

# **UNIT 30 THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AGAINST COLONIALISM AND RACISM**

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## **30.0 OBJECTIVES**

After reading, this unit you will get to know about :  
a brief historical background to the struggles for freedom and equality in Asia and Africa,  
the inspiration for the struggle,  
the current struggles going on for freedom and equality,  
the opposition to the struggle through Neo-colonialism and Imperialism, and  
India's contribution in promoting a free and equal world.

## **30.1 INTRODUCTION**

You must have read and/or heard about the freedom movements of Asian and African people. They were mainly for self-determination and equality. The question of equality became dominant because the Europeans were inferior in intellect and therefore, they needed guidance and civilizing.

It may look surprising today, but Jules Ferry, a French intellectual, defended the French aggression of Indo-China by arguing that it was the duty of superior races to civilize the inferior races. The English poet Rudyard Kipling talked of the 'white man's burden' to civilize the Asians. The American President McKinley defended the conquest of Philippines by declaring that Americans were to educate, uplift, civilize and christianise the Filipinos.

These arguments were only a cover. The real motives were to acquire control over those countries which were the sources of raw materials for their developing industries, besides being markets for their industrial products. The colonies were also to serve as reserves for recruitment of cheap labour and recruits for the colonial armies.

Needless to say, the colonialists sought to consolidate their positions in settlements which were strategically and militarily crucial for their operations.

The task of the freedom movements was two-fold : **one**, to expose the falsehood of the theory of superiority of the European or the White Man; and **two**, to achieve self-determination and thus put an end to exploitation of resources and subjugation of people.

India was the first country to attain independence after World War II. The Indian anti-colonial struggle left an impact on the political developments of other Asian and African countries. The Indian national movement linked its struggle with the aspiration of the freedom movements in other colonies. The freedom struggles against the colonizers and the racists thus, became a worldwide movement. Extending a hand of friendship and cooperation to Africans in their struggle against colonialism and racism, Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister said at the Asian-African Nations Conference held at Bandung (Indonesia) from 18-24 April 1955 : "It is upto Asia to help Africa to the best of her ability because we are sister continents. We are determined not to fail in this new phase of Asia and Africa".

## **30.2 IMPACT OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ON THE PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION**

Decolonization means ending of colonialism and attainment of independence - both political and economic. The question is: did India have any impact on the anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa? We find that being the first to be independence, the Indian impact was both direct and indirect. The success of Indian methods of freedom struggle, i.e., participation of all sections of people, of defiance of colonial laws, boycott of imported goods, stoppage of work, closure of markets and filling prisons with patriots, intensely encouraged other Asian and Africans. They used methods successfully tried by India in their respective struggles for freedom.

### **30.2.1 Freedom Struggle in Asia**

Freedom struggle in most Asian countries had started in the early twenties of the twentieth century. During World War II, while Hitler was conquering Europe, Japan had run-over Asia and occupied all the small nations. The Japanese occupation was resisted by the nationalists of every Asian country. And when Japan was defeated by the allied forces in August 1945, the process of decolonization began. In fact, it was completed within a decade. The French,

Dutch, British and Americans did try to recolonise, but, they could not stand the pressure of the nationalists. In Indonesia, the Dutch had to leave in 1950; Cambodia freed itself from the French in 1953, and Korea, after an unsuccessful attempt for unification for two years, emerged as two independent countries in 1948. British held on to Malaya till 1957 and Singapore till 1959. Chinese revolution in 1949 was regarded as a great victory of the people.

In Vietnam, the revolutionaries had taken over power in 1945 under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. Till 1954, they had to fight the French who tried to recolonize. Soon after the defeat of the French, they had to fight the Americans till 1975. The US administration had emerged into the conflict to back up anti-communist forces. India opposed US intervention and extended full support to the regime of Ho Chi Minh. And when Western powers tried to debar entry of China into UN, India supported the Chinese case.

### 30.2.2 Freedom Struggle in Africa

In Africa the decolonization process stretched over a much longer period than in Asia lasting upto 1990.

