“Soldiers have taken up positions at dozens of farms. Long stretches of tarred highways are now deserted at night.”

“The war in Namibia is now costing the South African government $1.25 million per day.”

“Up to 2400 people were arrested in June [1979] in a large scale police and security force operation in Windhoek’s black township of Katatura.”

Two years ago, reports like these could have been coming from Zimbabwe, where a war against white minority colonialism was being fought. Today, Zimbabwe is independent and Africans there know freedom for the first time in their lives. But today in Namibia, Africans are still fighting against white minority rule.

Namibia is the next link in the struggle against colonialism in southern Africa—the last link before South Africa itself.
South Africa’s Brutal Mandate

While the struggle in Namibia is for the universally-recognized right to self-determination, it is also unique. Namibia is the only country in the world that the International Court of Justice has ruled to be illegally occupied by a foreign power.

How did South Africa come to occupy Namibia? South Africa invaded Namibia, then a German colony called South West Africa, during World War I in the name of the Allies. The colonial history of Namibia had been a vicious one. In one of the worst cases of genocide ever, German colonizers killed more than three-quarters of the Herero and Nama people at the turn of the century.

The League of Nations took responsibility for the “well-being and social progress” of the people of Namibia in 1920, and gave a mandate to fulfill this trust to South Africa, which was then still part of the British Empire. All other mandated territories were later given their independence, but South Africa repeatedly flaunted United Nations’ demands to withdraw and instead tightened its grip on the territory.

“We are Namibians and not South Africans. We do not now, and will not in the future recognize your right to govern us; . . . to treat our country as if it were your property and us as if you were our masters. We have always regarded South Africa as an intruder in our country.”

Herman Ja Toivo
founding member of SWAPO
at Terrorism Act trial, 1967

South Africa’s occupation of Namibia has been brutal. Thousands of Namibians were forced to move from their home to make way for white “development.” The Hereros were forced into the desert, where their chief protested “no human being ever lived before; it is a country only good for wild beasts.” The Namas too were forced off their hunting grounds to make way for white farmers and to provide them with black laborers. In Ovamboland, whole villages were bombed to force the people to move and to become migrant workers in the mines and on the railroads. Western mining companies came to Namibia to benefit from its natural wealth and cheap labor (see Namibia’s Mines, page 4).

When the National Party came to power in South Africa in 1948, it extended the inequality and inhumanity of apartheid to the one million Africans of Namibia. Its exploitation of Namibia became more systematic.

In response to this oppression, SWAPO (South West Africa People’s Organization) was formed in 1960. When the United Nations General Assembly voted in 1966 to terminate South Africa’s mandate over Namibia and South Africa refused to withdraw, SWAPO decided that armed struggle would be necessary to force South Africa out.

Why Namibia Will Win

Over the years South Africa has thwarted Namibian resistance and international appeals. Since 1977 five western members of the United Nations have negotiated with South Africa to arrange for United Nations-supervised elections leading to independence (see Chronology). But South Africa has continually stalled the international talks, while it tried to impose an “internal settlement” on the people of Namibia similar to that which the white settlers attempted to install in Zimbabwe.

South Africa again delayed the Namibia talks to watch the outcome of the Zimbabwean elections. South Africa was humiliated by the results; it had poured more than $50 million into Abel Muzorewa’s losing campaign. But it also used this breathing period while international attention was focused elsewhere to escalate military attacks on SWAPO and detentions and torture of SWAPO supporters inside Namibia.

SWAPO has always been willing to contest internationally-controlled elections, because it believes that it has the support of the majority of the people. South Africa is now afraid that SWAPO is right, seeing the overwhelming electoral victory Zambians gave Robert Mugabe’s ZANU and the Patriotic Front alliance.

In spite of South Africa’s intransigence, there are strong reasons to believe that the Namibian people will succeed in winning their independence.

