

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF THE HEREROS OF NAMIBIA

=====

National Conference on the Land reform and the Land question  
in N A M I B I A: THE HEREROS ' VIEW.

Presented by: PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF THE HEREROS,  
DR. KUATMA RIFUAKO.

WINDHOEK  
NAMIBIA.

June 25 - July 1, 1991.

the land reform and the land question by Dr. K. Riruako.

INTRODUCTION.

Namibia is free and the land reform should be treated in a just way to eliminate the last vestiges of national oppression and to foster the original rights of nationalities of the land in accordance with the new democratic principles of the Namibian Constitution as well as to entrench the equality of nationalities in Namibia before the law.

Presently, the golden cause of the Exterminated in Namibia and his/her sole rights as to the loss of land, lies decided in his/her political skills for democracy, national reconciliation and nation building. Thus, the cost of national extermination and dispossession of land and other movable property should be taken very serious. The Namibian people who lost their livelihood through colonial expropriation of land must be listened to and be fully given communal landownership. As farmers, they need to be accorded comprehensive Land Bank's credit to buy back the holy land of their ancestry in Namibia.

Certainly, unreasonable and deliberate provocations on the land reform will end up into a bloody war of destruction without a winner. Therefore, the special urgency of the land question in our country, at this time, must be concrete and historical. It must also address itself to the frank recognition of our people's right to land and the development and improvement of agriculture in general and stock farming in particular.

The Herero people are certain that their genuine and patriotic resolve during the struggle for national independence and their political cooperation with other groups and political parties, was key to the total Namibian political redress and had paved the way for the establishment of democracy in Namibia.

At all times in the history of Namibia, the Herero people invested power in the people of Namibia and exercised that power in line with the wishes and aspirations of the whole Namibian people. Now that this country is free and sovereign, the Herero people would like to vote the new powers of independent Namibia to be perfected into strong and responsible administrative regions and constituencies throughout the country. Nevertheless, the people living in such regions and constituencies should be respected.

In the past, the National Concordance of the Chiefs' Councils aimed at the Bill of Fundamental Rights and the creation of a democratic Government by the people for the people in Namibia. Thus, the Hereros want nothing less than the Bill of Fundamental Rights and genuine democracy in the Namibian approach to find solutions to the land question and its natural distribution (topography).

Without the active participation and agreements of the Hereros, there will be no solutions to the land reform in Namibia towards everlasting peace and justice. In fact, the land under discussion is theirs and the Khoi-Khoi people of Namibia.

They have the sacred duty to expose the evils of the past as well as to lay down new ways to safeguard the policy of national reconciliation and nation building. They are also prepared to face the spectre of insidious tribal domination from the North in all its manifestations in Namibia.

Now inasmuch as our democratic Constitution of Namibia does not permit:

- 1) the abolition of commercial secrecy,
- 2) the nationalization of banks, mines, schools, big companies; and,
- 3) the confiscation without any indemnization of the properties of large landowners, all attributed lands, all private lands and buildings with all their dependencies; - Therefore, the Hereros as represented by the HERERO ROYAL HOUSE, demand for the speedy recognition of their right to all their communal areas by the State without delay. We believe that the just solution to the land reform in Namibia must start with the mandate for communal landownership and should be as follows:

- a) The former colonial rights over all the "Reserved Areas" should be transferred to the people and be recognised as communal patrimony. It must be registered as the private property of the land deprived citizens of the very areas.
  - a.1) In the name of the people of the very area, the communal patrimony should be the life-interests of all who pasture and till it as the right of social support and the creation of new conditions of living.
- b) The right of life-interests of communal lands should be conceded to all citizens/residents of the communal land, irrespective sex and the social status.
- c) The life-interests of land must be equalitarian, if necessary; having into consideration the local conditions of the area and of the people in the specific communal area.
- d) The forms of life-interests of land must be intirely free, domestic and communal or by arrangement in conformity of what different villages and communities decide.
- e) The immediate creation of the Agrarian Fund of communal ownership, subjected to periodical harmonious sharing with the growth of the population, of cattle farming, elevation of productivity and of technical level of agriculture in all spheres of life; and,
- f) The State approval of the FNDC (ENOK) stock farming programmes for the Herero communal lands.

Surely, the question of land in all its dimension can only be resolved by the active participation of the indigenous Committees on land reform of the people of Namibia who practically lost their land.

Therefore, the HERERO ROYAL HOUSE would like to present an Expert document of its Committee on the matter.

- A. The Land's Rights, Reform and Resettlement Committee of the Hereros (LRRRC of the Hereros), during its deliberations from 14-20, February 1991 had defined the Herero pastoralists in the following four main categories, they are:
- a) cultural farmers,
  - b) historical farmers,
  - c) communal farmers and
  - d) Petty commercial farmers.

In short, cultural farmers pursue the traditional, cattle-class farming in accordance with a specific caste of the clan. The historical farmers with no difference as to the caste order put special emphasis on the habitat or place of farming and its history no matter whether the locality is suitable to farming or not. The communal farmers are communally orientated and the community of clans come first. Secondly, the ad personam adoration of large herds of cattle are considered part of the great pride of the communes. The petty commercial farmers are small farmers with commercial aspirations, especially amongst the young generations. They consider modern farming on a small scale as ideal. Such farming can be qualified as distant farming from the normal cultural and historical farming.

Before any normal and just survey and distribution of communal land to the communal farmers according to their classes, the LRRRC of the Hereros requests for a thorough investigation and study into the original sizes of all communal lands. The injustices of lands distribution and redistribution in the past must be determined and serve as a guideline not to commit the same mistakes of colonialism in Namibia.