The African decolonisation process can be divided under four major periods. The **first phase** was between 1950 and 1959. Six African countries had been liberated during this period. For attaining their independence, over 2,00,000 Africans sacrificed their lives. The **Second phase** was in the 1960s. The periods saw the dismantling of the British, French and Belgian colonial empires. This was possible because of the mass support for the independence movements, both inside their respective territories and from independent governments and international organizations.

During this phase, as many as thirty one colonial territories gained independence becoming individual countries. The **Third phase** was in the 1970s. In the mid 1970s, the Portuguese empire in Africa collapsed. Most of the African continent thus became decolonized.

While these were the colonies decolonized from the European rule, the colonized groups in South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia were still struggling against the white settler groups who had either gained their independence from the Europeans in the early 20th century or had unilaterally declared themselves independent of their colonial power. South Africa and Namibia are instances of the former, while Rhodesia (now called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia) is an example of the latter case. In Rhodesia and Namibia, the Africans won their independence only in 1980 and 1991 respectively. The South Africans were already a Republic. The Fourth Phase of the decolonization process thus ended only in the early 1990s.

### 30.2.3 Impact of Indian Independence

Asian and African leaders fighting their respective colonial powers were inspired by the successful Indian independence struggle. They hailed the Indian success as an achievement of the colonized population as a whole, especially because it demolished the racial theories of 'superiority of the white race'. The Asian and Africa leaders became convinced now about the possibility of their own victory. This strong hope in the potential of their people gave the necessary morale and confidence.

The Indian sacrifices sustained in challenging the British rule moved the leaders of the colonized territories in Asia and Africa. Their personal contacts with the Indian leaders in England and the

United Nations further inspired them. During these personal meetings, they gained knowledge of the Indian struggle and learnt the tactics of the anti-colonial movement. Political programmes, Manifestoes, and Resolutions of the Indian Political Parties clearly demonstrated that the ideology of freedom was shared by all the opinion groups and parties in India.

Some of the parties and groups in Africa fighting colonial rule based their own activities on the Indian method to obtain freedom. The Ghanaian leader, Kwame Nkrumah who led his country's freedom struggle appreciating India's role wrote :

After month of studying Gandhi's policy and watching the effect it had, I believe.....  
(when backed by strong political organisation) it could be the solution of the colonial problems.

On another occasion he noted :

Nehru's understanding of the problems of Asia and Africa were a great source of encouragement to all of us who had been engaged in the struggle for liberation and unity of Africa.

The support of post-Independence India to the freedom movements in Africa became a crucial factor as the former was a founding-member of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Indian liberation of Goa from the Portuguese, rule in 1961 inspired the liberation movements particularly, in Portuguese Africa as well as in the rest of the colonial territories. The liberation of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) from Pakistan in 1971, where India's support was crucial, further encouraged the Africa liberation movements. They looked upto the Indian as the leader of the Afro-Asian bloc. Earlier, the Indian initiative in bringing forth a resolution at the UN General Assembly in 1946 condemning the Apartheid regime in South Africa, establishing India as the pioneer of anti-racist struggle also. India helped the movement with moral, material and humanitarian assistance. It also took the lead in creation of the 'Action Fighting Racist Invasions and Colonialism in Africa' (AFRICA) Fund to help the independent countries in the Southern African region in the mid-1980s.

Winnie Mandela, a South African leader and the former wife of the First President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela appreciated India for supporting the anti-racist movement, thus :

The warmth, love and solidarity of the people of India give us courage and strength to stand up and walk upright under the load of apartheid and continue the bitter struggle against the inhuman regime.

The influence of India was also felt in the foreign policy decision of the newly independent countries of Africa. Almost every country adopted Non-alignment as their foreign policy programme. They chose not to be entangled in any post-Second World War military block, formed both by the US and the Western allies ('The NATO') and the USSR and allies ('The Warsaw Pact'). Instead, the new African countries joined the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) formed in 1963 as the organisation of Pan-African continent. Like India, they retained their friendly relations with their respective former colonial masters.

