



## Tricontinental Scene



# Southwest Africa: The Real Solution Is Not in the U. N.

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On October 27, 1966, the General Assembly of the U.N. decided to revoke the mandate of South Africa over Southwest Africa. The voted resolution received an overwhelming majority (114 votes).

Two and a half years later, what has changed in that region of the southern part of Africa? Nothing at all. A U.N. commission that attempted to visit the territory to learn about the living conditions and try to put into effect the discussions of the highest international organization, could only go as far as Tanzania, seeing themselves obliged to return to New York with empty hands, because of the denial of the South African Government to extend an entry permit.

There is nothing left then but to discuss the racist challenge, and last May, the U.N. did discuss it. Once again, the structural weakness and the famous "balance of forces" blocked the efforts of some delegates of Africa and Asia who wanted the challenge to be answered "most energetically". On this occasion, Cuba stated with utmost clarity that the rights of Southwest Africa to independence and self-determination will be achieved only by the struggle of the Namibian

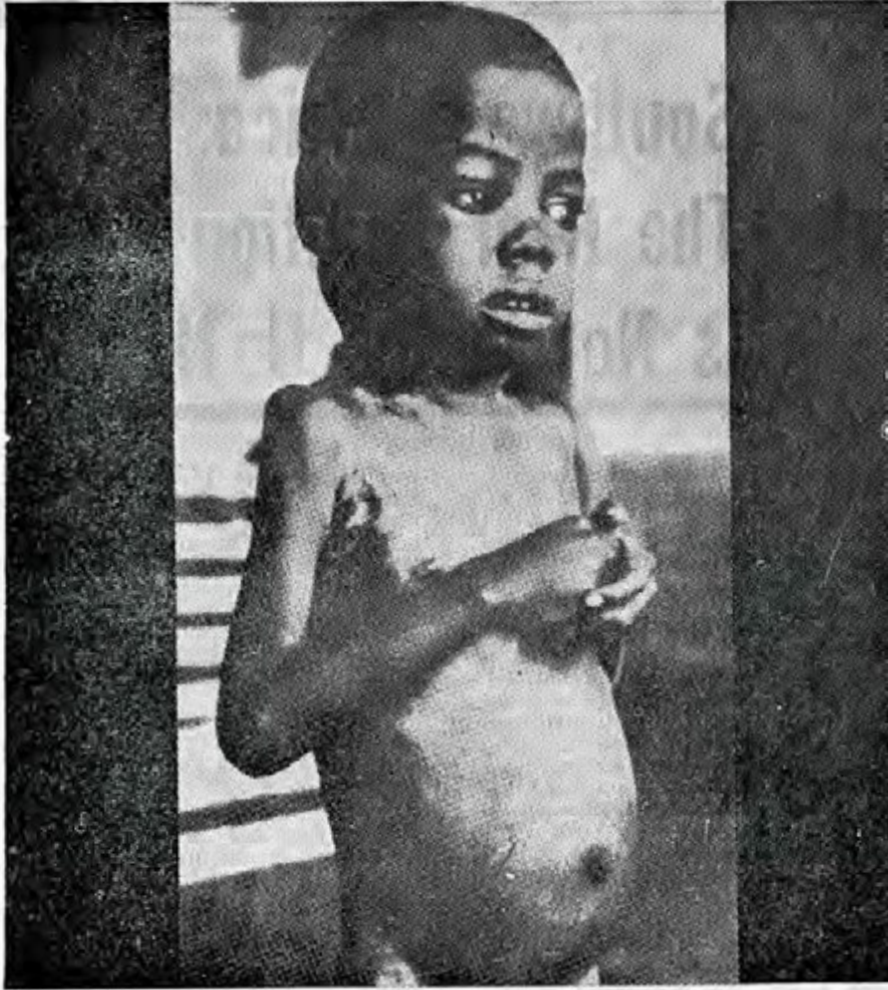
people and in the territory of Southwest Africa itself. The final resolution that came out of the heated debates hardly differs from that of October 27, 1966. And even if they did encompass in their continue to be just so many more U.N. resolutions; and the real solution of the problem has never depended, nor can depend, on the U.N.