The right to land for the Herero farmers over their communal lands throughout the breadth and length of Namibia is a matter of life and death. It is fundamental to life, to freedom, to culture and stock farming. Even the children of communal farmers need their rights to land, to life, to happiness and property like other children elsewhere in the world for whom we are spending our energies to perfect their lives.

of In that regard our younger State must be careful not to entrench the vestiges of national oppression of the past history. Freedom in Namibia must be felt in living and above all the recognition of the right to property of all citizens irrespective their social status, sex and the colour of their skin. Colonialism and its consequences in Namibia must be remembered through its three faces, e.i. 1884-1914, 1915-1944 and 1945-1990, March 20; and so the preparations, study and genuine discussions of the land's issue must be understood and analyzed in that background.

Today after March 21, 1990 the Herero people, like others according to their needs; are still fighting for the recognition of their communal rights and for the just attainment of private patrimony of the Hereros within the existing Herero communal lands, the only designated Herero communal patrimony after the horrible death camps of labour and physical exterminations where the Herero survivors were put at 7318 officially in Namibia and about 1000 of them reached Botswana. The question of the land in Namibia will for final reasons, test the correctness and honesty of the Government of the day as well as the non-exterminated groups towards the cause of the Herero people in an independent Namibia.

Presently, the Herero people are continuing to experience:

- a) the horrors of yearly aftermath grazing, shortage of underground water in areas such as Rietfontein, Epukiro, Eiseb-block, Otjinene, Omaheke, Okamatapati and Otjituuu;
- b) the absence, if not lack of adequate infrastructure of water like water-tanks, ground dams and water supply for areas like Ovitoto, Otjimbingwe, Okaoko and Omatjette;
- c) lack of Land Bank's credit,

- d) Lack of, if not limited surveying, balcanization and fencing of communal lands,
- e) Lack of agricultural assistance to control poisonous plants and bush-penetrators;
- f) State alienation of the Hereros not to qualify for landownership of their sofar retained communal lands;
- g) the deliberate delay of distribution of the balcanized communal areas to the Hereros in Aminuis (corridor), Okamatapati, Rietfontein and parts of Otjituuu.

B. Now that Namibia is free and all citizens are entittled to happiness and development, the Herero people and its Land's Rights, Reform and Resettlement Committee would like to request the Government of the day and the coming Conference on the Land's issue to consider the immediate recognition of the Hereros'rights to their communal lands without delay.

Furthermore, the Herero people and its Committee would like to recommend the following approach as to the equilibrate development of the undermentioned communal lands:

1. OVITOTO and OTJIMBINGWE:

- i) Ovitoto grazing strength and the number of its stock (small and big) must be compared and determined.
- ii) There must be a definite differentiation of farmers according to their stock capacity in Ovitoto and thereafter permanent settlement of stock farmers in Ozoserekaze be pursuit.
- iii) The rest of the stock farmers should be settled in Eiseb - Block.
- iv) The Ovitoto situation should be in force also for Otjimbingu and Omatjette.

2. AMINUIS:

- i) Permission and permanent settlement of Aminuis stock farmers in the corridor on the farm basis should be authorized.
- ii) Aminuis must be surveyed, balcanized into farms, fenced and be given to its stock farmers.
- iii) Aminuis stock farmers who are having the power to maintain commercial farms in the Gobabis Area should be assisted to obtain Land Bank's credit to buy commercial farms in the region.
- iv) Houmoed (Otoue) should be given to the stock farmers from Aminuis by the State as private farms.

3. RIETFONTEIN-BLOCK (OTJOMBINDE):

- i) Water-drilling and water supply to the whole Rietfontein area
- ii) Water-drilling and fencing of the balcanized places in Rietfontein which are identified and owned by stock farmers of Rietfontein.



- iii) Interested stock farmers and all those who are having financial power to buy commercial farms outside Rietfontein should be helped to get the necessary credit from the Land Bank of Namibia.
- iv) After complete balcanization and distribution of land in Rietfontein the inhabited farm land of Rietfontein should be handed over to their original owners.

4. OKAMATAPATI:

- i) The surveyed area of Okamatapati which is in need of water should get water supply up to the border with Bushmanland as well as the Namibia-Botswana border.
- ii) All unsurveyed area of the Herero communal lands should be surveyed, balcanized, fenced and be given to the respective communal stock farmers.
- iii) Eastern Otjituuo area falls under Rietfontein and Okamatapati as far as development is concerned.

5. EISEB-BLOCK:

- i) The Eiseb-block must be surveyed, balcanized, water supplied, fenced and be distributed to stock farmers from the rest of all Herero communal lands in Namibia.
- ii) In areas affected with poisonous plants (Otjikurioma) efforts should be made to promote small and big wild animal breeders of the communal lands and to provide agricultural financing.

6. EPUKIRO/OTJINENE/OKONDJATU  
OKAKARARA/OKOTJITUUO( CENTRAL):

- i) Each and every eastern and western area of the Herero communal lands without water supply should be examined and supplied with water.
- ii) These areas after complete survey and balcanization with all the necessary infrastructure must be redistributed to communal stock farmers of the region.
- iii) Stock farmers who have fenced areas for themselves (west/east) in Herero communal areas should be subjected to the inspection of the size of the area whether it constitute an economic unit.

7. KAOKOVELD:

The Herero people are aware of the undisputable facts that about 90% of the stock farmers in Kaokoland communal area are cultural farmers, if not historical. Therefore, the Herero people suggest for the immediate surveying, balcanization and fencing of eastern and southern Kaokoland into economic farm units. The rest of Kaokoland should be divided up into large type of communal orientated farms and to be supplied with water and electricity as well as the speedy improvement of roads to facilitate accessibility to desert and mountainous areas. For the preservation of cultural

traditions and increase in cattle breeding of the Nguni-type, and boreholes drilling in Kaokoland should be a priority. The Herero people are convinced that the creation of a free market in Kaokoland should be carried out hand in hand with the erection of agricultural centres of learning in the field of new cattle farming and horticulture.

In the interests of Kaokoland stock farmers, the grazing lands of Kaokoland bordering to Etosha National Park must be restored by shifting the border-line to that of Otjovazandu as it was in the past. The tourists potential in Kaokoland should be developed, especially at Ongongo, Oruvandjei, Kaoko-Otavi, Epupa and others.

