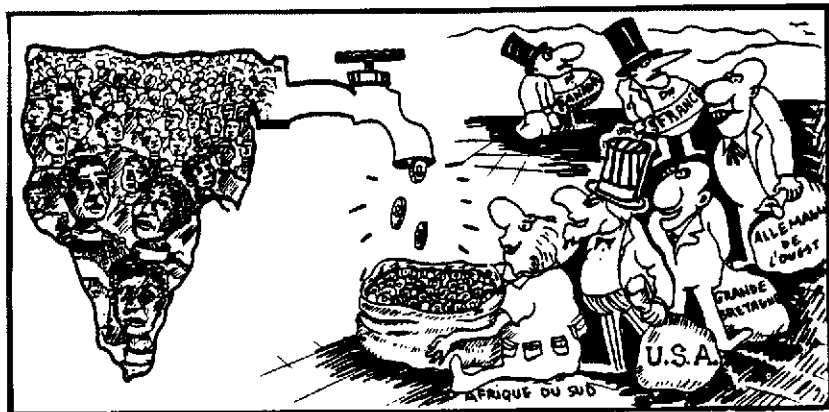
Over the next two years, and despite Mozambique's 'non-aggression and good neighbourliness' pact with South Africa, the damage was even heavier. More than 1,800 schools were closed down and 313,000 students and almost 5,000 teachers displaced. By the end of 1985 total damage was estimated at US\$5 billion. Prior to 1981, and even despite the heavy costs of five years of war with Rhodesia (estimated at US\$556 million), Mozambique made modest, but important economic progress. Exports of cashew, cotton, and coal reached record levels by 1981, and real GNP grew by 15% from 1977 to 1981. However by 1985 the value of exports fell to less than one third the 1981 levels. The massive destruction orchestrated by South Africa has now virtually destroyed the national economy. A *negative* growth rate of 7% in 1983, was followed by one of -14% in 1984 and -20% in 1985. Mozambique's debt service is now officially estimated at between 160% and 190% of planned 1987 ex-

port revenues.

South Africa can be said to have achieved most of its aims in Mozambique. All ANC cadres have been expelled, Samora Machel is dead, FRELIMO's bold socialist project - so palpably popular even in 1983 - lies in tatters, and Mozambican people are exhausted by a generation of war and six years of famine. Mozambique is today economically more dependent than ever on South Africa. Of the total foreign exchange revenue of US\$180 million in 1985, \$57.5 million 'originated in South Africa', either as payments for rail-port services or remitted wages of migrant workers. The recent 400% devaluation and the cuts an-

costs through oil and diamond revenues. However the collapse of the oil price in 1986 forced imports of consumer goods below 50% of those for the year before, while intermediate goods imports fell to barely one third of the 1985 figure.

The burden on the other SADCC countries has been heavy though not of the same order. Prolonged destabilization and finally a total blockade of Lesotho precipitated a coup in January 1986. The new government concluded a security agreement which gives Pretoria the right to vet all refugees in Lesotho, and has been rewarded with joint development projects dangled for 20 years before its predecessor. An at-



nounced by the Economic Recovery Programme, are a bitter testimony to how South African aggression has reduced Mozambique. And still the country is obliged to spend 42% of its budget - itself financed by the 'timely arrival of grants and credits' - on defence against destabilization.

The costs in Angola have been almost as high. Official figures speak of 60,000 dead, over 600,000 internal refugees and total damage equal to US\$12 billion between 1975 and 1986. Over 50% of the budget is now devoted to Defence. Angola has the highest number of war paraplegics per capita, thanks to UNITA practice of mining the fields in which peasants work. Angola has been partly able to cushion some of these

tempt to foment an MNR-like dissident problem in Zimbabwe seems to have been crushed, but Zimbabwe is obliged to maintain a substantial military establishment and a permanent military presence along the Beira corridor at the cost of some Z\$12 million a month. Defence spending now consumes 16% of the Zimbabwean budget, a much lower proportion than that of Angola and Mozambique, but one which has forced deep cuts in key development and social programs.

At a regional level, the central prop of SADCC strategy, an alternative regional transport system centered around Mozambique, has been virtually destroyed by South African

and MNR attacks. The Benguela railway has likewise not functioned for years. The official SADCC report characterises the regional economy as one beset by 'immense problems arising from declining investment, the erosion of its productive capacity, and security problems caused by the apartheid system in South Africa'. The total debt of SADCC countries stands at US\$16.6 billion, or roughly 66% of their combined GDP. Tanzania and Zambia all have debt service ratios of over 80%, while that of Mozambique is between 160% and 190%. SADCC's original vision of steady growth and progress towards reduced economic dependence on South Africa has been shattered.

