The liberation of Southern Africa was one of the major political developments of the 20th century. The demise of Portuguese colonial rule, the end of white settler domination, and the dismantling of the apartheid regime had far-reaching consequences not only for the people in the region but for the global community. The Struggles for Freedom content area, launched in June 2007, focuses on the complex and varied liberation struggles in the region, with an initial concentration on six nations: Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. The national advisory committees, consisting of leading scholars, archivists, and public intellectuals in each of the six countries, joined by a few scholars from outside the region, played a critical role in selecting the material for the Struggles for Freedom content area. The collection includes materials from South Africa’s pioneering digitisation project, Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), as well as documents digitised in some of the other countries and from archives and libraries beyond Africa. Because the struggles for freedom in Southern Africa were both a regional and global phenomenon, documents concerning them are scattered across the globe, reflecting the history itself: colonial rule, dispersion of exiles, international intervention, and worldwide networks that supported successive generations of resistance within the region.

At present, the collection includes nationalist publications, colonial government reports, local newspaper articles, personal papers, correspondence, UN documents, critical books, oral testimonies, and speeches. One rapidly growing section of the collection revolves around interviews with women and men, peasants and workers, foot soldiers and leaders who participated in the struggle. Materials in the Struggles for Freedom content area have been selected to address the following five broad themes:

- the colonial system and its consequences;
- popular resistance;
- anti-colonial organisations;
- regional and international contexts; and
- wars of liberation, destabilisation, and internal conflicts.

The Struggles for Freedom content area is a rich repository of documents which is continually developing and will be of substantial interest to a broad array of scholars and researchers, teachers and students. A series of introductory essays is designed to contextualise the diverse materials and make them particularly accessible for research, for classroom use, and for the general public interested in contemporary Africa in the wider world.

Selected collections from Aluka’s Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa: Local, National, Regional, and Global Perspectives Content Area

Botswana Serials

These serials include minutes of the African Advisory Council, the European Advisory Council, and the Joint Advisory Council of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The African Advisory Council, initially called the Native Advisory Council, was established in 1919; the European Advisory Council in 1920. African criticism of this discriminatory separation into two councils led to the founding of a Joint Advisory Council. The first five volumes of Therisanyo/Consultation, published by the Botswana Democratic Party, are also included in this collection.

Object type: Journals, reports
Source: Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University

Core Readings
This collection includes difficult-to-find or out-of-print books selected by Aluka’s national and international scholarly advisors. The fundamental criterion for a work’s inclusion in this set of readings is that it is relevant as a contemporary historical source or contains significant content based directly on primary sources.

Object type: Books, interviews
Source: Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University and Private Collections

Divestment Pamphlets
These are a selection of pamphlets published by national and local U.S. groups dealing with divestment and other forms of economic disengagement from the white regimes in Southern Africa.

Object type: Books, pamphlets, reports
Source: Private Collections

Nordic Africa Institute
The Nordic region played a particularly important role in international support for liberation in Southern Africa. The Nordic Africa Institute, based in Uppsala, Sweden, has taken the lead in documenting this history. This collection initially includes chapters digitised from a six-volume series on 'National Liberation in Southern Africa: The Role of the Nordic Countries'.

Object type: Articles
Source: Nordic Africa Institute

Rivonia Trial Papers
This collection contains proceedings from the 1964 Rivonia Trial, which resulted in sentences of life imprisonment for eight men, including Nelson Mandela and Ahmed Kathrada.

Object type: Proceedings
Source: Digital Innovation South Africa

Samora Machel Documentation Center
This collection consists of interviews collected by the Samora Machel Documentation Center as part of a series of interviews with leaders of the Mozambique Liberation Front. The interviews collected here focus on memories of President Samora Machel. Noted interviews in this collection are with Alberto Joaquim Chipande, João Ferreira, and Aurelio Manave.

Object type: Interviews
Source: Samora Machel Documentation Center

World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism
In the 1970s and 1980s, the World Council of Churches Programme to Combat Racism played a highly visible and controversial role in international debate about white-minority rule in Southern Africa. It supported reflection and action among churches in Southern Africa, provided direct humanitarian support to liberation movements, and was a leader in international campaigns for economic disengagement from apartheid.

Object type: Articles, biographies, correspondence, minutes, notes, press releases, speeches
Source: World Council of Churches Archives

Moormann Interviews (Angola)
This collection consists of 2 interviews, with Raul Indipwo and with Lourdes Van Dunem. These interviews were undertaken as part of a dissertation research project centered on the relationship of music and politics in late colonial and newly independent Angola.

Object type: Interviews
Source: Marissa Moorman

Zimbabwe Serials
Zimbabwe News, published in Harare, Lusaka, and Maputo, was the official publication of Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). Aluka holds various issues between 1968 and 1998. Zimbabwe Review, published in Dar es Salaam and Lusaka, was the official publication of the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU). Aluka holds various issues between 1964 and 1977. The digitized versions available on Aluka are those held by Northwestern University Library.

Object type: Magazines
Source: Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University