#### 8. COMMERCIAL FARM LANDS:

The commercial farms of Namibia comprise the original great grasslands of Hereroland, Damaraland and Namaland as well as the vast hunting areas of Bushmanland.

The colonial policy of the expropriation of land had resulted into the creation of commercial farms. The Namibian Constitution has legalised the ownership of the commercial farms on the day of independence and it is now a constitutional protected private ownership. Nevertheless, today the commercial farms are of the greatest and vital economic interests of free Namibia. Thus, the Herero people earnestly welcome foreign investments to improve commercial farming in Namibia.

In furthering good farming relations with other countries, and especially between Namibian stock farmers and their non-resident counterparts; the HERERO ROYAL HOUSE should request the Government of Namibia to ensure the farm land of non-residents into proper economical units with high income and productivity.


The commercial farms on the free market should be made available for the Namibian black stock farmers, who lost their land, to buy and to utilise for the breeding of small and big livestock. And, the productive utility of foreign owned commercial farms should be examined and promoted in the interest of economic development and to attract foreign investments in Namibia.

It is in the interests of the country's economy and development, that the disadvantaged stock farmers in the past should be given on the basis of low-loans and resettlement scheme, bank credits to purchase commercial farms on the market.

The stock farmers who are interested in commercial farming should be trained, identified and classified on the following terms of 150 mixed stock, 900 small stock and with appropriate experience in farming.

The Namibian agricultural potential in the fields of cattle farming and horticulture should be developed according geographical and ecological vast realities of Namibia.

As a matter of fact, the Hereros and their ROYAL HOUSE are confident that the question of land reform, is a long term issue and the State should study and define its role towards the commercial and communal farm lands of Namibia. Furthermore, the HERERO ROYAL HOUSE would like to call on the Government of Namibia to balcanise and fence the arable communal lands of Namibia into Green productive and economic units.

..........

DR. KUAIMA RIRUAKO

PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF THE HEREROS.

A. : Tribal Map of Africa

Okomihoko via Africa tji ja vitura.

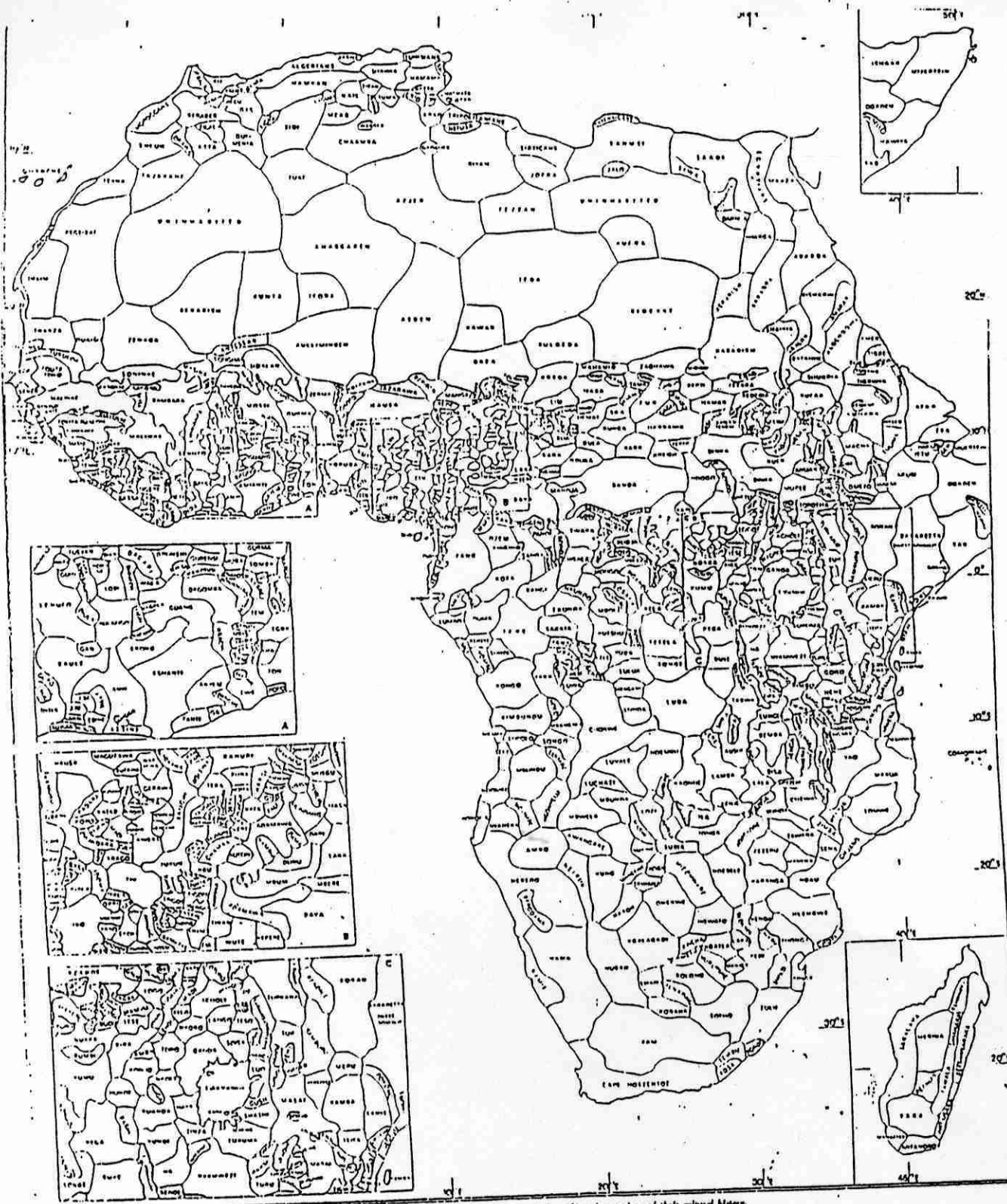


Fig. 1. Tribal map of Africa. Sources Murdock, *Africa by peoples and their cultural history*.