### FROM GERMANY TO THE UNION PASSING THROUGH THE LEAGUE

Point 6 of Art. 22 of the League of Nations is still in effect for the rulers of South Africa:

"Territories exist, such as Southwest Africa and some islands of the South Pacific, that, due to their small populations and to their small size, or to their geographical contiguity to the territory of the mandatory power, and to other circumstances, could be better administered under the laws of said power as integral parts of its territory subjected to the conditions mentioned above in the interest of its indigenous population."

When the results of World War I put an end to the German Protec-



torate imposed in 1884 on Southwest Africa, Art. 22 of the League of Nations Charter was translated into the handing over of the African Southwest, "with a mandatory character," to the white government of South Africa (December 1920). It was logical to expect that

the Anglo-Boer concordat would govern its "mandate" in the same way that it ruled the social and political life inside South Africa: no rights for the Africans, all the rights for the colonizers of European origin. There were difficulties, like the rebellion of Bondels-

warts in 1922 and the uprisings of the Rehoboths in 1924, but already in 1926 South Africa was in condition to decree the "First Legislative Council" of Southwest Africa and, three years later, to move Boer peasants from Angola to Southwest Africa. The first incident with the League of Nations occurred in 1936, when the latter opposed the intent to transform the territory under mandate into another province of the Union.

Already in 1939 the police of South Africa and the racists also decided to take into their own hands the administration of the so-called Caprivi Strip (after Count Leo de Caprivi, successor to Prince Bismarck as Imperial Chancellor of Germany in 1890), which extends from the northwestern part of Southwest Africa to the Zambezi River.

After World War II, the U.N. refused another petition of the Union to "incorporate" Southwest Africa as a province. There were some verbal "battles", but in 1947 Pretoria temporarily agreed to give an accounting to the recently-created Trusteeship Council, heir to the Administration of the Mandates, of its action in Southwest Africa.

The "honeymoon" would not last long. The Boers' Nationalist Party, with its apartheid policy, took power at that time in the Union of South Africa. In 1949, the neo-Fascist government of Dr. Daniel François Malan determined not to make any more reports to the Trusteeship Council because this was opposed to the creation of the "Bantu Reservations" in the Southwest. In this way, the weak link of the U.N. with the administration of the territories was reduced to a dead letter in a useless document, in spite of which the U.N. would reiterate its petition to the Johannesburg Administration, and would discuss the "Southwest Africa case" in 1955.

#### STUBBORNNESS AND REPRESSION

Thirteen years later the procedures and the results are still in the same vicious circle of verbal duels, of threats and challenges, which do not in any way alter the terrible situation of the African people of Namibia, autochthonous name of the Southwest nation. Balthazar Vorster, successor of Malan, Stridjom and Verwoerd, stubbornly considers that the defeat of the Germans during World War I by the South African troops commanded by Smutts and Botha, is the only source of "legality", so the decision of the U.N. of revoking the mandate is "an arbitrary act, unacceptable, and is to be repudiated."

With 30 thousand racist soldiers who can in a few hours move into the African Southwest, Vorster hopes to crush any intent—if there should be one—of materializing the resolution of last October.

But Vorster knows that he does not have to fear such unlikely decision. The only danger for his regime lies in the African people of Namibia, heirs of the magnificent combat traditions of the Herers. South African repression against that people constantly increases. Last January 27, 35 nationalists of the Southwest were condemned in South Africa "for attempting against the established order."

The struggle for national liberation in Southwest Africa is inevitable but difficult. The 96,000 whites—South Africans, British, Germans—who live there receive opportunities for the investment of capital which even surpass those offered by the Pretoria Government in South Africa itself. These 96,000 whites are not going to pack up their bags and leave without resistance, and they will not be alone in that last battle. It will be a battle that will be waged without the participation of the U.N. because naturally it will not be another tournament of worn-out rhetoricians.