Other costs are less amenable to quantification. The psychological trauma of a generation of war; the

profound loss of hope and now prevailing apathy throughout much of the region; the social and economic consequences of the loss of precious skilled personnel (especially health and education workers) routinely selected as targets by UNITA and the MNR; these are the costs which cannot be reduced to cold statistics. It is likewise difficult to measure precisely the reduction in just six short years of all efforts to forge economic independence and reasonable living standards for the peoples of the region to a remorseless war for simple survival. Their militarization of politics, of planning, of most economic decisions, of cultural life – indeed the subordination of much daily living throughout large areas of Southern Africa to military contingencies – these must exact a very heavy toll in years to come.

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... plus official Mozambique government publications

## Why Namibia?

*continued from page 6*

that of Namibia) glamourize Unita as a genuine anti-colonial political movement. The craven support for P.W. Botha of Unita's Jonas Savimbi and his close and dependent ties to South Africa's military establishment are, of course, played down. Meanwhile, regular church reports of South African repression in Namibia rarely get past the Western media's news editors!

### Commonwealth initiatives

Vancouver could change this quite significantly, even at the simple level of media exposure, if Commonwealth leaders were to decide to take a specific initiative to secure Namibian independence. Already several Commonwealth states such as India and those in southern Africa's Front-line are providing various non-military forms of assistance to SWAPO, and the Commonwealth Secretariat has a small aid programme for Namibians. However, as suggested at the outset, what really counts politically is whether the Commonwealth states

are prepared to stand up publicly to Reagan and Thatcher on Namibia. Against Thatcher they must insist on an unambiguous rejection of the US-Pretoria linkage policy and on specific sanctions against transnational corporations and white settlers in occupied Namibia (in short, a full implementation of UN Security Council decisions on Namibia). A public appeal to UK public opinion for action to secure the UN Plan for Namibian independence would also be helpful.

There is, of course, the parallel need to challenge Reagan openly regarding his delay, via "linkage," of any action on the Namibian independence question, that the holding hostage of a nation in UN trusteeship because of US domestic political propaganda is unacceptable. Could the Commonwealth insist that US arming of Unita, because of the latter's utter dependence on the SADF, breaks the UN arms embargo and will prolong the human suffering caused by apartheid? Certainly, diplomatically, the Angolan government proposal to withdraw troop reinforcements from below the 13th Par-

allel once the UN Plan begins to be implemented and the SADF is withdrawn from Namibia is a generous offer, considering that it is the SADF which has violated international borders to defend white supremacy. Perhaps the US public should be reminded of this. For its part, Pretoria is hoping that time will run out for the delicate and complicated multilateral diplomacy embodied in the UN Plan. Noises from Reaganites and ultra-right Tories in the UK merely echo Pretoria's burning desire to get the Western powers to throw the Plan away.

In short, even if the Commonwealth Summit in Vancouver were to produce a package of action proposals against apartheid which included (rightly) effective sanctions, aid to the Front-line States and related measures, it would still be most unfortunate if specific action on Namibia were excluded. A great deal can be done by NGO's and solidarity organizations which support SWAPO to prevent this, but the key may lie in whether any Commonwealth leaders are prepared to stand up and be counted by the Namibian people.

# Tambo, Not Rambo: The ANC's President in Toronto



*Oliver Tambo addresses a rally at Queens Park, Toronto.*

On Saturday, August 29, a few hours before he addressed a public rally in front of the Ontario Parliament Buildings in Toronto, Oliver Tambo met at Anglican Church House with a group of anti-apartheid activists, drawn from church, labour, NGO and support group circles. There was time for a full and frank discussion of a wide range of issues of mutual concern. The chief purpose of the present article is to share the substance of that session with readers who were not in attendance. But first, a few words about context.