The people of Namibia are highly politicized and will not give in to South African racist rule. Their resistance has taken many forms. Workers have organized on the mines and have struck for improved working conditions. Many of Namibia’s churches have taken a strong stand against South African occupation. For their outspokenness several missionaries have been deported and others have been harassed and denied the right to operate freely in the country. SWAPO armed resistance is growing, as South Africa’s stationing of more than 60,000 troops in the territory demonstrates.
South Africa's efforts at fashioning an "internal settlement" in Namibia are likely to backfire. As Nhato Motlana, a Soweto leader, pointed out, "The big lesson of Zimbabwe is that anybody in southern Africa who gets white patronage is finished." South Africa has tried to create political alternatives to the SWAPO liberation movement, but the more support South Africa gives them, the more they are tainted in the eyes of the people.

The ethnically-based Democratic Turnhalle Alliance to which South Africa is handing over more local administrative power through the constituent assembly, is openly backed and funded by the South African government. South Africa may hold a new round of ethnic elections in the second half of 1980 to consolidate its internal settlement. It might then hope to "merge" its internal and international strategies, giving "its" black candidates the greatest possible support in a future UN-run election. But all its efforts will probably have the opposite effect.

Resistance to the war from inside the South Africa military is growing. Many men are refusing to comply with the compulsory military draft and are getting growing support from the churches for doing so. Peter Molle and Richard Steele, for example, are two Baptist conscientious objectors who are serving jail sentences rather than fight in Namibia. There have also been four incidents in the last year of groups of soldiers going AWOL (absent without leave). In the biggest such incident, at least 120 soldiers left the Upington base in South Africa's northern Cape in October 1979 after a five-month tour of duty in Namibia's northwestern war zone.

The attention of the Frontline states is focused on Namibia now that Zimbabwe is independent. African states have waited for three years while the west has taken the initiative on Namibia at the United Nations. But the western negotiations have still not borne fruit, and African patience is justifiably running out. The Africa group at the UN is likely to urge strong action against South Africa in 1980 if South Africa remains intransigent on Namibia.

"It is the army, together with units of the Home Guard, which detain and beat students, hospital personnel and pastors, applying sand and electric shock torture to those accused of aiding SWAPO... In the first instance, it is they who deserve the name 'terrorist'."

Rev. Paul Wee
Lutheran World Federation

What You Can Do

• Call for U.N. Sanctions against South Africa. In 1980 Namibia will be a highly-visible symbolic issue by which African nations will judge American policy toward southern Africa, as the Rhodesian sanctions issue was in the late 1970's. Urge U.S. support in the Security Council for concrete measures against South Africa as long as it illegally occupies Namibia. Write to President Carter (The White House, Wash., D.C. 20500) and Ambassador Donald McHenry (US Mission to the UN, United Nations, New York, NY 10017).

• Write to your Representative. Congressional conservatives are attacking US contributions to United Nations programs that benefit Namibia, especially the Institute for Namibia in Lusaka, Zambia. The Institute is training several hundred Namibian exiles in administrative and development-related skills.

• Call for the release of political prisoners and detainees. Make special appeals for Namibians held in prisons in South Africa and for the 136 people who were taken from the Cossing refugee camp in Angola and have been held incommunicado for two years. Call for an immediate end to torture of all prisoners. Write to South African Ambassador Donald Sole (3051 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Wash., D.C. 20008). For more information, contact Episcopal Churchmen for South Africa or Amnesty International (see addresses in Resources, page 6).

• Sponsor educational events about Namibia. Namibia is still invisible to many Americans and we need to change that. Films, records, speakers and pamphlets are listed in the Resources section on page 6.

• Give material support to Namibian refugees. Some 60,000 Namibians are refugees in Angola and Zambia. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees and SWAPO operate camps for them, but supplies are very limited. They need educational materials, clothing, medical supplies and transportation vehicles. For more information, contact the SWAPO office in New York or the Africa Fund.

• Support South African military resisters. A growing number of young men are leaving South Africa rather than fight in Namibia. Some are arriving in the United States needing legal and other kinds of assistance. For more information, contact Southern Africa Military Refugee Aid Fund.