## **Check Your Progress 1**

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1) What were the two main tasks of the freedom movements in Asia and Africa?

.....  
.....

2) How did India inspire the freedom movements in Africa? Mention three main activities.

.....  
.....  
.....

3) The following can be said to be the defenders of the ideology of superior races' mission to civilize inferior races. Tick (&) the right answer.

- (a) Gandhiji, Nehru, Azad
- (b) Luther, Mandela, Nyerere
- (c) Ferry, Kipling, Mckinely.

## 30.3 COLONIALISM AND ITS REMNANTS

The impact of colonialism can still be felt in many parts of the world, although the colonial powers have decolonized most of their territories.

- (a) There are a large number of military bases which the western powers maintain in their former colonies.
- (b) Also there are the former colonies to which the colonial powers have granted formal independence. However, in these areas, the governance is still not allowed to be done by the chosen representatives of the people. Instead, the territories are being run by the allies of the former colonial powers.

### 30.3.1 Existence of Military Bases

#### Diego Garcia

While the UN does not regard Diego Garcia as a colonial area, for the countries of the region, this is indeed a remnant of colonialism.

Diego Garcia is a group of islands forming a part of the Mauritius archipelago in the Eastern Indian ocean.

When Mauritian independence was negotiated with the British in 1965, the latter which was the colonial power insisted that though Diego Garcia was a part of the Mauritian archipelago, it would be still under the British possession. According to the agreement, the people of the island were shifted to the Mauritius main island, and the British paid compensation for their

rehabilitation. The British leased the island out to their ally, the USA, which set up a military and a nuclear base.

Realising the danger this base poses to the security of Mauritius, Indian and the other Indian ocean countries have been demanding the withdrawal of foreign powers. They are supporting the nationalist forces in Mauritius who urge a speedy return of Diego Garcia to Mauritius and the dismantling of the US base.

### **30.3.2 Governance by the Allies of Imperial Powers**

#### **Western Sahara**

The Western Sahara, now called the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), is a desert country of 2,66,000 sq. km. in the North Western part of Africa. It formed a part of the Spanish colonies in Africa and was recognised by the other colonial powers, namely, the British, French and the Belgians at the Berlin conference in 1885. One November 14, 1975 Spain abandoned the area by entering into a tripartite agreement with Morocco and Mauritania. Sahara was divided into three parts: The Northern part was handed over to Morocco, and Mauritania received the Southern part. Morocco and Mauritania were neighbours and were skating claims to the Spanish Saharan territory due to historical reasons. Spain kept for herself rich fishing banks and settled for a share in the profits from phosphate mining.

#### **Annexation by Morocco**

Morocco which annexed the northern part had the richest phosphate deposits. The Moroccan annexation was strongly backed by France. To ensure continued support, Morocco agreed to buy military equipment from the USA and to give transit facilities to the USA's Rapid Development Force.

#### **POLISARIO Opposes Moroccan Actions**

The annexation by Morocco was disputed by the POLISARIO (Peoples' Organisation for the Liberation of Sakiet el Hamra and Rio de Oro). This is a Front encompassing all the nationalist groups and people of the territory and is spearheading the political movement for liberation of the territory from Morocco. After failing in its initial attempts to persuade Morocco to withdraw, the POLISARIO launched an armed struggle. Spain, the colonial power, which still retained control over certain rich areas of the territory, ultimately gave up its claims after the death of its dictator, Gen. 'Caudillo' Franco in 1975. Mauritania, which claimed and occupied the southern part of the territory, also made peace with the POLISARIO after a military coup in 1978. POLISARIO now occupied three-fourth of the territory, declaring those areas on which it established its control as an independent republic, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The POLISARIO won a major victory when the organization of African unity (OAU) admitted the SADR as its 51st member-state.

Though the SADR had been recognised by more than seventy countries internationally, Morocco with the support of its western allies, has refused to handover its territory to the POLISARIO'S administration. Morocco which is supposed to hold free and fair referendum, under the joint auspices of the OAU and the UN, has so far delayed the implementation of this plan. Various reasons and excuses have been given, such as the assessment of nationality of the voters and the

status of refugees who are lodged in different POLISARIO-controlled camps in Algeria and camps inside the SADR territory.