\* \* \*

Earlier in August Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, visited southern Africa. He made clear his commitment to the Front-line States in their defence against South African aggression, even passing on an invitation to non-member Mozambique to participate as an observer at October's Commonwealth Conference in Vancouver. He professed himself once again to be no friend of apartheid and appeared to be greeted very coldly indeed by his South African opposite number, Foreign Minister Pik Botha. Clark received a much warmer reception in Lusaka when he met with representatives of the African National Congress. Perhaps it was there, too, that he finally pinned down the date of ANC President Oliver Tambo's long-awaited visit to Canada at the Canadian government's invitation. In any case, it was only two weeks later that Tambo arrived in Canada.

Tambo was well received by the anti-apartheid / non-governmental organization network in Canada. Indeed the warmth of his reception at a well-attended informal get-together

at Toronto lawyer Charles Roach's house on the Wednesday evening of his arrival in Canada would be difficult to describe. And such warmth was duplicated at other "unofficial" sessions in Ottawa and at the above-mentioned public rally, hastily organized but remarkably effective nonetheless. Much less warm was his reception by his official hosts, the Canadian government. Thus Joe Clark, in his comments on the visit, managed to convey the impression to the media that he was at least as concerned about the ANC's resort to violence and its links to "Communism" as he was about the horrors of apartheid. Moreover, it appears that, in private, Brian Mulroney's approach was not very much more enlightened.

#### Tambo meets Mulroney

When he spoke to us that Saturday morning, the day after his meeting with Mulroney and Clark, Tambo, seasoned diplomat that he is, chose his words carefully. The ANC, he stressed, had welcomed Canada's recent support for a sanctions programme against South Africa and had been impressed, in particular, with Mulroney's persistent pressing of the issue at the seven nations Economic Summit earlier this year. He hoped now to encourage the Canadian government to play an even more active role in pushing for "comprehensive sanctions" at such forthcoming meetings as those of the "Francophonie" and the Commonwealth. It would be unfortunate if the intransigence of the British and the Americans on this question (including their persistent vetoes of U.N.-sponsored mandatory sanctions proposals) were to discourage Canada from following through on this question. The example of the Nordic countries in acting "comprehensively" despite U.N. vetoes might prove helpful to Canadians, he suggested.

Yet Tambo was exposed to an even more deep-seated limitation in Canada's position. For the Canadian government, he suggested, apparently views sanctions as de-

signed to preempt altogether the need for popular-cum-armed struggle in South Africa - a view very different from that of the ANC which, more realistically, sees sanctions as "complementary" to that necessary struggle. In this latter view, the role of sanctions is to weaken the side of the oppression and thus, in the long run, to undermine the apartheid state's ability to resist indefinitely. Tambo had hoped that Canadians saw themselves to be supporting, by means of sanctions, a just and legitimate struggle for freedom that takes many forms, including the resort to the use of force of arms. Now he learned at first hand from Mulroney that the ANC's "violence" was a major problem for him!

*"with all due respect,  
I do not think the  
Canadian government  
should look to what  
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government is saying  
about the ANC to  
determine its own  
strategy"*  
Oliver Tambo...

Tambo was not altogether successful in hiding a note of annoyance here, especially as he recounted the moment when Mulroney confronted him with the South African government's advertisement from that day's *Globe and Mail*, one which demagogically misrepresented the ANC's armed struggle as mere "terrorism". "With all due respect", Tambo said, "I do not think the Canadians should look to what the South African government is saying about the ANC to determine its own strategy." The majority of the people in the world, he pointed out, don't care what the South African government says and refuse to evaluate the ANC by shift-

ing their gaze from the central reality of apartheid's unyielding violence - which is, after all, the reality which the ANC must confront in choosing its own tactics. "Are there no justified acts of violence in the world?" he asked. Could this be merely a pretext for some watering down of support for sanctions?

To be sure, the Prime Minister presented the matter to Tambo partly in terms of tactical considerations of his own. Mulroney claimed that he could not really hope to persuade Thatcher to move on the sanctions question as long as the ANC engaged in violence. Tambo did not need to point out to us that this was to misrepresent the nature and depth of Thatcher's hostility to sanctions or indeed any other form of significant action against apartheid. Instead Tambo, politely but ironically, permitted himself only the comment that he had never heard that argument before. As for Mulroney and Clark's own punctilious distaste for revolutionary violence in South Africa, it was left for others in the room to point out how unlikely it was that these two were merely uninformed about the extent of the apartheid regime's intransigence or naive about the kinds of real pressures which would be necessary to shake the regime. Tambo himself refrained from pressing the point.