## B.1. Annex on Colonial Policy.

### THE LAND POLICIES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM IN NAMIBIA.

The forces of colonial and international imperialism had in the past embarked on:

- a) the destruction of the Namibian people, their confinement to reserves and setting up of colonial anti-people's agency (ies) of administration of property.
- b) the dubious and secret commercial practice or transactions to have the whole nation a debtor to colonialism and imported religion.
- c) the gradual transfer of people's land and cattle into the hands of colonial settlers, through the force of rifles and the abolition of traditional people's power organs through divide and rule imperial policy.
- d) And, the pursuit of colonial policy of gradual land expropriation of Africans, the cunning mapping out of borders of communal lands, locality-wise and internal deportations and labour camps, in order to turn the whole people into refugees in their own country of birth.

The LRRRC of the Hereros would like to cite two striking examples from the colonial period:

#### 1. Constitutional

Theodor Leutwein's promulgation of the "

IMPERIAL DECREE OF 10 APRIL 1898 PERTAINING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RESERVES FOR NATIVES IN THE PROTECTORATE OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA" will have more to reveal in future studies and analysis.

#### 2. Commercial undertakings

Six companies had involved themselves in land theft in Namibia:

- a) GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA COMPANY
- b) SIEDLUNGSGESELLSCHAFT FUER SUEDEWEST AFRIKA
- c) HANSEATISCHE LAND-, MINEN- UND HANDELSGESELLSCHAFT
- d) KAOKOLAND- UND MINENGESELLSCHAFT
- e) BRITISH SOUTH WEST AFRICA COMPANY
- f) SOUTH AFRICAN TERRITORIES (KHARASHKOMA SYNDICATE)

The Extermination Order of General Lothar von Trotha explains for itself and will serve as a cutting sword when the Hereros as a people are demanding today for the Government of Namibia to recognise their inalienable right to all present-day existing Herero communal lands.

Apart from its colonial German anti-Herero propaganda, trying to justify its inhuman and fascist character of hegemonic German nature, it stated clearly that Germans in their conduct of war were aimed at annihilating the Hereros and to possess their land and property instead.

The Extermination Order says in part:

" The Herero people will have to leave the country. Otherwise I shall force them to do so by means of guns. Within the German boundaries, every Herero, whether found armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. I shall not accept any more women and children. I shall drive them back to their people - otherwise I shall order shots to be fired at them. These are my words to the Herero people."

That Order of the German General was declared and carried out against the Hereros. Furthermore, modern slavery in Namibia was marked by the entry of the " IMPERIAL DECREE OF 26 DECEMBER 1905 PERTAINING TO THE SEQUESTRATION OF PROPERTY OF NATIVES IN THE PROTECTORATE OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA".

The misdeeds of German troops were further testified under oath by collaborators such as Jan Cloete from Omaruru, Johannes Krüger from Gaub and Hendrik Campell from Rehoboth.

The LRRRC of the Hereros would like to commend on the German imperialist policy towards Ovamboland and its political consequences during the pre-independence struggle and today, facing the coming National Conference on Land Reform.

#### THE HERERO COMMENTARY:

The Germans had left the Ovambos in peace as a matter of agreed upon German policy, in order to use the Ovambos latter as free wage-labourers in Namibia, while the Hereros, Namas and Damaras are being treated as forced slave-labourers without the ownership of land.

In that background, the letter and spirit of the then contract system in Namibia which imported the Ovambos down South never loose in sight who is who in Namibia.

Therefore, in the first and last expression of Namibian independence the question of land reform and that of the state power, traditional leadership and culture and how they should be tackled and on what fundamental principles should be number 1 (one) in the Namibian politics.

Talking about their majority in a clear tribal reactionary fashion, the people of Ovamboland have angered the whole of Namibia except the colonialists who do not bother themselves with the unpatriotic Ovambo nationalism. The Ovambo greed for land, money and absolute power had made them to declare war against the landless Namibian compatriots in the past and today. This is the first and historic unforgiveable tragedgy of Ovamboland.

THE HISTORY OF BETRAYAL PLAYED BY SWAPO LEADERSHIP DURING THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION OF NAMIBIA WAS AND CONTINUE TO BE IDENTICAL TO THAT OF HERMANUS VAN WYK OF REHOBOTH DURING 1904-7.

In memory of precious just struggle for land ownership, the LRRRC of the Hereros would like to cite King Samuel Maharero's Declaration of War and Last Order to His People.

" All our obedience and patience with the Germans is of little avail, for each day they shoot someone dead for no reason at all. Hence I appeal to you, my Brother, not to hold aloof from the uprising, but to make your voice heard so that all Africa may take up arms against the Germans. Let us die fighting rather than die as a result of maltreatment, imprisonment or some other calamity. Tell all the Kapteins down there to rise and do battle".

