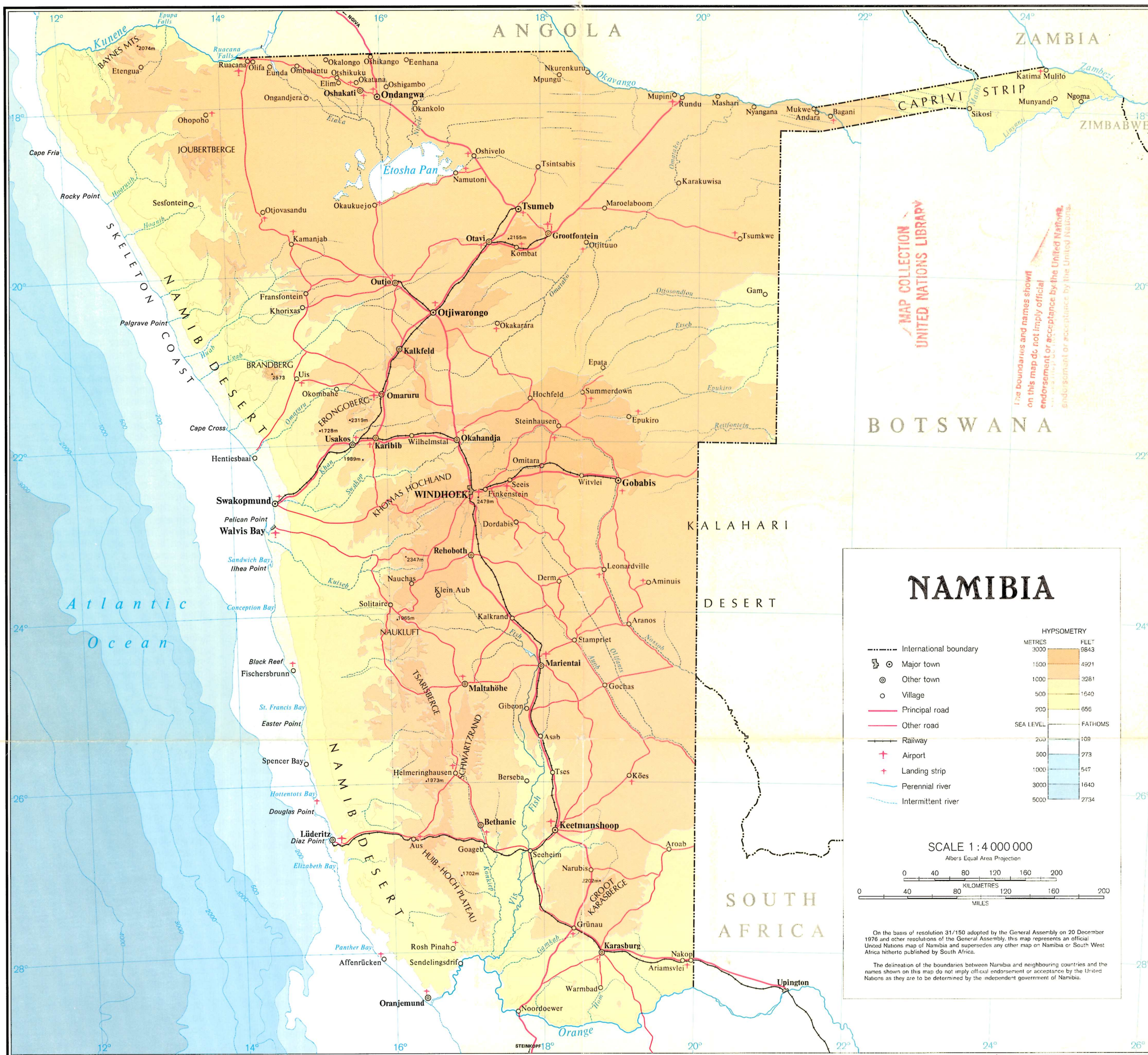




# United Nations Day: 24 October 1984



MAP NO. 3228 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS  
MARCH 1984

Map E553/0/1984

## UNITED NATIONS AND NAMIBIA

### Dear Student,

Respect for equal rights and self-determination of peoples is one of the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This principle was reaffirmed and further elaborated in the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly more than two decades ago. In proclaiming this right, the United Nations has given expression to the aspirations of the peoples of the world to equality and freedom.