Therefore, Morocco's policy in the Western Saharan territory is referred to as "Internal Colonialism".

## **30.4 COLONIALISM AND RACIAL JUSTIFICATION**

In the first unit of this course, you have read about the meaning of 'race' and the political uses of radicalism.

Race refers to distinctive physical characters that distinguish one from the other sub-divisions of the human species. There are more similarities than dissimilarities amongst the different groups. By grouping similarities in pigmentation, hair texture, jaw and shape of nostril it is possible to distinguish three broad divisions of human race - the Negroid (Black), the Mongoloid (Yellow) and Caucasoid (White). Years of scientific research has proved that these differences have no bearing on the basic physiological or psychological peculiarities of human beings. They play no role in deciding the intelligence level of humans. Racial peculiarities are just external physical attributes. Those who have coined the concept of superiority of the Europeans over the Asians and Africans have used the term 'race' for political purposes. For them broad racial divisions are Whites, Asians and Africans.

### **30.4.1 Race Used as a tool for Exploitation**

By picturing the non-Whites, particularly Africans, as incapable of independent development, racism was used as a tool for securing legitimacy and acceptance of European rule and discriminatory socio-economic practices. By repeated indoctrination and distorted propaganda about superiority of white races, a whole range of exploitative economic relationships, value systems, social attitudes and political principles were developed.

Ideological indoctrination was so subtle that even the non-Whites were taken in by it. Many got misguided and accepted the doctrine of superiority of whites. The scientific truth that all men are born equal and belong to one human race had to be defended. Mahatma Gandhi explained "all those who can have children of one another belong to the same race, the human race".

Till the 16th century inferiority was not associated with Africans or Asians or with pigmentation or texture of hair. Discrimination was generally based on religion, region or class. Mobility from a lower status group to a higher status group was possible under Plato or Aristotle's ideas of differences. Their philosophies did not imply or attribute any inherent elements of inequality among the men based on racial features. Racial groups were not discussed as inflexible, non-transgressable, divisionary water-tight compartments but as a group whose only right to be considered superior was the superiority of martial powers.

The European colonizers, through slave trade, plunder, genocide devastated the African continent in particular, and pushed it hundreds of years backward. And then they attributed backwardness of Africa to 'racial inferiority' of Africans. The colonizers theorized that European technological advance was due to their social superiority.

## **30.4.2 Colonial Practice and their Effects**

In the African areas where colonialism introduced European settlements, societies were structured on the basis of racial discrimination. In these areas, climatically suitable, minerally rich and agriculturally fertile lands were alienated and allotted to the white settlers. Non-Europeans, i.e., Asian settlers and indigenous people were denied the right to own land or lease their lands. Africans were forced to work on low wages. There was no occasion for them to rise up in society and compete with the whites. Africans were also denied a share in political life. Their political parties were banned. Formation of multi-racial and multi-ethnic parties was forbidden. Racial discrimination tried to reduce Africans to sub-human levels.

## **30.5 STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY AND FREEDOM**

Racial discrimination was used, till recently, in certain territories of Africa, to exclude the Non-White groups from exercising power. These groups were denied even the basic rights of human dignity and freedom. They were arbitrarily administered by the white settler communities whose ancestors emigrated from Europe, mostly from Britain, Netherlands and Germany. The settler communities were either granted independence in the beginning of the 20th century or had themselves declared their independence from their mother countries.

These communities had been the most ardent and vocal advocates of racial discrimination. Although colonialism as it is understood in the conventional sense is no longer valid in such territories, the white settler communities have themselves become colonisers of the lands of the native peoples. They have displaced the local people from their traditionally inhabited lands, and have stopped the people from advancing into modern modes of life. The white settlers had allied themselves with the remnants of colonialism, such as Portugal which continued to maintain its control over two Southern African territories, Angola and Mozambique till 1975, much later than the other European colonial powers. The impact of colonialism is still too powerful to be removed from these territories.