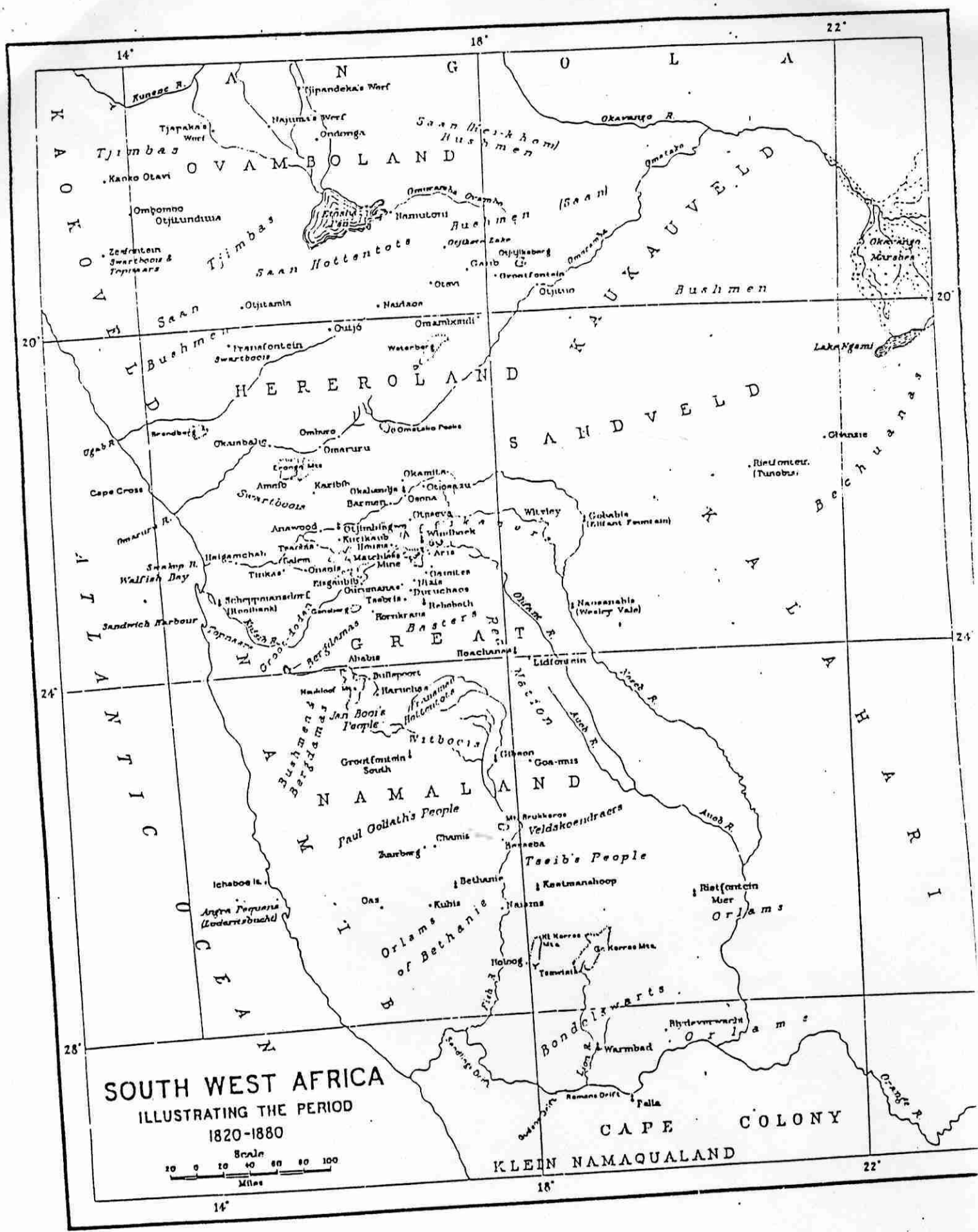
(A letter to Hendrik Witbooi from S.Maharero ca. 11-01-1904)

#### THE DECLARATION OF WAR.

" In my capacity as Supreme Chief of the Herero I hereby decree and resolve that none of my people lay their hands upon the English, the Bastaards, the Berg Damara, the Nama and the Boers. We shall not lay violent hands on any of these. I have made a solemn pledge not to make this known to anyone, including the missionaries."

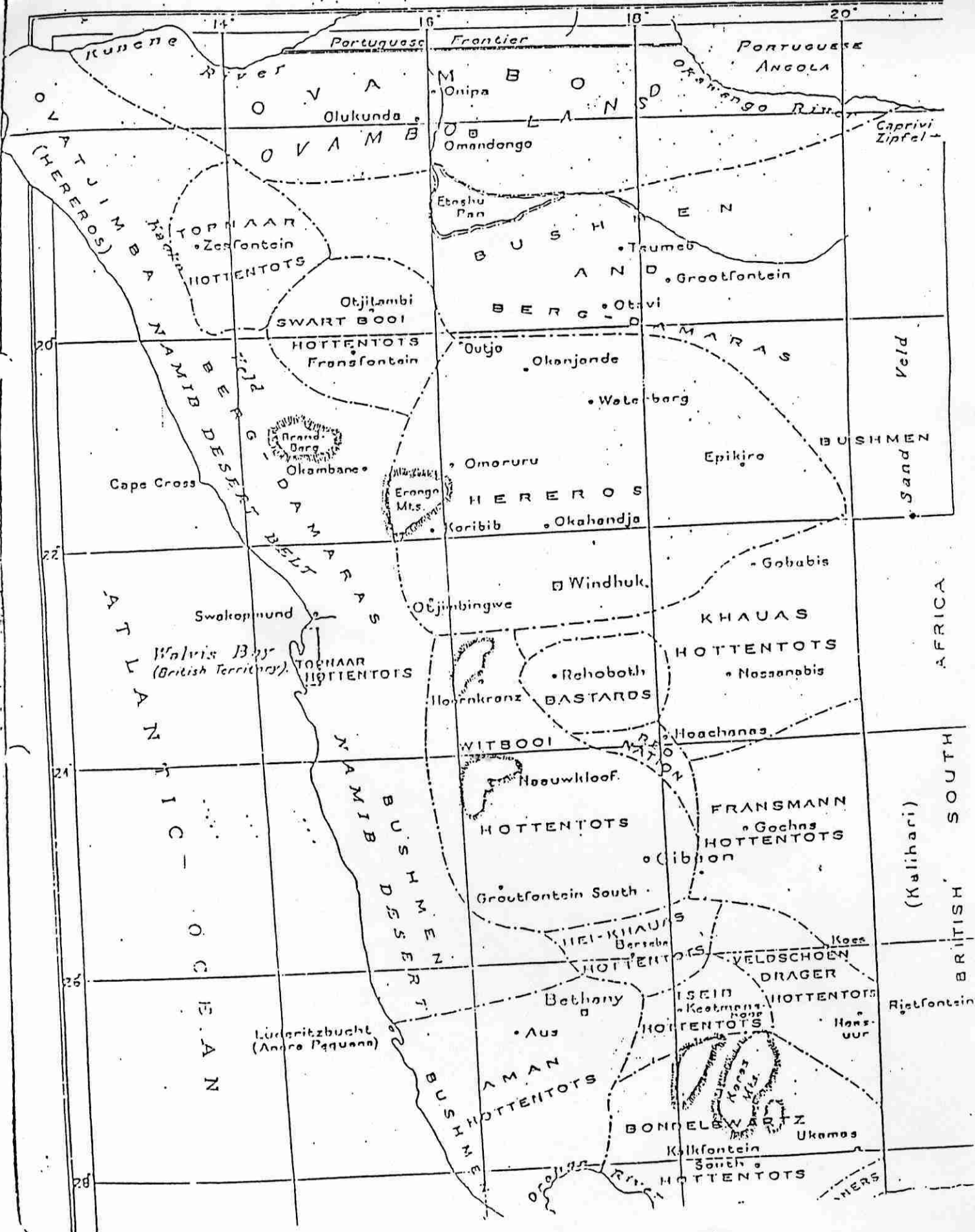
Daniel Kariko's statement further explained: "At our clandestine meetings our Chiefs decided to spare the lives of all German women and children. The missionaries, too, were to be spared ..... Only German men were regarded as our enemies."