In the past four decades, the world has witnessed more than a billion people attain freedom and, as a consequence, well over one hundred countries have joined the community of independent nations. The United Nations has played a unique role in this historic process, which has swept away most of the former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Despite the progress made so far in the process of decolonization, there are still crucial and highly pressing issues to be resolved. Among these, the question of Namibia remains one of the foremost concerns of the international community and constitutes a very special responsibility of the United Nations. There is no doubt that the solution of this long-standing bilateral issue between the United Nations and South Africa will have a beneficial effect on the southern African region as a whole.

Over a span of almost four decades, the United Nations has steadfastly supported the inalienable right of the people of Namibia to self-determination and independence in

a free and united Namibia. These efforts culminated in the adoption of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which established the modalities by which the people of Namibia would be able to determine their future through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations.

It is indeed regrettable that, notwithstanding all the progress made in the negotiations thus far, we have not yet been able to proceed to the implementation of the United Nations plan because of South Africa's insistence on raising, as preconditions for the implementation of the plan, issues outside its scope. The continued delay in the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) can only prolong the agony and travail of the Namibian people, cause more bloodshed and imperil the peace and development of the other countries in the region.

Urgent efforts must now be made by the international community to bring about a final settlement so that we can proceed expeditiously with the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). International opinion in support of the legitimate aspirations of the people of Namibia for genuine self-determination and independence can have a most positive impact in this regard. And you, as students, can help to mobilize support for the endeavours of the international community to bring freedom and justice to the people of Namibia.

*Javier Pérez de Cuéllar*  
Javier Pérez de Cuéllar  
Secretary-General of the United Nations





# United Nations and NAMIBIA

## To the Student

### Introduction

Namibia lies along the Atlantic coast of the south-western part of Africa and is bounded on the north by Angola, on the northeast by Zambia, on the east by Botswana and on the south by South Africa.

It is a vast semi-arid land mass of 318,261 square miles (824,269 square kilometres), the size of France and the United Kingdom put together. The principal features of the Territory are extensive desert areas and low overall rainfall. It can be divided into three regions:

1. The Namib, an arid and desolate region, is a coastal belt from 40 to 80 miles wide;
2. The central plateau covers slightly more than half of the territory's land area;
3. The Kalahari, composed of plains covered with sand dunes and with virtually no surface water, is in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Average rainfall is between 200 and 400 mm. annually.

Despite the enormous size of the Territory, its population density is one of the lowest in Africa. Figures are difficult to confirm as there is considerable dispute about estimates and projections of Namibia's population. The Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia estimated the population of Namibia at 1.5 million in 1978.

Namibia is extremely rich in natural resources. It is the largest source of gems and diamonds and has one of the biggest deposits of uranium—a strategic mineral crucial to the development of nuclear power—in the world. Other valuable resources which are found in Namibia are copper, lead, tin, zinc and manganese, many of which are of strategic importance. Offshore oil prospecting is being carried out with the hope of significant finds. Natural gas, which may be used as a motor fuel, has been discovered off the coast.

Commercial farming, in the hands of white farmers, is mostly confined to the central plateau region known as the "Hardred". Commercial agriculture, the second most lucrative sector, also controlled by the whites, is based on cattle and karakul sheep raising for export. Cultivation of food crops is minimal and basically limited to subsistence farming by Africans. The country has the richest inshore and deep-water fishing zones in tropical Africa. The main inshore fish are pilchard and anchovy; the principal deep-water fish is hake.

Commercial fishing was the third mainstay of the economy until the mid-1970s, when it virtually collapsed because prolonged indifference to marine ecology by South Africans and other interests had resulted in the exhaustion of resources. By 1982, the marine resources were reportedly renewing themselves, permitting further exploitation although on a vastly reduced scale.