The republics of South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia are examples of the White-settler community-dominated territories.

### **30.5.1 South Africa**

The white settlers numbering 4.5 million out of a total population of 32 million gained independence from the British in 1910. Like Canada and Australia, in South Africa the Europeans settled and founded a colony. Ever since then, the settler minority's rule had denied political, social and economic rights to the Africans and Indians. What is more, the African majority was denied their rightful place in their own native country.

In 1912, the African National Congress (ANC) was founded to represent the Africans, the Asians and the colored population (mostly the descendants of Africans and Europeans), who constitute eighty three per cent of the total population. The ANC and its allies, united in a broad nationalist front to struggle against Apartheid (racial segregation). Apartheid was also adopted by the settler



regime in legal as well as in other walks of life. The regime argued that separate development of culturally differing groups is most suitable for retaining their culture and identity. For this purpose, the regime created separate residential areas for all and 'reserves' or the 'homelands' known as Bantustans. Thus, 87% of the population were forced to live in 13% of the territory, while 13% of the population inhabited 87% of the land areas. The Africans were also paid low wages and were compelled to have permission of the administration and approval of the employer for undertaking to visit the 'Non-African Areas'.

The Africans opposing the policy of apartheid argued that the apartheid theory was itself illogical and inhuman in democratic world. The Africans and their organisation, the ANC were committed to establish democracy and participation of all sections of the people in government.

The struggle continued for more than seventy years in the face of the white regime's refusal to dismantle the apartheid system. Violence and terror tactics were employed to silence the black opposition. Since the western powers invested huge amounts in South Africa, they backed the apartheid regime. Close military relations were also established between the West and South Africa. The ANC's struggle involved opposing the regime both internally as well as internationally.

The White regime eventually had to bow to the political and economic pressures created by the black opposition groups and the international forces focussed on the UN. Nelson Mandela's release from prison after more than 28 years in February 1992 set the stage for a final transformation of South Africa. A phase-by-phase change over the next two years saw the convening of a Constituent Assembly having representation of all the communities and groups inhabiting South Africa. The elections held under the Constituent Assembly brought the ANC and allies a complete victory. A National Unity Government was formed and a new constitution approved. The new constitution came into effect in 1996. Its main features are to constitute South Africa into a non-racist democratic country with equal representation and power to all its inhabitants.

Thus, the fight against racism and remnants of colonialism by the Africans, Asians, the coloured and the liberal sections of the Whites culminated successfully. The objective of the new government is to ensure development of all sections of the population and to reverse the bad impact sustained by years of subjugation.

## **30.5.2 Namibia**

South-West Africa or Namibia was earlier colonised by the Germans during 1880-1915 after annihilating three-fourths of the indigenous population. But in the First World War, Germany lost Namibia to the British. The League of Nations formed after the war in 1919 assigned Namibia to the British to govern as a Mandate Territory. But Britain transferred Namibia to South Africa to be administered. According to the League, the Mandatory Power was expected "to promote to the utmost the material and moral well being of the inhabitants". The British decision was in violation of the League of Nations mandate. South Africa, on its part, introduced white settlement and discriminatory laws and practices. The European settlers increased from 14000 in 1915 to 50000 in 1949, depriving Africans of their lands. They were forced to work for the White settlers. After World War II, the League of Nations was replaced by the UN. The mandate system of the League was also replaced by the UN's Trusteeship System. The new arrangement required preparing the Trusteeship territory to an eventual independence. But South Africa, the

administrator of the Mandate refused to acknowledge the transfer and challenged the UN authority. Its argument was that it was responsible only to the League and not to the new organisation, the UN.

The case of Namibia was taken to the International court of Justice. In the meanwhile, the UN had terminated its mandate in 1966 in the hope of preparing Namibia for eventual independence. But South Africa refused to oblige, and continued to occupy Namibia. It imposed the apartheid system. South African supporters included the US, besides France, Great Britain, West Germany, the former colonial powers in Africa and Japan. In 1964 the UN transferred Namibia to the UN Council on Namibia to administer the territory until independence. IN 1971, the international Court of Justice ruled that South Africa had to return Namibia as its occupation was declared illegal.