Tambo also saw the long arm of Pretoria's propaganda machine in the kind of fixation with the question of "Communism" which he had experienced on this visit. Certainly he was prepared to make no apologies for the presence of Communists in the ranks of the ANC. He noted that "we are all fighting the same enemy" while also pointing out, correctly, that there is "not a tittle of evidence" for the bizarre charge that the ANC is controlled by Moscow and/or "the Communists". The West fought side by side with Stalin against Hitler, but we who are fighting another Hitler in our own country are asked to drive the Communists out. Why, he asked, is that?



Margie Bruun-Meyer

Meeting with Toronto solidarity community. (left to right) Yusuf Suleman (ANC chief representative), Archbishop Ted Scott, Oliver Tambo, Mfanafuthi Makhatini (ANC director of international affairs), Dennis Cromarty (representative Assembly of First Nations), Joyce Diplale (Inter Church Coalition on Africa).

Why is Pretoria being tacitly defended by this kind of argument? Is it because it is a white regime, we wonder? And is this kind of red-baiting also being slotted in as one more pretext to pull away from a firm commitment to sanctions? Such were the questions that Tambo left us with.

#### The strength of the resistance

Of course, there was much more to the ANC President's presentation than a series of bemused reflections on the preoccupations of the Canadian government, useful though these reflections were to the assembled Canadians who must deal with that government on a day-to-day basis. Actually, the central and primary thrust of Tambo's talk was to underscore, in rich detail, the continuing strength of the resistance in South Africa - in spite of the brutal repression which the apartheid regime has brought to bear under its several States of

Emergency. Although government censorship chokes off a clear image of the activities of the forces of resistance the truth is, Tambo affirmed, that "the more the repression grows, the more determined we are".

He reminded us of the advances made despite the States of Emergency. Thus the greatest trade union movement in the history of South Africa (COSATU) was born during the emergency and one of its affiliates (the National Union of Mineworkers) has just engaged in the greatest strike in South African history. The greatest organization of youth, SAYCO, was launched this year in the very teeth of the emergency as will be a new federation of women. And the United Democratic Front refuses to be driven from the field despite every effort by the government to destroy it. At the same time, the armed wing of the struggle has also advanced, there having been more armed actions in the

past seven months than during any comparable period. Not that such armed action includes the practice of "necklacing", much as the South African government and some sections of the media might like to imply otherwise. "No member of MK (Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's armed wing) has ever necklaced anybody," Tambo said. "We have an army of trained cadres whose orders are to attack military and the police and to avoid attacking civilians."

In short, Tambo affirmed that the political and armed struggles are two sides of the same coin, premised on the understanding that "apartheid must be abolished". Here was, in effect, Tambo's reply to Mulroney and Clark: a point must be reached "where apartheid is so costly that its defenders back off". How is this to be achieved? "We have proven that the key lies in struggle". True, the state has acted viciously in retaliation, attempting

to destroy the ANC inside and outside South Africa by means of assassinations, armed raids, kidnappings and the like. And they have had to modify their domestic policies, avoiding new installments of apartheid on occasion while introducing some modifications. Hence, the dropping of certain of the pass laws (albeit many important aspects of them have been introduced in new form). But, said Tambo, "the government had already experienced great difficulty in enforcing these laws against the people's will." Besides, the demand of the people is not merely for the modification of this or that repugnant law. "The demand of the people is for *power*." (see box)

President Tambo had less to say about the nature of post-apartheid South Africa, although he did respond to some length to questions about the future of democracy and socialism there. Consistent with the ANC's oft-stated position he affirmed that "there will be political parties of all shades of opinion" and the people will decide democratically what their futures hold. As regards economic matters, Tambo's

The inability or unwillingness of the Canadian government to grasp the central point of this paragraph – the fact that popular struggle is the most crucial element in the anti-apartheid arsenal – was no more graphically witnessed than in Joe Clark's recent interview on Southern Africa policy with Carol Goar of the *Toronto Star* (September 15, 1987). Goar finds that the external affairs minister "cannot explain South Africa's extraordinary prominence on the world's stage ... About three years ago, there was what Clark calls 'a spontaneous focussing of world opinion on the apartheid issue. I don't know why it happened. Its partly the media.'" No mention of the fact that exactly three years ago the Vaal uprising triggered off the most massive upsurge of popular resistance in South African history, one that has sustained itself for three years!