### Brief Historical Outline

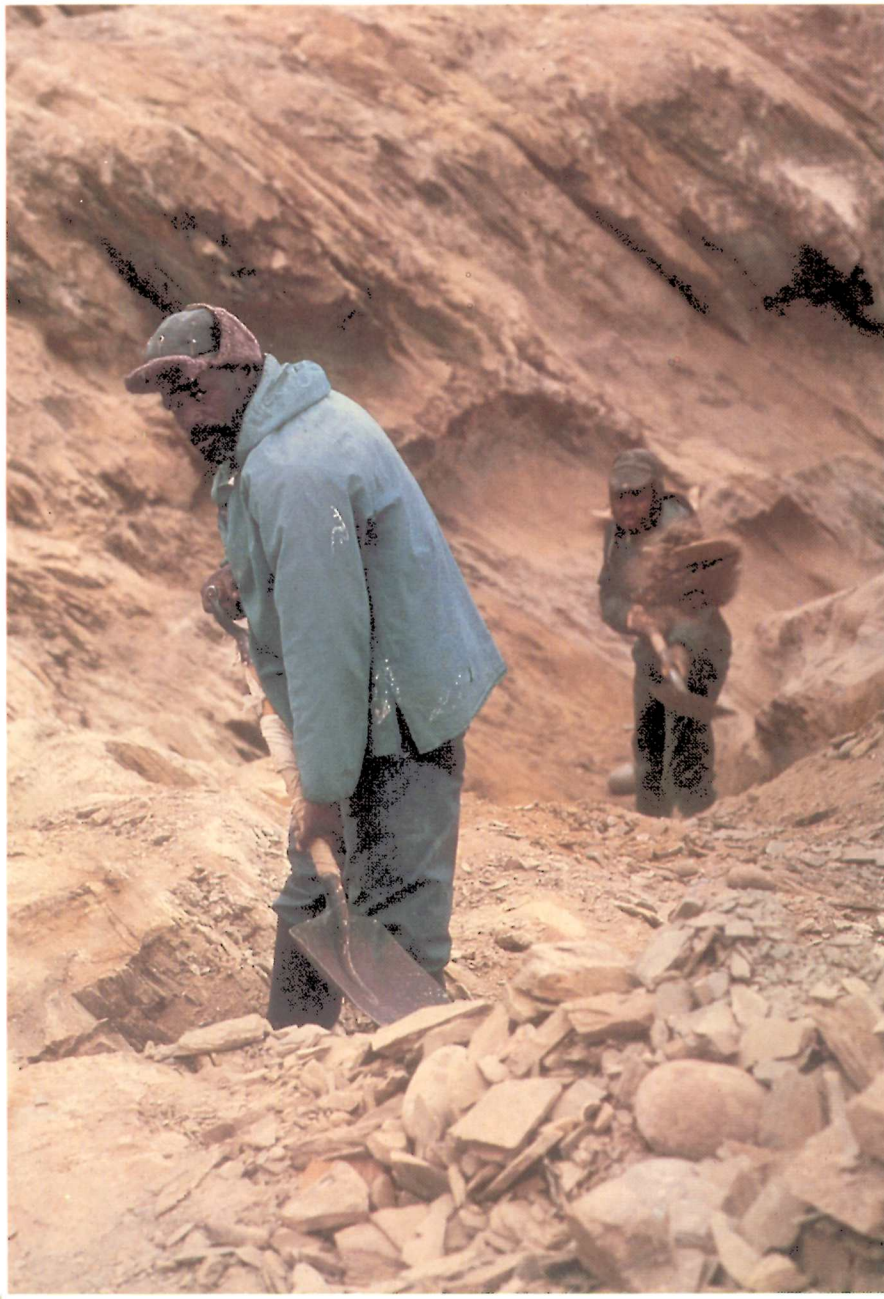
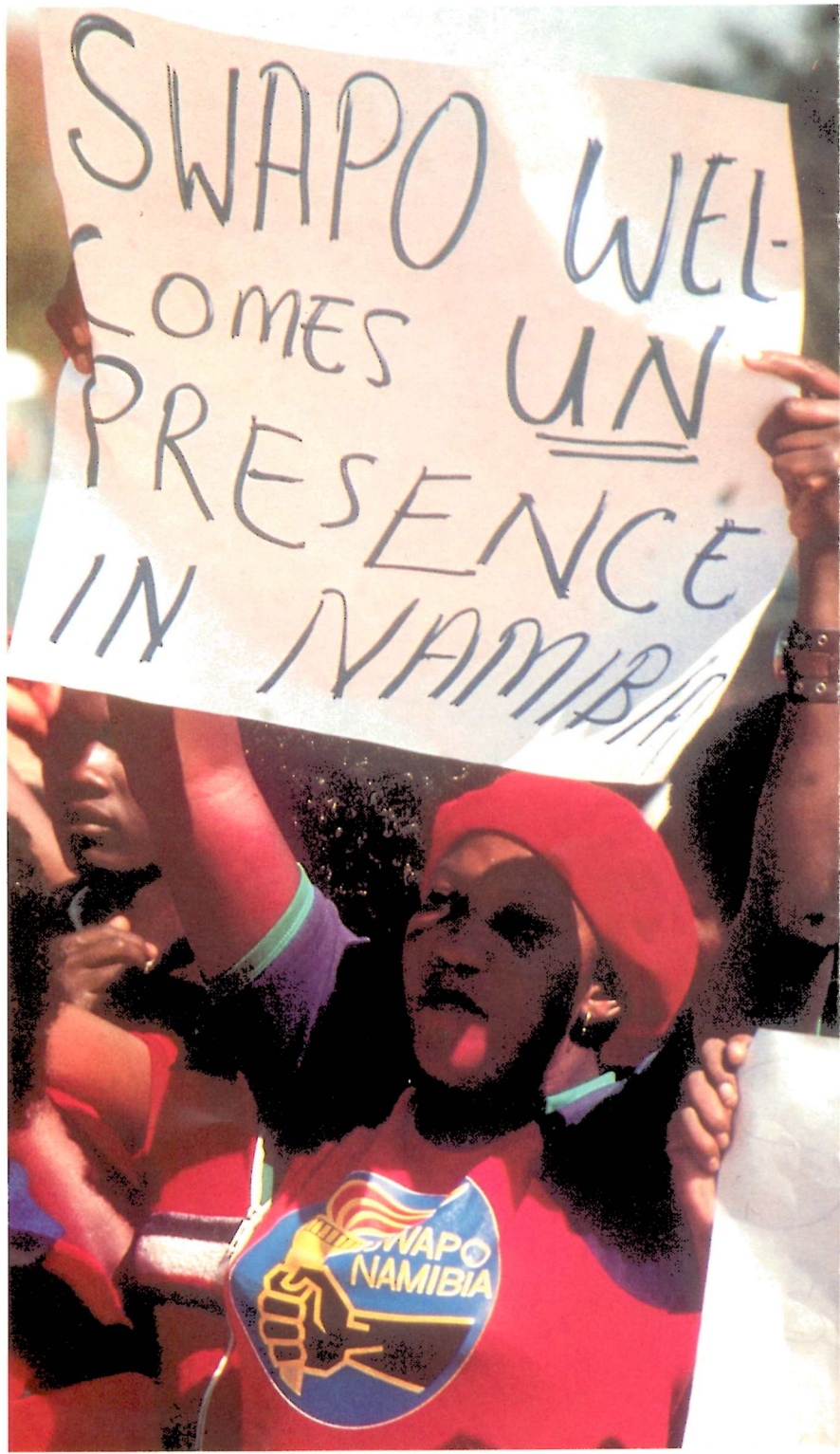
Although Portuguese explorers first set foot on the shores of Namibia in 1484, the Territory was one of the last areas in Africa to be colonized. Early explorers and navigators arriving by sea were deterred from penetrating the interior of the Territory by the endless high sand-dunes along the coast; the few travellers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who entered the country overland were for the most part hunters, traders and missionaries who had no interest in staying there permanently. Only the harbour at Walvis Bay had been claimed by Britain in 1878 as an important provisioning point on the route to the Cape of Good Hope.