There are clear historic realityies not to be forgotten during the discussion of the National Conference on the Land Reform such as the fate of the Hereros, Namas and the Damaras in Namibia through all colonial periods of Apartheid.

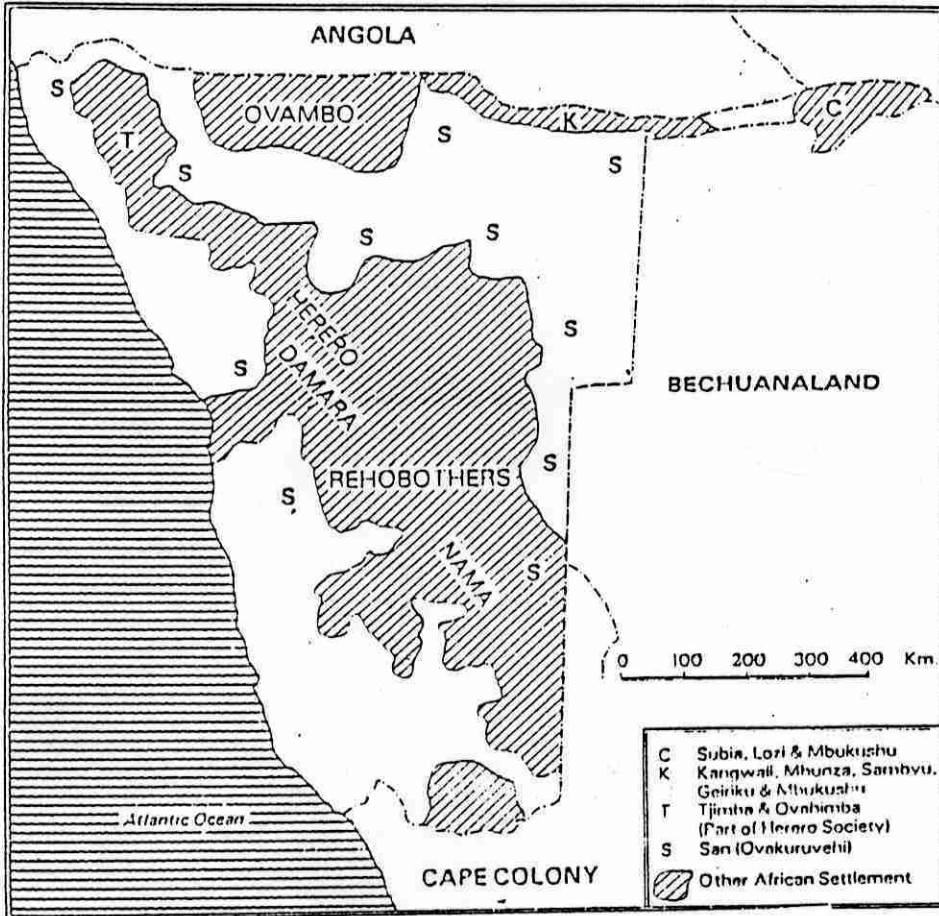


SHOWING TERRITORIES OCCUPIED BY NATIVE TRIBES  
AT THE TIME OF ANNEXATION BY GERMANY IN 1890.