• Keep informed. This is a critical year in the struggle for Namibia. For up-to-date information about political developments and how you can respond, write to the Washington Office on Africa.
Namibia’s Mines: Digging Out Her Wealth

Deposits of diamonds, copper, uranium, lead, tin and other minerals are Namibia’s greatest source of wealth. But their development has been carried out at the expense of the African population. German colonists imposed virtual slavery on Africans who picked diamonds by hand from Namibia’s coastal sands. Today, the contract labor system forces thousands of men to live apart from their families. In addition to this cruel heritage, South African, American, British and other European-owned companies will have extracted much of Namibia’s mineral wealth by the time liberation comes.

Namibia is the world’s largest producer of gem diamonds, at mines owned by South Africa’s Anglo-American Corporation. The Tsumeb copper mine, controlled by the American companies Newmont Mining and American Metal Climax, is the largest private employer and user of contract labor in Namibia. In the 1970’s Rio Tinto Zinc of Britain made a major investment in the world’s largest uranium mine at Roßing, where last extraction of uranium in the 1980’s is planned to fill contracts with Britain, France and Japan. One-sixth of the western world’s uranium ore is being produced at Roßing.

All told, extraction of minerals provides about one-third of Namibia’s gross domestic product, two-thirds of its exports, and more than half of its tax revenues. One-third of the income from the mines is paid to foreigners, as profits to parent companies and dividends to shareholders. So much of the income is never seen by Namibians. At Tsumeb mine, for example, African wages are about ten times lower than white wages. If African wages in 1971 had been increased six times, the return on equity at Tsumeb would still have been equal to the average of that at other Newmont mines.

Exploitation by Contract

Unequal division of land and the contract labor system are two reasons why Namibia’s mines have been profitable for foreign investors. As in South Africa, Africans in Namibia were relegated to Bantustans, where less than 40 percent of the poorest land is set aside for more than 85 percent of the people. The semi-desert conditions in much of the country means Africans frequently can’t subsist there. For the mining companies this is a bonus. A South African official in Windhoek was quoted in the Financial Mail as saying:

You are making a mistake if you think the Ovambos come here because they like it... It is economic factors that force them to come and work here... They have had a very poor rainy season so far... This means that we are going to have a heavy supply of labor this year again.

Migrant workers number 50,000 out of the total African workforce of 70,000 in the monetary economy. Until 1972, mining companies recruited labor through state-run labor bureaus. Africans had no say over where they would work or what pay they would receive. Men came to the mines and farms for 11 months while their families were forced to stay behind. Breaking the contract without proper cause was a criminal offense.

Workers’ Grievances Spark Strikes

In December, 1971 the Tsumeb manager told a reporter, “All our Ovambos are working and there is no sign of unrest.” Three days later, 4000 workers at the mine went out on strike, along with 16,000 others from all over the country. At Tsumeb, the workers demanded:

*We do not want the contract system merely to be improved and that it be given another name… Any method of selling people meets with our disapproval.*

The 1971 general strike was the first one ever to force labor concessions from the South African government, but the basic structure of the contract system was not changed. The criminal penalty for breaking contract was revoked, but employers could still keep an African worker indefinitely by refusing to sign the pass saying that his employed had legally ended.

Other strikes followed, at the Roßing uranium mine in 1976 and again in 1978. The workers’ grievances included health hazards as well as unequal wages, inhospitable single living quarters, and the company’s refusal to allow a representative trade union. A workers representative described the dangers of radiation exposure:

_Working in open air, under hot sun, in the uranium dust produced by grinding machines we are also exposed to the ever-present cyclonic wind which is blowing in this desert... Our bodies are covered with dust and one can hardly_