The indigenous population of the Territory consisted mainly of nomads, herdsmen and hunters who needed extensive pasturage and hunting areas. The Ovambos, the largest group, numbering from 100,000 to 150,000 at the end of the nineteenth century, lived in the northern part; the Herero, nomadic herdsmen estimated to number about 80,000, in the central part; and the Nama in the south. A number of smaller tribes were scattered over the area.

The first colonial Power to occupy Namibia was Germany, which until late in the nineteenth century had acquired no African possessions. Germany established its rule by chicanery and force of arms beginning in 1884. By the time the fierce resistance of the Namibian people, culminating in the Herero and Nama rebellions of 1904 to 1907, was overcome, the Herero population was massacred and thus reduced from 80,000 to 15,000 and three quarters of the Nama tribe had been killed and their lands and cattle confiscated.

Namibia was the only possession which Germany regarded as suitable for white immigration. From the very beginning, therefore, it was German policy to encourage white settlement in the relatively rich lands extending through the centre and south of the Territory and to drive the Africans into the arid lands on its desert margins. Accordingly, the German occupiers divided the Territory into two parts divided by a so-called Red Line: the northern sector, comprising less than one third of the total area, where most Africans were confined, and the so-called Police Zone, designated for European settlement, where the African population nonetheless outnumbered the whites. Reserves amounting to only 15 per cent of the total area were established in the Police Zone for the Damara, Herero and Nama groups as well as for the so-called Rehoboth Basters (persons of mixed descent).

In 1920, following Germany's defeat in the First World War, the League of Nations established a Mandate authorizing South Africa, which had occupied Namibia during the war, to administer the Territory on behalf of His Britannic Majesty. It might have seemed to the Africans that the time had come for the recovery of their lands. But the South African



takeover, if anything, made their situation even more difficult. Although Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations provided that the "well-being and development" of the people formed "a sacred trust of civilization" and although, under the terms of the Mandate, the Mandatory Power was bound to promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being of the inhabitants, the South African Government did not return the lands to their original owners but, in fact, proceeded to allocate new farms to white settlers and retained the German division of the Territory into African and European sectors. Thus, the majority of Africans continued to find themselves restricted to barren and undeveloped reserves in the north which they were forbidden to leave unless they had permission to work as migrant labourers in the Police Zone, the only area of economic development. Most Africans residing in the Police Zone worked for whites as domestic farmers or hired hands. There, also, they were regulated by a system of labour and pass laws which established a firm pattern of inferiority and segregation.

In 1925, in order to enable the white population of the Territory to manage its own affairs, the Government of South Africa set up a legislative assembly with delegated powers from which Africans were completely excluded.

Following the Second World War the South African Government, which as of 1948 was controlled by the National Party, made a determined effort to annex the Territory. This attempt failed, largely due to the opposition of the United Nations. Nonetheless, South Africa proceeded to govern the Territory almost as a fifth province of the Republic. In 1951, the Territory's white population was even given representation in the all-white South African Parliament and was allowed virtual autonomy in running the area within the Police Zone. Furthermore, effective 1 April 1955, the South African Government took direct control, through its Department of Bantu Administration and Development, of the administration of "native" affairs and introduced even more rigid practices of *apartheid* than had previously been applied in the Territory. In subsequent developments, the Government of South Africa established the post of an Administrator-General for the Territory in 1977 with responsibility for most of the functions previously falling under the direct control of the Government in South Africa.

### United Nations Council for Namibia

The United Nations Council for Namibia was established by the General Assembly in 1967 pursuant to resolution 2248(S-V) as the only legal authority to administer the Territory of South West Africa/Namibia until independence.

The United Nations Council for Namibia, originally composed of 11 members, was enlarged to 31 members in 1978. The mem-



bers of the Council are: Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Liberia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Cameroon, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zambia. In addition to the above membership, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) participates in the work of the Council, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) maintains observer status in the Council.

Since its establishment in 1967, the United Nations Council for Namibia, as the legal Administering Authority for Namibia, has carried out the following activities:

—exposing the illegal presence and repressive policies and practices of the South African régime;

—assisting the Namibian people in their struggle for independence under the leadership of SWAPO, their sole and authentic representative, by financing education and training programmes, providing travel and identity documents and ensuring the participation of SWAPO in the work of the Council and the United Nations;

—taking action to ensure compliance of Member States with the United Nations resolution on Namibia and with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice;

—exposing the activities of foreign economic interests in Namibia by showing how these activities support the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa;

—consulting with Governments of Member States to determine ways of increasing pressure for a South African withdrawal;

—representing the interests of the Namibian people in international organizations and conferences;

—protecting Namibia's territorial integrity;

—enacting any laws or decrees to protect Namibia's interests;

It is first and foremost a Namibian institute administered to benefit the Namibian people and to further their interests.