Community, church and solidarity activists honour Tambo at a reception.

answers may have been a little too conciliatory (even if calculatedly so) for some in the room. Thus, he argued that meetings with South African business people, among others, have produced a satisfactory level of agreement regarding the ANC's position that "the economy must serve the people", that it be "strong" but also that "the wealth be distributed equitably".

He drew attention to the nationalization planks of the Freedom Charter, while also noting that there is no strict blueprint as to how rapidly any such programmes would be pursued or how comprehensively. As for the statement by Galvin Relly that the South African economy is so structured that it would be destroyed by nationalizations, Tambo underscored the extent to which the apartheid state itself already holds a very substantial stake in the economy. The ANC's goal is a "mixed economy", said Tambo, reiterating that businessmen, black and white, are relatively comfortable with the ANC. There was, in short, virtually no reference to the possibility that some kind of on-going post-apartheid class struggle might be necessary in order to guarantee an

"equitable" future – although the importance of the strike activities of the mineworkers, underway at the moment of his talk, was singled out for special emphasis.

\* \* \*

Obviously, there were a number of open questions being flagged here regarding South Africa's long-term socio-economic future, questions which will, no doubt, continue to be wrestled with both within and without the ANC. And, in any case, there is still the apartheid system to be overthrown before such questions can be placed absolutely squarely on the agenda. Yet with respect to this stage of the struggle, it came as no surprise to those gathered at Anglican Church House to find Oliver Tambo still rock solid in the front line – bringing to Canadians a clear message of militancy. It seems certain that all of us there in the room felt moved by his eloquence and his example to rededicate ourselves to taking his message ever more effectively to other Canadians, including to those political leaders who refused to listen carefully and sympathetically, on this occasion, to the message from Tambo's own lips.



# Massacre at Homoine

## A Canadian's Account

*The depravity of the war which South Africa has been waging against Mozambique is well known to readers of Southern Africa REPORT. But that depravity reached a new nadir at Homoine, in Inhambane Province, on July 18th of this year. There a particularly barbarous raid saw the MNR/Renamo, South Africa's proxy force in Mozambique, butchering children, women and men indiscriminately as part of its more generalized tactic of intimidating the Mozambican population. In the end the death toll would rise to 424 (even more than the number mentioned in the letter which follows). A CUSO cooperant with close TCLSAC connections was in the area at the time of the massacre and we print here an extract from a letter which she wrote home describing her experience.*

Maxixe is a small town across the bay from Inhambane that you have to get to by ferry (the road around the bay is dangerous because of bandits). I arrived ... to be greeted by two very anxious men: there was an attack on a town 25 km away at Homoine where besides many workers and friends there were two close friends of our friends, a Dutch woman and a Quebecoise woman (CUSO cooperant). They too had just arrived - they'd left at 6 am on foot, running after hearing the mortar attack and heavy gunfire.

The rest of the day was spent trying to gather more information about the people left behind and the general situation. It's very bad, let me tell you. An American guy who'd been in Homoine only 8 days and was in a hotel there didn't run; he hid in a courtyard behind the hotel, scrunched up with 2 Mozambicans in a small room next to a bathroom that had one wall open on top connected to it - the bandits actually entered the bathroom and showered it with bullets, which he said ricocheted everywhere. In-

credible. They came out at about 10 am but ran back in again while the attack continued, until 1 pm, when he jumped into his car and drove here. He said they attacked from 3 directions and were extremely well-organized - an army - and dressed exactly as the FPLM (Mozambique army), only better: new uniforms, boots, hats. The people were confused at first, thinking it was the army.

No one has estimated the number dead yet, but we'll probably hear today (though often this information isn't given out). But we know 70 wounded were sent to hospitals (30 to one here, near Maxixe - 40 on the ferry to Inhambane). It's a terrible situation. Another cooperant has been teaching a course of 19 women who are learning to be *animators* in the water program. He's building wells in the countryside and they need local women to explain to the people what the program is about, ask where the best place for the well is, etc. and help people use it properly once it is built. They were in a village only 8 km from Homoine, so they had to be moved out - now they're in a couple of houses in Maxixe - luckily the bandits didn't attack their town. God, it's incredible! The Quebecois woman, Christine, is a fine person, an accountant who's been in Mozambique about 4 years now, I think. She's determined, I know, to go back to Homoine, but I doubt (and I hope not) that CUSO will let her. I should mention, a soldier knocked on their door (Christine and the Dutch woman) as they were trying to decide what to do and stayed with them until they were safely in another town and had managed a ride to Maxixe. It was good to know they were taking care of the cooperants as they say they will (though the American guy was forgotten). This sounds like a callous

remark - we're all aware of the contradictions between the need for our safety and for Mozambique's safety - yet these assurances are necessary for the survival of foreign aid in Mozambique. If something happened to a CUSO cooperant, it's possible the government would be forced to pull us all out.