(continued on page 6)
### CHRONOLOGY

The last 20 years of Namibia's history has been a story of South Africa's continued illegal occupation, frequent but often ineffective international responses, and growing popular resistance. Here are some highlights of that struggle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South African actions</th>
<th>Namibian resistance</th>
<th>International response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1959 Dec. 10</strong></td>
<td>South African police kill 11 people and wound 54 during protest; following removal of Africans from Windhoek into Katutura township.</td>
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<td><strong>1960</strong></td>
<td>SWAPO forms as national anti-colonial movement.</td>
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<td><strong>1966 Sept. 27</strong></td>
<td>SWAPO begins armed struggle in Ovamboland, northern part of Namibia.</td>
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<td><strong>1967</strong></td>
<td>37 SWAPO members tried in Pretoria under Terrorism Act which was applied retroactively to Namibia in same year. Many are still serving sentences on South Africa's Robben Island.</td>
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<td><strong>1969 Aug. 12</strong></td>
<td>UN Security Council endorses termination of South Africa's mandate over Namibia.</td>
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<td><strong>1971 June 21</strong></td>
<td>International Court of Justice declares that South Africa's presence in Namibia is illegal.</td>
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<td><strong>Dec. 13</strong></td>
<td>20,000 workers across the country go on two-month general strike to protest contract labor system.</td>
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<td><strong>1972</strong></td>
<td>State of Emergency declared in Ovamboland.</td>
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<td><strong>Dec. 11</strong></td>
<td>Security Council votes to end year-long dialogue with South Africa over Namibia since South Africa was not acting in good faith.</td>
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<td><strong>Dec. 12</strong></td>
<td>UN General Assembly recognizes SWAPO as &quot;sole legitimate representative&quot; of Namibia's people.</td>
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<td><strong>1974 April</strong></td>
<td>Coup in Portugal. South Africa loses ally in Angola, on Namibia's northern border.</td>
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<td><strong>Dec. 13</strong></td>
<td>General Assembly establishes UN Decree No. 1 making extraction of minerals or other resources illegal without UN consent.</td>
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<td><strong>1975 June 6</strong></td>
<td>US, Britain and France veto Security Council resolution on arms embargo against South Africa because of its occupation of Namibia.</td>
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<td><strong>Sept.</strong></td>
<td>South Africa sets up conference at the Turnhalle gymnasion in Windhoek for ethnic leaders to discuss future of Namibia. SWAPO, a national political party, is excluded and denounces talks.</td>
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<td><strong>Sept.</strong></td>
<td>South Africa invades Angola from Namibia, in collaboration with US CIA. South Africa does not withdraw for six months.</td>
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<td><strong>1976 Jan.</strong></td>
<td>Security Council passes Resolution 385 calling for the holding of elections &quot;under UN supervision and control.&quot; Several African parties based in central and southern Namibia disband and join SWAPO, demonstrating that SWAPO is not simply an Ovambo party.</td>
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**Oct. 19** US, Britain and France again veto sanctions on arms to South Africa over Namibia in Security Council.

**1977 April** Five western members of Security Council launch negotiations with South Africa to plan for internationally-run elections.

**Aug.** South Africa appoints an Administrator-General to Namibia as part of strategy to establish autonomy for Namibia under South African domination.

**1978 April 10** Western nations present plan for Namibian elections to Security Council, calling for (a) UN Special Representative to insure conditions for free and fair elections; (b) release of all political prisoners; (c) end to all hostilities; and (d) restriction to base of South African and SWAPO armed forces.

**April 25** Prime Minister Vorster announces South Africa's acceptance of western plan.

**May 4** Before SWAPO responds to plan, South Africa kills 750 Namibians, mostly women and children, at Cassinga refugee camp in Angola.

**July 12** SWAPO agrees to proceed with Security Council with western plan.

**July 27** Security Council adopts western plan, Secretary General Waldheim appoints Martti Ahtisaari as his special representative.

**Sept. 20** Prime Minister Vorster announces his resignation and rejects UN proposals on Namibia; announces that South Africa will hold its own elections in the territory.

**Sept. 29** Security Council passes Resolution 435 establishing mechanism to carry out Waldheim's plan.

**Oct.** US Secretary of State Vance meets with Prime Minister Botha in South Africa; holds out possible meeting for Botha with President Carter if he cooperates on Namibia.

**Dec. 4-8** South Africa holds election in Namibia to form constituent assembly that will draw up new constitution. Widespread intimidation charged; UN declares election illegal.

**Dec. 22** South Africa announces it accepts UN plan and will try to convince newly-elected constituent assembly to accept also.

**1979 April** South Africa arrests virtually all SWAPO leaders inside Namibia.

**May** South Africa launches one of the largest military offenses of the war, and extends martial law to cover 80% of population.

