

# Features

## Freedom for Namibia

In only two months, an election will be held in Namibia which could decide the future of the entire liberation struggle throughout southern Africa. An international agreement sponsored by the United Nations has created the possibility for democracy and majority rule for this southwest African state, which has been controlled by white South African for decades. But the promise of democratic government is being threatened by several factors, which may yet produce the tyranny of white supremacy throughout the region.

South Africa accepted this international election in Namibia due largely to events which began back in 1976. Apartheid troops were defeated militarily by the Angolans and Cubans in Angola's liberation war. South Africa suffered serious strategic losses also with the independence of Mozambique; and within another four years, Zimbabwe would be liberated as well. Consequently, the South Africans fell back into

Namibia as their last line of defense. The South African Air Force constructed a series of bases along the northern frontier of Namibia, and conducted bombing raids against SWAPO camps in Angola. In 1978, the apartheid military escalated these attacks, and in one instance the South Africa Air Force murdered over 600 civilians in one bombing raid.

It was in response to the apartheid assault that the United Nations called for a peace plan in 1978, which included an immediate cease fire; the removal of all but 1500 apartheid troops after two months; and the scheduling of elections for a new constituent assembly based on universal suffrage. Under the Carter administration, South Africa was being pressured to accept these terms; but after the U.S. elections of 1980, the Reagan administration informed the apartheid regime that they were under no pressure to accept the UN's agreement immediately. The U.S. used its diplomatic weight to permit South Africa to consolidate itself inside Namibia, by

The South Africans were only forced to come to terms in 1988, when they were defeated militarily at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. It had become clear to them that Namibia could no longer be held as a direct colony of apartheid. But the Reagan administration had given the South Africans eight important years in which to consolidate its clients inside Namibia. They were able to recruit spies and agents to infiltrate SWAPO; and they had identified local Blacks who were agreeable to oppose SWAPO in the upcoming constituent elections.

Although the international agreement declares that the people of Namibia must exercise self-determination, South Africans who were born in Namibia or who can prove at least four years' residency will be permitted to vote in the Namibian election, even if they no longer live in the country. The apartheid regime has registered perhaps as many as 150,000 whites in an effort to throw the election from the Black majority. Most political observers had assumed that the South West African

establishing paramilitary forces among the white settler population, and by recruiting Blacks who accepted a puppet/client role in opposition to (SWAPO), which has been the leading progressive political force in the struggle against apartheid domination in the country, would easily win more than two thirds electoral support it requires to control the new constituent assembly. But a combination of errors and mistakes on the part of SWAPO, plus the maneuverings of the apartheid regime and its local allies, now have created a giant question mark for Namibia's future.

SWAPO's first error occurred in April, immediately preceding the initiation of the UN peace settlement process. SWAPO ordered into northern Namibia perhaps as many as 1200 fighters of its People's Liberation Army of Namibia. The purpose was to consolidate its position in the region. South African military and its local paramilitary clients reacted, killing 300 fighters, and terrorizing the local population. This permitted the South Africans to delay the process of demilitarization until mid-August. During this interim period, the military and paramilitary units were able to intimidate thousands of potential voters. African voters were told to stay away from political meetings sponsored by SWAPO, and not to register for the elections. In the northern part of the country, where the greatest fighting occurred this year, registration figures are very low—precisely in the electoral areas in which SWAPO had counted on to produce its necessary 66 percent mandate.

SWAPO's second political error was the product of South African's successful attempts to infiltrate the organization over a period of several years. Under the terms of the independence process, both the apartheid regime and SWAPO were obligated to release their detainees. Hundreds of SWAPO prisoners were indeed agents of apartheid. But unfortunately, many others were not. A group of prisoners had been veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle and members of SWAPO who had been unjustly arrested due to the fear that they had been agents. A few prisoners, such as SWAPO former central committee member Victor Nkandi, had also been prisoners previously in South African detention campus. SWAPO officials now admit that many mistakes were made in the treatment of prisoners, and that those individuals who have acted against party procedures will be held accountable and prosecuted. However, the entire incident has created the sense among many supporters of SWAPO that the organization has lost a good amount of political credibility.

A third mistake is that of political inconsistency. SWAPO for many years maintained an unambiguous political line, calling for a fundamental, radical economic reorganization of the nation, and a sharp break from all commercial ties with apartheid. But SWAPO has modified its economic program in an attempt to win over non-SWAPO constituencies. This effort has confused their core defenders.