*Tribal Boundaries, ---*

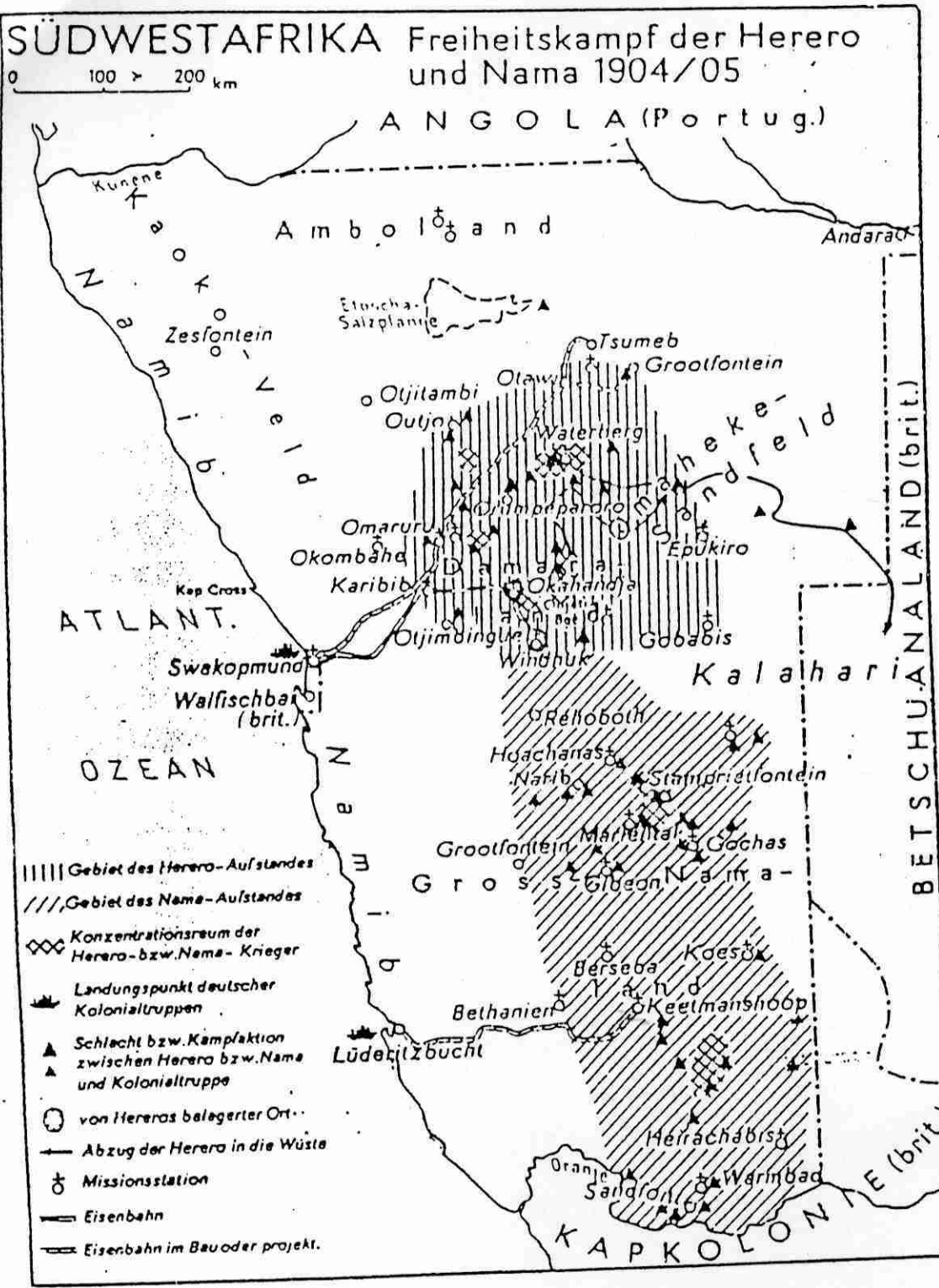


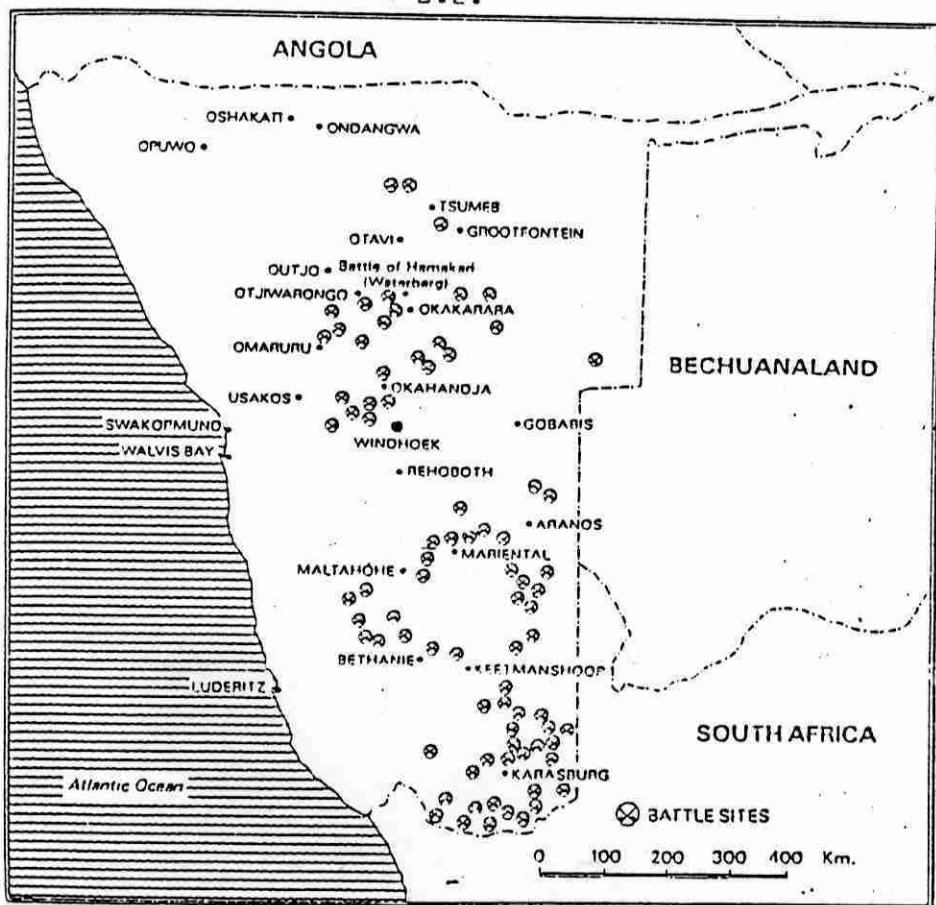
- D.