The South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) which was formed in 1960 led the struggle to end racial discrimination and the South African rule. Initially adopting peaceful means such as strikes, demonstrations and boycott actions, it switched on the armed struggle in 1966 when the South African regime began using violent methods to suppress the opposition. South Africa crossed over even to the neighbouring Angola in hot pursuit of the Namibian refugees. A government was also sought to be set up in Namibia by the South African government called the Turnhalle Conference. It proposed setting up of a loose federation of ethnic groups. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) which was the result was to counter the SWAPO. the SWAPO was recognised by the UN and OAU as "the sole and authentic representative of the Namibia people". Therefore, the DTA was rejected by the UN, the Namibia Council besides the SWAPO itself. Incidentally, the Western powers also joined in its rejection.

The five member *Contact Group* that was formed by the USA, Canada, West Germany, Britain and France attempted to find a solution for holding free election as demanded by the UN Security Council Resolution 385. But South Africa refused to acknowledge the proposal of the Contact Group. in 1978, the UN again resolved through resolution 435 to hold elections in Namibia under a UN Transitory Assistance Group. Again, South Africa rejected Resolution 435 and conducted a sham election in 1978 trying to install the DTA. But the SWAPO and its allies rejected and intensified the armed struggle. It attracted widespread support from the trade unions, children and opinion groups. To suppress the agitations and armed struggle, the South African Defence Forces invaded the northern neighbour, Angola because of that country's sheltering the SWAPO. After the South African forces were roundly defeated by the joint forces of Angola and Cuba at Cuito Cunavale (Angola) in 1988, the talks for withdrawing South African troops from Angola were intensified. From late 1988, internal developments forced South Africa to withdraw from Namibia, because the methods of control of Namibia being exercised by South Africa were not successful for long. There were revolts and dissidence even by those groups who were trusted by South Africa to administer the West Namibian territory. SWAPO began to be supported by almost all the ethnic communities on the external front, the US on whose support South Africa was depending also favoured negotiations with Angola, Cuba and the SWAPO. Us acted as a mediator. It was agreed that Cuba would withdraw its troops from Angola according to a time frame and that Angola would not host the SWAPO. This was conditional on South Africa's withdrawal from the Angolan territories which it had invaded and implementation of Resolution 435 on Namibia, (which promised independence to Namibia). Though 1st April 1989 was promised as the implementation date, due to technical logistical problems the date was put off to November 1, 1989. The UN Transitional Group (UNTAG) supervised the elections to a 72-member National Assembly in November 1989, after South Africa granted general amnesty to all the exiled refugees. With the SWAPO securing 57.3% of the votes of the 95% electorate, the

party emerged as the ruling party in the pre-independence election. The National Assembly later supervised the smooth transition to independence. Namibia thus became free on March 21, 1990.

### **30.5.3 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia**

The territory of Southern Rhodesia which acquired the name of Zimbabwe after independence in 1980, was controlled by the British South African Company of Cecil Rhodes till 1923, was controlled by the British government later took control and it encouraged enterprising Britishers to settle down and take advantage of the mineral discoveries. However, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 enacted by the settlers who controlled the administration, began a policy of racial discrimination. The Whites excluded the Africans from acquiring fertile agricultural lands and restricted their mobility. Jobs were denied and wages were kept low. No facilities were also given. But the Second World War brought pressures on the white settlers to improve the condition of the Africans. Some token reforms were, therefore, introduced which the Africans used to their advantage. The educated Africans protested against the racial segregation and conducted strikes against the government. As there was no organised protests, the strikes soon ended without achieving any major results. Meanwhile, the British government proposed that Southern Rhodesia join the Central African Federation whose other members were Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia so that they would be profiting from mineral discoveries. But the whites of Southern Rhodesia rejected the offer protesting against the British Government's 'appeasement' policy of the Blacks. The white extremists of Southern Rhodesia won the 1962 elections, displacing the party which ruled the territory from 1923. Ian Smith was elected the leader of the Nationalist party which took over power. His threats to declare Southern Rhodesia independent of Britain materialised in 1965 when the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) shocked the world.