If SWAPO fails to win a two-third vote, the liberation

struggle may be stalled for another decade or more. But the forces of white supremacy are taking no chances. On 12 September, for example, one of the senior white officials of SWAPO, Anton Lubowski, an attorney and former member of the South African army who defected to the Africans, was murdered in front of his home in Windhoek. Lubowski would have become a key leader of a SWAPO-led government. When pushed to the limit, apartheid and its clients in Namibia respond with terror, harassment and death. These are the essential tools of racism.

South Africa cannot achieve freedom unless Namibia also becomes free. We must pressure the Bush administration to step up tougher sanctions against South Africa. We should also contact Congressmen Howard Wolpe (D) and Dan Burton (R), the chair and ranking Republican members, respectively, on the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, to demand the end of South Africa's murderous maneuvers to subvert majority rule and democracy in Namibia.

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## The Two Faces of Racism

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE

Much has been written about the tragic, racially-motivated execution of sixteen year old Yusuf K. Hawkins in the Bensonhurst neighborhood on 23 August to look at a used car, they were attacked by approximately ten white youths. Reportedly, the white youths were outraged that a local white woman was dating a Black man, and they were lying in wait for their victim. Armed with baseball bats, golf clubs and at least one gun, they were heard by witnesses saying before the shooting: "Let's club the (expletive) nigger." Young Hawkins backed away from the confrontation, but was gunned down by two .32 caliber bullets.

Hawkins' murder triggered a deep outrage among the city's African American population for several reasons. Hawkins was only the latest of a series of Black victims of white violence in New York, a list which has included the Black men beaten and killed at Howard Beach, and the killing of Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpers and other Blacks by the police. When local activists Jitu Weusi, Reverend Herbert Daughtry and others called for a protest march to denounce the murder, they were told by New York Mayor Ed Koch that they had no right to protest in the Bensonhurst area. On August 31, thousands participated in a mile-long protest march, which culminated in a confrontation with police on

Brooklyn Bridge. About ten police and scores of demonstrators were injured. On the same day, the suspected killer of Hawkins, Joseph Fama, pleaded not guilty to the crime.

The deeper reason for the level of anger among Black residents was the viciousness of the murder, and its random character. Hawkins was not engaging in any criminal activity. He was only inquiring about an automobile for a commercial transaction. The fact that he could be killed in cold blood told the city's 2.2 million African-Americans that they, too, could become victims of vigilante violence by white racists at any moment.

## Free Nelson Mandela

between wanting to get on with one's life and trying to ignore what has happened. Generally, it seems to aid in recovery if the victim is allowed to ventilate her feelings and discuss the attack, but there are women who are unwilling or unable to do this. In this situation, the best rule of thumb is not to press. She'll bring it up when she's ready to, and in the meantime it's good to take one's cues from the victim. If she wants to talk about needlepoint instead of the attack, talk about needlepoint.

As to the tacky, at the risk of encroaching on Miss Manners' territory, I feel quite safe in saying that questions about a victimizer's physical dimensions or preferences are really beyond the pale. What's more, there is absolutely no reason to ask them, unless one is an investigating officer and then only if it's related to the case!

Above all, one should never presume to tell a victim that one knows exactly how she feels, even if one has been similarly victimized. Each assault is different, has its own unique features, and no one can truly tell another person that she can enter into her feelings exactly. It simply isn't possible, because of the fact that we are each separate and complete originals—no one has ever felt the identical way you do, or I do, simply because no one else has ever been you or me.

When it comes to victimization, it's possible to empathize, and if someone can, the victim is that much better off. Empathy says, "I can understand how you feel," not "I know how you feel."

To some it may seem to be hairsplitting; after all, what's the difference between saying 'I understand' and 'I know' when it comes to feelings? The difference is simple: when it comes to feelings, only the individual having them can know for certain. Why further victimize someone by ignoring her divinely-given uniqueness?

## What About Date Rape?

BY CHRIS RUSSO

My first impulse on hearing a question like "What about date rape?" is to reply, "What about it?" A rape is a rape, whether committed at knife-point on a dark street or by duress on a living room couch. The unfortunate thing is that the rape on the living room couch is often not considered a 'real' rape.