It's all very heavy, but I'm glad I'm here. It's good to get a different perspective on the country, to be "in the country." We talked to the doctors at the hospital yesterday. (we were at their house on the beach - they returned, after working most of the previous day and night, at 4 pm having treated the last of the wounded people) - they said the bandits told the wounded people to tell the people in Maxixe there were 1000 of them in the area and they'd be coming to Maxixe soon. So people are worried here too - and though we keep reassuring ourselves, we make a lot of jokes about swimming across the bay.

My friend was just about to leave for work this morning and one of his team workers showed up and said the situation south of here is very bad too. It's hard to imagine any of us are going to be here for very long.

What is so incredible is the idea of this well-equipped army - some of the bandits are half-starved and attack with machetes and hoes. Not these guys. The assumption is that there are drop-offs of supplies from submarines off the coast - god, it's hard to fight that.

Well, I must do some work. You don't need to worry about *me* - but you have to keep telling people what's going on here.

*P.S.* Just sitting down to work. They announced last night that 380 people were killed in Homoine Saturday - it makes me sick to write this. The shock is hitting us more every day here. It's impossible to imagine how they did it. This place is so calm, so beautiful, the people so sweet in the best sense of that word - I can't comprehend it at all.

# "No Such Thing as a Liberal Bourgeois": The South African Miners' Strike

BY BILL MARTIN

*Bill Martin is a research associate of the Fernand Braudel Centre, SUNY-Binghamton, and has recently returned from southern Africa.*

It was one of the longest, and certainly the largest and costliest, industrial action in the history of South Africa. After three weeks on strike over 300,000 Black miners have returned to work, breaking and processing the ores that sustain the South African economy. Over the course of the strike at least nine miners were killed, three hundred wounded, hundreds arrested, and tens of thousands fired. Independent analyses of the losses sustained by the mining companies ranged well beyond \$125 million. The duration and ferocity of the strike surprised mining capital and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) alike. As miners once again descend underground, the post-strike analyses have begun.

Focusing on the inability of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to win increased wages, Western press and media have interpreted the strike as a victory for the Chamber of Mines. Wage issues were certainly central to the strike. In 1985 the gold mines' working profits rose by 37%, while 1986 saw a further increase of 14 percent — an all time record. Against such figures NUM charted the abysmally low wages miners still receive: minimum wages start at less than \$120 per month, while over the last decade real wages have not increased at all.

Equally central to the union's demands were increased death and holiday benefits. As anyone who has been down a South African mine can attest, the work is dark, dirty and highly dangerous. As production has leapt forward in response



*NUM rally, Soweto, March 1986.*

to higher gold prices, Black miners have become all too aware that death claims several of their fellow workers every day. Matching the mining monopolies' record profits last year was a more macabre achievement: a fifty-year record of 800 deaths on gold and coal mines.

In the end NUM settled for the Chambers' pre-strike offer of a 15 to 23.5 percent wage increase, while gaining increased death benefits and holiday pay. Interpreted in purely economic terms, the Chamber did indeed manage to contain wage demands. Yet how this was achieved, and how it reveals the course of the struggle between miners and the mining monopolies, leads to quite different conclusions from those common in our press and media.

One lesson seems clear. In the immediate period mining capital has dug in its heels and taken a far more aggressive stance than in recent years. Emboldening mining firms to take such a course were undoubtedly a number of developments on the national level. Successive States of Emergency have been aimed at not only undercutting cooperation across the con-

stituencies of the national democratic movement, but have led to a direct attack by the state upon the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and its affiliates like NUM. In this climate the mining firms' decision to tackle NUM directly this year, rather than await a more severe test several years down the road as NUM's strength on the mines continued to grow, may have appeared to be a well-considered gamble.