Racial discrimination increased under Ian Smith's regime. The UDI was declared illegal by the UN and sanctions, military, political and economic, were imposed. In the first few years, the sanctions were becoming effective, Ian Smith's regime concluded alliances with South Africa and Portugal which were having colonies in Angola and Mozambique.

The Africans, meanwhile began their armed struggle in 1966 after a few years of passing through ineffective organisation and splits in their main organisation, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1963. The ZAPU was powerful among the Ndebele Community of southern parts of the territory. The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) (which emerged from the ZAPU) was influential among the Shona community in the north-east. The ZANU having good links with the People's Republic of China, Korea, and the freedom movement in Mozambique, the FRELIMO, soon spread its activities to central and eastern areas of the territory. The ZAPU was led by Joshua Nkomo and had USSR's support. The ZANU was led by Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe. From December 1972, active armed operations began in the territory. The operations radicalised the population but South Africa, Zambia, U.K. and US were alarmed. More so it was happening during the Cold War. The USSR was supporting the liberation movements in the neighbouring Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique. From 1946, after the decolonization of Portuguese territories, war increased. The 'Frontline' states - Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia-urged both the feuding guerrilla parties, the ZAPU and the ZANU to unite. In 1976, with their backing, Patriotic Front came into being but unity between the two groups was still not forthcoming. However, the guerrilla struggles were mounting pressure on Ian Smith's government. Now, more successful, the guerrillas made heavy inroads into the rural areas. With economic difficulties mounting, and white morale falling, Smith's regime made internal settlements and modifications. A few African leaders were invited and

power was promised to be shared. The Africans saw through the design of the Smith government. His plans were rejected and more support extended to the guerrillas. Smith's chosen government under Bishop Abel Muzorewa could not be successful in governing the territory. International pressure especially from the USA and the UK, besides the UN, compelled the regime to participate in the Lancaster House Constitutional conference in 1979 and 1980. The South Africans too pressurised the Smith regime into accepting a compromise. Accordingly, transitional arrangements to independence began from September 1979 and the agreement recognising the modalities for transfer of power signed in December 1979 after the annulment of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965.

In the elections of February 1980, the ZANU-PF (Patriotic Front) and Mugabe won 57 of the 80 'Common Roll' (seats for the Africans) seats, representing 63% of the total votes cast. The seats for whites were reduced to 20, and for the first time in Rhodesian history, the Blacks obtained the majority of representation. Rhodesia became independent as Zimbabwe on April 18, 1980. The new government promised to redistribute the lands among the African, who had, in the early twentieth century, lost to the greed of the White Settlers.

### **30.5.4 Indian Support for the Struggle Against Apartheid**

India has followed a consistent policy of anti-racism. This stand is based on the cardinal principles that freedom is indivisible and that racism is another facet of colonialism. India has been in the forefront of the fight against the racist systems of South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia. Even during the struggle for independence, the Indian nationalists were vehemently opposing racist practices and policies. The leader of the Indian National Congress, Mahatma Gandhi had himself experienced apartheid for a full two decades when he lived in South Africa as a practising lawyer.

Mahatma Gandhi's *Satyagraha* ('Soul Force') and other non-violent campaigns for human rights first took shape in South Africa. Gandhi returned to India with his experiences of racial cruelties, repression and inhumanity. The opposition to racial discrimination was well reflected in the Indian initiative at the United Nations in October 1946. India highlighted the problem of racial discrimination at the very first session of the UN General Assembly. India launched what can be termed a movement against racism. The UN was till then dominated by colonial powers. Most of the present members were still struggling to free themselves from foreign domination and subjugation. India spoke on behalf of the colonized people and urged freeing racial discrimination in its widest political context and not as a side issue, confined to certain parts of the world. In other international forums too, India took the initiative and condemned racial discrimination. India described racialism as a crime against humanity and as a manifestation of colonialism, exploitation and oppression. It declared that apartheid could only be destroyed and smashed as it cannot be reformed.