The role of the Institute in the struggle for liberation of the Namibian people is particularly crucial when seen against the racial policies of South Africa which have kept Namibians educationally deprived.

The Institute offers a three-year programme in development studies and management. The curriculum includes constitutional and legal affairs; historical, political and cultural affairs; economics; agricultural and land resources; social affairs, education and information. Graduates of the Institute receive a diploma underwritten by the University of Zambia.

In addition, the Institute functions as an information and documentation centre on Namibia. The Institute undertakes applied research and publishes studies on various questions concerning Namibia and the struggle for liberation of the Namibian people. The Institute also prepares and compiles documentation to be used as a basis for policy formulation by the future government of an independent Namibia.

Periodically the Institute organizes training workshops and seminars for the purpose of providing Namibian students with the opportunity for in-depth analysis of specific topics and developing concrete problem-solving skills.

Under the supervision of the Institute, graduates pursue further training at universities or gain experience through internship programmes at various ministries in African countries.

### SWAPO

The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was established as a national liberation movement on 19 April 1960 by the Namibian people "in response to their need for an organizational framework through which the masses could articulate their problems and aspirations and weather the storm of *apartheid* repression".

With provisional headquarters in Luanda, Angola, and offices in several other countries, SWAPO's stated objective is to liberate the Namibian people from colonial oppression and exploitation in all its forms. At a meeting of its Central Committee in Lusaka (1976), it adopted a Constitution, as well as a Political Programme, in which it aims "(a) to liberate and win independence for the people of Namibia, by all possible means, and to establish a democratic Government based on the will and participation of all the Namibian people; (b) to realize genuine and total independence of Namibia in the spheres of politics, economy, defence, social and cultural affairs".

SWAPO has always expressed its readiness to have the Namibian issue settled through negotiations, but in 1966, in response to measures of repression designed to thwart the growth of the movement, it felt the need to formally establish a military wing—the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). Since its formation, PLAN has been waging an armed liberation struggle against South Africa.

SWAPO is active both internally and externally. While it has never been officially banned in Namibia by the South African Government, the organization's supporters have been the subjects of arrests and repression, making open political activity impossible. The movement was declared the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/146 (1976) and was "invited to participate in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in the capacity of Observer (GA resolution 31/152)".

—mobilizing and promoting international support for the liberation of Namibia under the leadership of SWAPO through effective publicity campaigns;

—raising funds for the various programmes administered by the Council and acting as a trustee for the United Nations Fund for Namibia.

To undertake its activities, the United Nations Council for Namibia meets regularly at United Nations Headquarters in New York and holds extraordinary plenary sessions outside UN Headquarters in order to carry out extensive consultation with the front-line States and other countries. The Council also sends its members on missions to Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America in order to mobilize support for the Namibian struggle.

### United Nations Commissioner for Namibia

The General Assembly decided in 1967, pursuant to resolution 2248(S-V), to establish the post of the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, to whom the Council would entrust such executive and administrative tasks as it deemed necessary. The Commissioner is responsible to the Council in the performance of his duties. He is appointed annually by the General Assembly and maintains regional offices in Zambia, Botswana and Luanda in order to facilitate liaison with Namibians.

The Office of the Commissioner for Namibia, as the executive body of the Council, co-ordinates the activities of the National Programme for Namibia, provides the administrative functions related to the General Account of the Fund for Namibia, and provides education, training and humanitarian assistance to Namibians. It also supports the activities of the United Nations Institute for Namibia, mobilizes and disseminates information on the Namibian struggle, issues United Nations Council for Namibia travel documents to Namibians and carries out research and legal studies on topics related to the situation in Namibia.

### United Nations Institute for Namibia

The United Nations Institute for Namibia was established by the United Nations Council for Namibia on Namibia Day, 26 August 1976, in Lusaka, Zambia, to enable Namibians to undertake training, research, planning and related activities with special emphasis on the struggle for national independence and the establishment of an independent, united Namibia.

The Institute is the result of the efforts of the international community, for the first time in the history of decolonization, to provide a Non-Self-Governing Territory with the opportunity to prepare the infrastructure and administration it will require at independence.