A 'real' rape, in too many minds, is committed by a stranger to the victim. It's something that happens in the dead of night, when the victim is taken by surprise and either physically overpowered or threatened with more violence if she resists.

Date rape, on the other hand, is too frequently looked on with something dangerously close to indulgence—after all, 'boys will be boys' and 'everyone knows that when a woman says no she really means yes.'

Add to this the attitude of, "There but for the grace of God go I" that many men seem to have, and it's small wonder that these assaults are under reported. After all, goes the common belief, didn't the woman know what she was getting into? She should be more careful who she dates.

Does all this sound familiar? It should. It's little more than a variation on the old theme of 'blame the victim.'

In the past, it was assumed that a woman was raped through some fault of her own, either by dressing provocatively, being in the wrong place, or just deciding to say no if she had said yes in the past.

All these old chestnuts seem to be getting a new lease as date rape becomes more openly discussed.

Some men seem to feel that having 'invested' in an evening's entertainment entitles them to some sort of sexual payoff. Never mind the fact that all the woman was offering was her company; these types seem to think that a date is in the nature of a commercial transaction. And they evidently feel cheated if the woman doesn't want to fall into bed.

Until men stop viewing dating situations in this light and start realizing that no means just that, we'll have to continue an uphill battle. More women are reporting rapes now than twenty years ago; let's hope it won't take that long for date rape to be recognized for what it is, too.

### 'It's Only Sex'

BY CHRIS RUSSO

I was talking with a friend of mine, and she happened to mention a discussion she'd

recently had with one of her male friends. He, during the course of their talk, had said that he couldn't understand all the fuss over rape.

"It's only sex," he said, honestly wondering what all the fuss is about.

There are times the male psychology amazes me.

Disgusts me, too.

'It's only sex.' The very statement reveals an abysmal misunderstanding of the nature of sexual assault. I had hoped that that sort of thinking had gone the way of the "dodo" bird, but it appears to be alive and well and living in the southeastern North Carolina and, I suspect, many other places as well.

'It's only sex.' I wonder how he would feel if he were the victim of a mugging and his wallet was taken. After all, it's only money. Why shouldn't another person have the right to take it from him?

The boat is obviously being missed here. It seems to me that there's an underlying attitude here, and a disturbing one, to be sure. The dismiss rape as 'only sex' is to dismiss a woman's right to choose her sexual partner. I don't feel it's going too far to say that a statement such as this denigrates the very activity of sex itself, which should be a joyous celebration of life, not

an act to terrorize another individual.

For, in the last analysis, that is exactly what rape does. It takes something that is intended to be positive and misuses it, turning it into a weapon. It is not a crime of passion, as so many still try to make us believe—and please don't get me sidetracked onto that, or this article will never end!—it's a crime of violence. A rapist isn't out to have sex, he's on a power trip. Apparently there is some kind of rush to be had from forcing another person to submit to one's demands, no matter how outrageous. The victim is usually in fear of her life and frequently the lives of others, such as her children, are also threatened, gaining a semblance of cooperation, on the old theory of 'When you have them by the throats, their hearts and minds will follow.'

No, it's not 'only sex.' It's a terror of trying to second-guess what this person is going to do next, wondering if you will live to see the next sunrise. It's a well-nigh complete loss of your own autonomy, if only temporarily. It is having your option to 'just say no' totally disregarded. And it is the most violent crime one can experience and survive.

'Only sex?' Not by a long chalk. And the sooner we see the death of this naive view, the better.

### Never Tell A Victim You Know 'Exactly' How She Feels

BY CHRIS RUSSO

One of the most common problems arising from sexual assault is confusion on the part of the friends and families of the victims. Nobody seems to know precisely what to do or say, and it isn't really the kind of situation covered in most books on etiquette. Because there are no true guidelines, as there are for many of life's other traumas, the average person is really at a loss. As a result you have reactions that range from denial—"Oh, let's not talk about that so you'll get over it quicker"—to foursquare tacky—"Is it true what they say about (insert your favorite ethnic group here) men?"—and all the variations in between.

The fact is, there really can be no hard and fast rules because each individual victim is different. There are some who would like nothing better than to forget the whole thing and go on with life; indeed, I'd say that the vast majority fall into that category. However, there is a difference