**July** Angolan President Augusto Neto proposes plan for a demilitarized zone (DMZ) along the Angolan/Namibian border.

**Oct.** South Africa partially rejects DMZ plan, and wants to maintain South African bases within the zone.

**Nov.** South Africa stalls further talks on Namibia.
(continued from page 4)

recognize us. We are inhaling this uranium dust into our lungs and many of us have already suffered the effect. We are not provided with remedies and there is no hospital to treat us.

The mining companies' exploitation of Namibian workers and of the mineral wealth of their homeland is not only cruel but also illegal. In 1974 the United Nations General Assembly passed UN Decree No. 1 making the exploitation of natural resources illegal without UN consent, and establishing that any company which continues to operate under the authority of the South African government would be liable for damages to be paid to the future independent government. But all the mining companies continue to mine and to pay millions of dollars in taxes to the South African government.

Even more importantly, the mining companies are raping Namibia of its wealth. A South African government commission reported in 1964 that Namibia's mineral wealth would be mostly exhausted in the 1980's. The owners of the Consolidated Diamond Mines and Tsumeb copper mine said in 1971 that they expected their mines to dry up in 12 to 15 years.

The extraction of these minerals makes the liberation of Namibia all the more urgent. Theo Ben Gurinab, SWAPO Representative to the United Nations, said in 1976:

After the liberation of Namibia, perhaps we will be left with a country without any natural resources . . . This is precisely the South African strategy—to deplete the country of its natural resources in order to make us dependent on South Africa after we achieve our independence.

(Much of the information in this section is based on research by Barbara Rogers, Roger Murray, Tami Hullman and Reed Kramer.)

### Resources on Namibia

#### Films, Records and Photos

- **Two films from California Newsreel:** *Free Namibia* narrated by Ossie Davie, portrays exploitation and the struggle to end it. 27 minutes, 1978. $40 rental.
- **Namibia: A Case Study in Colonialism** shows colonial domination and mineral exploitation. 18 minutes. $25. Both films produced by the United Nations.
- **One Namibia, One Nation. SWAPO Freedom Songs by the SWAPO Singers.** Produced by Holland Southern Africa Committee from New World Resource Center.
- **Namibia in Struggle.** Portable Exhibition of Photographs, 1979. 18 sheets with photos and text. $12.25 from International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa.

#### Pamphlets

- **Packet on Namibia.** "For Self-Determination and Genuine National Independence for Namibia." An excellent packet including booklet on recent history of Namibia, detailed account of United Nations actions on Namibia, and political documents of SWAPO. Available free from Commissioner for Namibia.
- **The Namibians of South West Africa by Peter Fraenkel, Minority Rights Group—London, 1978, 48 pp. $2.30 from Africa Fund.**
- **The Workers of Namibia by Gillan and Suzanne Cronje, International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 134 pp. $5.20 from Africa Fund.**
- **Escalation of Political Repression in Namibia, International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, April, 1980, 12 pp. (xeroxed). $1.00 from Washington Office on Africa.**

#### Groups with Resources on Namibia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Africa Fund</th>
<th>Commissioner for Namibia</th>
<th>New World Resource Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>198 Broadway</td>
<td>D.C. 328</td>
<td>1476 W. Irving Park Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, N.Y. 10038</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>Chicago, IL 60613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(212) 962-1210</td>
<td>New York, N.Y. 10017</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
<td>Episcopal Churchmen for South Africa</td>
<td>SWAPO Observer Mission to the U.N.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa Coordination Group</td>
<td>853 Broadway, Room 1005</td>
<td>Theo-Be-n Gurinab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Spring, MD 20901</td>
<td>(212) 477-0066</td>
<td>New York, N.Y. 10017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Newsreel</td>
<td>International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa</td>
<td>(212) 986-7863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>630 Natoma St.</td>
<td>P.O. Box 17</td>
<td>Southern Africa Military Refugee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA 94103</td>
<td>Cambridge, MA 02138</td>
<td>Aid Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>(415) 621-6196</td>
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15¢ each for 1-10; 12¢ for 11-50; 10¢ each for over 50 copies. (Add 20¢ for postage.)

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