The Chamber of Mines' hard new line became apparent as negotiations failed, NUM's offer of arbitration was rejected, and the strike began. Small concessions on wages could have ended the strike quite early on, yet no such offers were contemplated. More significantly, for the first time in recent years the mining companies bargained as a united body. Critical was the position of the more "liberal" Anglo American mines, which had previously come to separate agreements with NUM. In public forums Anglo American spokesmen maintained their liberal stance, hailing the strike as proof of the maturity of the industrial relations system, a system now capable of sustaining a classic industrial dis-

Impact Visuals

pute restricted to economic issues. As one Anglo American spokesman publicly declared at the beginning of the strike, "both sides are ... playing the game according to the collective bargaining rules." In this view the strike became a positive "test of a liberal democracy, which creates institutions to resolve conflict, and allows people to aggressively pursue their interests, as opposed to directing everybody towards the national good."

Such views lost credibility as the strike wore on well beyond the expectations of the mining firms and it became evident that harder heads reigned inside Anglo American's boardroom. Anglo American was indeed caught in the midst of a contradiction of its own making. As the company that had proceeded farthest down the road of recognizing unions, in hope of achieving stable capital/labour relations, it was precisely the firm most seriously hit by the militancy of its labour force. Yet Anglo American stood firm, and its resistance to wage concessions soon produced escalating clashes between mine security forces and striking miners. On several occasions South African Police were brought in, yet in the day-to-day containment of the compounds this proved unnecessary. Acting as a "state within a state", mining companies showed that they were quite capable of deploying large, quasi-military forces of their own, complete with armored Casspirs. In the midst of such pressures the miners expressed a militancy that surprised all observers, including even those in NUM headquarters. As the (translated) chorus line from one impromptu miners' song put it, "Leadership don't come back to us until you have a better offer from the bosses."

The turning point of the strike came as the use of force was complemented by mass dismissals. After workers initially rejected the Chambers' modified offer on Thursday, August 27th, Anglo American led Chamber members in dismiss-

ing over 40,000 workers. This was an unprecedented action in a legal strike against "liberal" Anglo American, and clearly shocked miners and their leadership. Unlike the case in many western countries, South African strikers can be dismissed quite easily - whether the strike is legal or illegal. Faced with the possibility of 10-20,000 additional firings every day, the union finally called an end to the strike.

In the words of one Johannesburg mining expert close to NUM, the strike outcome "was in everyone's view - the Chamber's, the government's, and NUM's - a case of no winners, no losers." Surprisingly aggressive tactics by mining capital did contain a wage in-



crease, yet the costs were very high indeed. Only five years old as a union, and representing well less than half of the mining labour force, NUM's strength clearly shook management. Never before had Black miners sustained a strike over three days. NUM's ability to call out, and keep out, over 300,000 miners demonstrated a power that everyone discounted at the beginning of the strike. When management next approaches a strike they will undoubtedly do so in a more circumspect manner.

While management ponders these lessons, NUM faces a similar period of reassessment. One firm conclusion is the need to organize miners across the industry, particularly those in mines controlled by hard-line firms like Goldfields, Anglo Vaal and Gencor. This is a difficult task, but one clearly within the union's grasp, as shown by the

fact that workers on mines where NUM is not recognized came out in support of the strike anyway. How to counter the Chamber's dismissal tactics, among others, also remains to be analyzed. Preparatory legal actions, a running down of gold and coal ore stockpiles by a ban on overtime work prior to a strike, a more determined effort to counter mining companies' control of workers housed in compounds, and further cooperation with other unions are but a few avenues under consideration. In the future serious discussions of coordinated support by other COSATU unions will surely not begin only after several weeks of strike action have passed, as was the case this year.

NUM moves forward toward such calculations and future actions with its membership and organizational strength intact. In the face of the forces arrayed against it this year, this is in itself no small achievement. If Anglo American hoped to constrain NUM within "normal" capitalist labour relations, the course of the strike and the lessons being drawn from it all point towards a heightened push for concerted industrial and political action. NUM waged the strike under the terms of the nation-wide COSATU "Living Wage Campaign", a call which inextricably joins together actions in many industrial sectors with the demands from community organizations. From being the first COSATU affiliate to endorse the Freedom Charter, to raising on its banners the demand to nationalise the mines, NUM has in five short years pushed forward the inextricable linkage between political and economic struggles. Far from curtailing this trend, the strike's most lasting legacy may be to reinforce it. Referring to Anglo American's liberal image, the conclusion drawn at the end of the strike by Cyril Ramaphosa, the Secretary General of NUM, made this point clearly. "Throughout this strike," he argues, "it has been clear that there is no such thing as a liberal bourgeois."

Joel Pett

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