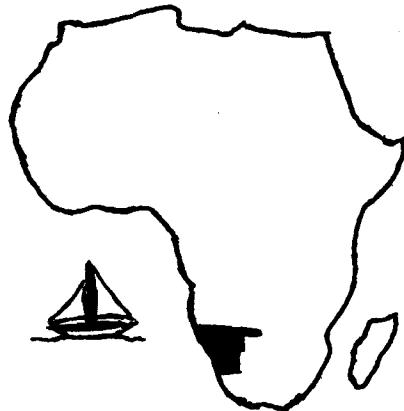


Books For A Free Namibia

A PROJECT OF OPERATION NAMIBIA,
A TRANSNATIONAL NONVIOLENT
ACTION CAMPAIGN TO AID THE
STRUGGLE FOR NAMIBIAN FREEDOM.



In the spring of 1976, Operation Namibia intends to sail a boat from southern Europe to Namibia. The boat will carry banned and otherwise unavailable books to Namibians who have requested them. The crew will be multi-national, experienced in direct action, and committed to nonviolence. On the way to Namibia, the boat will call at West African ports to contact supporters and build public awareness of our action.

As the boat nears Namibia, South African authorities have the choice of either attempting to stop us at some point, or allowing us to deliver the books. This presents a dilemma for South Africa. If South Africa refuses to let us in, it is exposed as an oppressive ruler for not allowing a basic tool for self-government to reach the people it is supposedly encouraging to "develop". If we do enter, then South African control of Namibia has been weakened. The purpose of the action is two-fold: to deliver the books to Namibians and to put new pressure on South Africa to withdraw totally from the country. The two aims are complementary - we combine publicly defying South African authority with an attempt to provide help and support directly to Namibians.

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The "books for a free Namibia" project is part of a long-term campaign - Operation Namibia. The Philadelphia Namibia Action Group initiated the campaign in March, 1975, because of a growing concern about Namibia and the crisis in Southern Africa. Operation Namibia's first actions were on May 30-31 - twelve demonstrations in Europe, North America and Australia. During the summer, we began a project on illegal corporate activity in Namibia. This work is continuing, although most of our energy goes into the books project. Meanwhile, Operation Namibia has grown to include organizers and supporters in many countries, and Philadelphia NAG now shares coordination with a group in Cambridge, England. Groups lending support to the campaign include Movement for a New Society, American Friends Service Committee and International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

ABOUT NAMIBIA

Namibia (South West Africa) was a German colony until the end of World War I, when the League of Nations gave the territory to South Africa to administer as a "sacred trust" on behalf of the League. The policy of oppression and racial decimation begun by the Germans became institutionalized under South African rule as the system of apartheid. Since the United Nations was formed, it has been trying to persuade South Africa to administer the territory in the spirit which was intended: to move toward Namibian self-determination and independence. Over the years, however, South Africa has consolidated its power in Namibia by separating and relocating native Namibians, placing puppet chiefs as their leaders, exiling and imprisoning the real political leaders and enforcing inhumane apartheid laws. Finally, the United Nations ordered South Africa to show proof of its intention to withdraw from Namibia by May 30, 1975. The deadline passed; South Africa made no real concessions.

In recent months, South Africa has been making a show of "compromise" with United Nations demands. South African sponsored constitutional talks are being held, but without the cooperation of the main black political groups. The public aspects of racial segregation are ostensibly being eliminated, but the essence of apartheid is preserved.

South African rule still means that "nonwhites", comprising 86% of the population, are forced to live in the poorest 25% of the land - their "homelands". Under the contract labor system, Namibian men must leave these "homelands" and their families for as long as two years to work in white-owned businesses and homes for extremely low pay. As of 1972, over 80% of black families earned less than \$25 per week (the cost of living in Namibia is roughly equal to that of the United States). One half of the children in black areas die before they are five years old. Yet Namibia is a land rich in minerals, fish and livestock. If South Africa and the United States (among other investors) relinquished their control over its resources, Namibia could easily support its population. As it is, starvation and diseases linked to malnutrition flourish.

We feel the time to act is now. Events in Southern Africa are moving quickly, with the decolonization of Mozambique and Angola and the strengthening of independence movements in Zimbabwe and Namibia. Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda have both declared that this is the last chance for nonviolence to resolve the Southern Africa question. We can help prevent all-out war by showing South Africa that we will not sit back and let them squander the lives and human rights of the African people. By placing ourselves in this picture of growing conflict as a new force for change, we can have a significant impact.

OPERATION NAMIBIA 4811 Springfield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143 (215) SA4-1858

Dear Operation Namibia:

I like your books project

Enclosed is a contribution

Please send me more information about Operation Namibia

I want to be an Operation Namibia contact person (a contact person helps to organize Operation Namibia where s/he lives, raise money, do publicity, arrange support actions, etc.)

Name: _____

Address: _____