### **Indian Initiative Against Racism**

Indian initiative and UN debates helped in the formulation of three main principles of anti-apartheid movement, namely: one, that racial policies were not matters of domestic jurisdiction; two, that racial policies adversely affected relations between states; three, that racial

discrimination was a violation of the Charter of United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **Protests Against Racism**

India further pressed the issue and the UN set up a Special Committee against apartheid. The UN General Assembly also passed a resolution asking member states to take certain diplomatic and economic steps against the Government of South Africa to force it into abandoning its racial policies. UN voted for meaningful comprehensive economic and arms sanctions against South Africa.

Earlier, Nehru, protesting against the continuous defiance of South Africa even demanded its expulsion from UN and the Commonwealth. He also blamed the Western powers for supporting the racist regime. He warned them of the colonial war turning into the most violent struggle on racial lines.

Indian efforts continued and in 1967 India recognized that ANC was the true leader of anti-apartheid forces in Southern Africa. This further strengthened the anti-apartheid movement. ANC was allowed to open its Asia mission in India to spread their cause further. A few years later India extended diplomatic recognition also to SWAPO, a companion movement of the ANC, which helped the latter to open its embassy. India contributed further by honouring the imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela with Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. The ANC and the SWAPO leaders were personally invited on state visits.

India condemned the armed attacks of South Africa against the neighbouring independent African States because the latter gave shelter to the freedom fighters of the ANC and the SWAPO. Destabilisation attempts of South Africa against the governments of Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho and Zimbabwe were discussed at the international forums.

At the instance of India and under its chairmanship, the AFRICA fund was created to help the nationalist movements of South Africa and Namibia and to assist the Frontline States - Angola, Mozambique, Zambia Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Botswana - to repair the damages caused to them by South African military invasions and sabotage of their nascent economies. The decisions to set up the AFRICA fund was taken at the Non-Aligned Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1986.

With the emergence of Namibia as an independent country and the dismantling of apartheid regime in South Africa complete, the fight against racism now involves steps to combat the repercussions of centuries of racism. Economic programmes given by the South African Development Coordination Committee (SADCC) Summits are being implemented towards making the Southern African region recover from the distortions caused by the apartheid regime.

## **30.6 LET US SUM UP**

In this Unit we discussed:

helped the background of the self-determination and freedom movements in Asia and Africa.

how the ideals of equality and economic development became a driving force for the liberation movements.

what role was played by the Indian Freedom movements in inspiring the freedom Movements of Asia and Africa.

how the post-independence India the freedom movements and the anti-racist struggles in Africa.

## 30.7 KEY WORDS

- Apartheid:** The practice of segregation of races as was practised in the Republic of South Africa by the White Community. The practice was discontinued after 1991 and the institutions of apartheid began to be dismantled since.
- Bipolar World:** A situation in international politics where two 'Big Powers' opposed to each other complete for getting allegiance of and control over the other countries. The 'Big Powers' are also called 'Super Powers'.
- Bloc:** Grouping of entities or countries based either on ideological similarities or security issues or economic necessities.
- Cold War:** Confrontation between countries through methods other than armed. It could be psychological or through media.

## 30.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

### Answer to Check Your Progress 1

- 1)
  - a) To disprove the theory of the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of the others.
  - b) to establish that the colonized people can also be as self-reliant and resourceful as those who colonized them or  
Self-determination and liberation from the foreign rule.  
(You may note down any other tasks of the freedom movements as well).
- 2)
  - a) Desire to be away from the politics of Super Powers because involvement in the politics of external powers would be wasteful and would not help in their progress.
  - b) Fear of once again coming under the colonial rule.
  - c) Apprehensions about the spread of communism in the own countries.
  - d) Preference to nationalism or to unity between countries of their same continent or region rather than to be followers of extremely developed ideologies.