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SOUTH AFRICAN JOINS BLACK LEADERS BACKING DEMAND FOR U.N. AUTHORITY IN NAMIBIA

New York, February 4. At a noon press conference outside company headquarters, delivery of a statement supporting Namibian independence, and signed by five black members of the U.S. Congress, launched a nationwide campaign against Newmont Mining Corporation. Among the five were Charles Diggs, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Africa of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Shirley Chisholm of New York, the first black women to be a candidate for the U.S. presidency.

At the same time, Bill Johnston of the Episcopal Churchmen for South Africa announced a stockholders' campaign against Newmont's Namibian operations where, as manager of Tsumeb Corporation, it is the largest employer in the territory. Tsumeb has been one of those firms hardest hit by the strike of 15,000 Ovambo contract laborers which began December 13th of last year.

The statement called upon Newmont to recognize the United Nations as "the lawful authority in Namibia" and requested an end to cooperation "with the illegal administration" of South Africa, such as tax payments and the filing of reports.

Among others who spoke in support of the action were Ben Gurirab of the South West African Peoples' Organization, Al Hubbard of Viet Nam Veterans Against the War, and representatives of the Polaro2 Revolutionary Workers' Movement.

Removing his hat and speaking bareheaded despite a chill wind, South African attorney Joel Carlsen began his remarks saying, "I take off my hat to the striking workers of Namibia." Carlson is a member of the International Commission of Jurists and before his departure from South Africa last year defended political activists including the 37 accused in the "South West Africa Terrorism Trial" of 1967.

The Reverend Ralph Abernathy, who succeeded Dr. Martin Luther King as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, sent word of his support from Finland where he is visiting. Also present was the Reverend George Houser, Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa, who carried a poster calling for U.S. corporations to recognize U.N. authority in Namibia.

After the press conference, a group of about thirty people moved to the 12th floor offices of Newmont where a delegation of four met with company officials. They presented the statement, background material on the strike, and an earlier similar document signed by prominent Christian and Jewish leaders including Eugene Carson Blake of the World Council of Churches and Balfour Brickner of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Among organizations joining the American Committee on Africa and the Episcopal Churchmen for South Africa in the action are the Southern Africa Committee and the Women's Division of the Board of Missions, United Methodist Church.