1900 Areas of original intersettlement,  
in Namibia

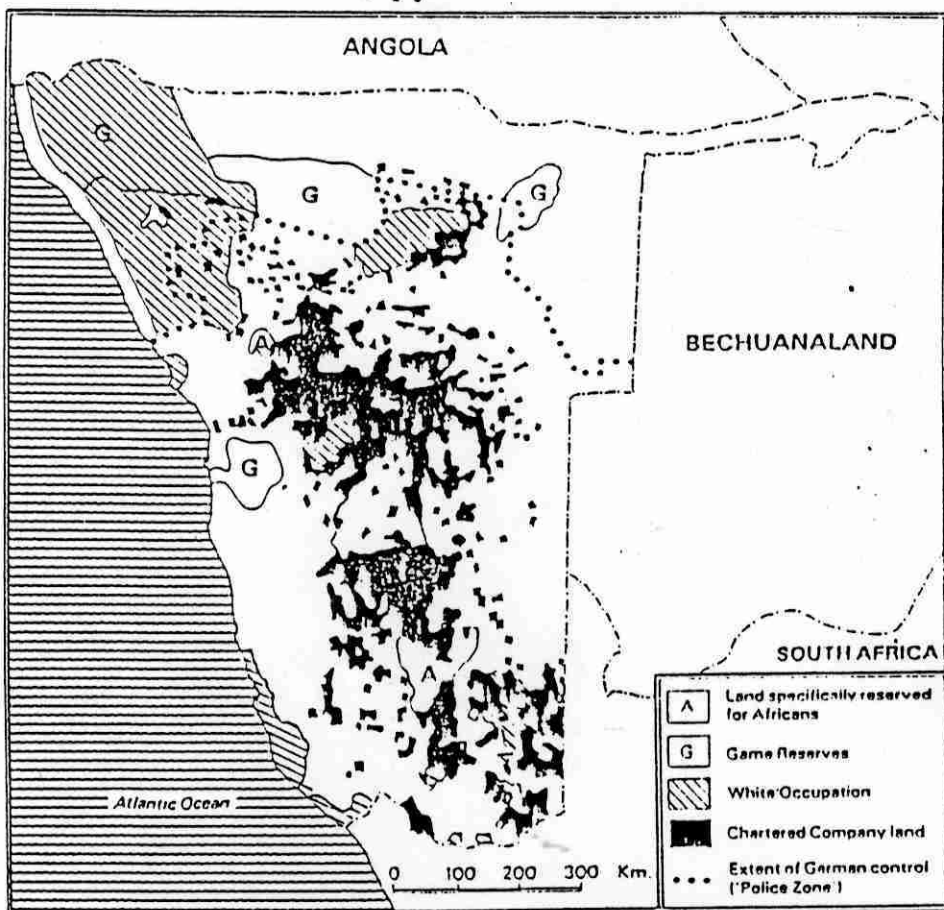




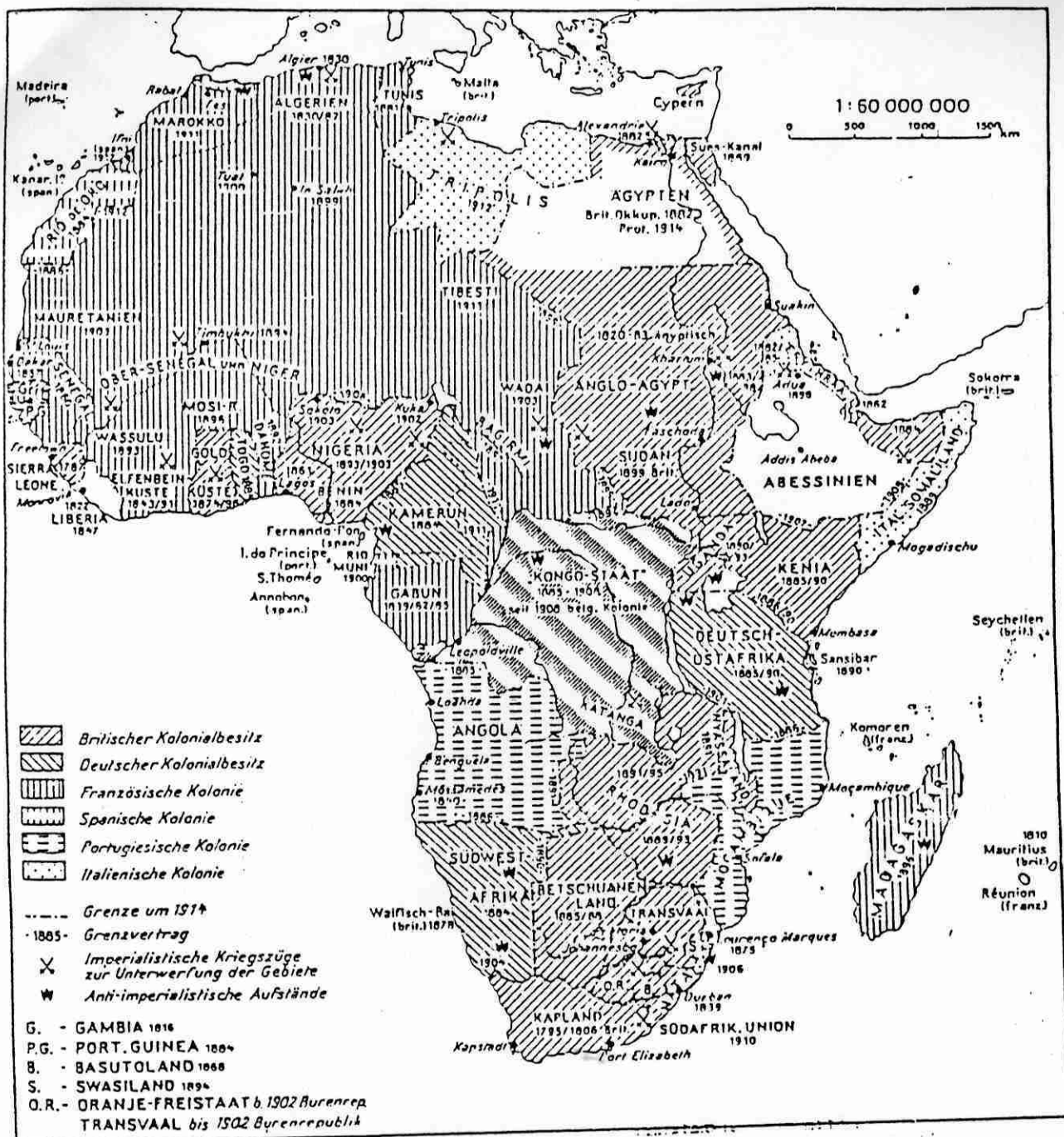


Battles between German and Namibian forces  
1904-7 War

- F.

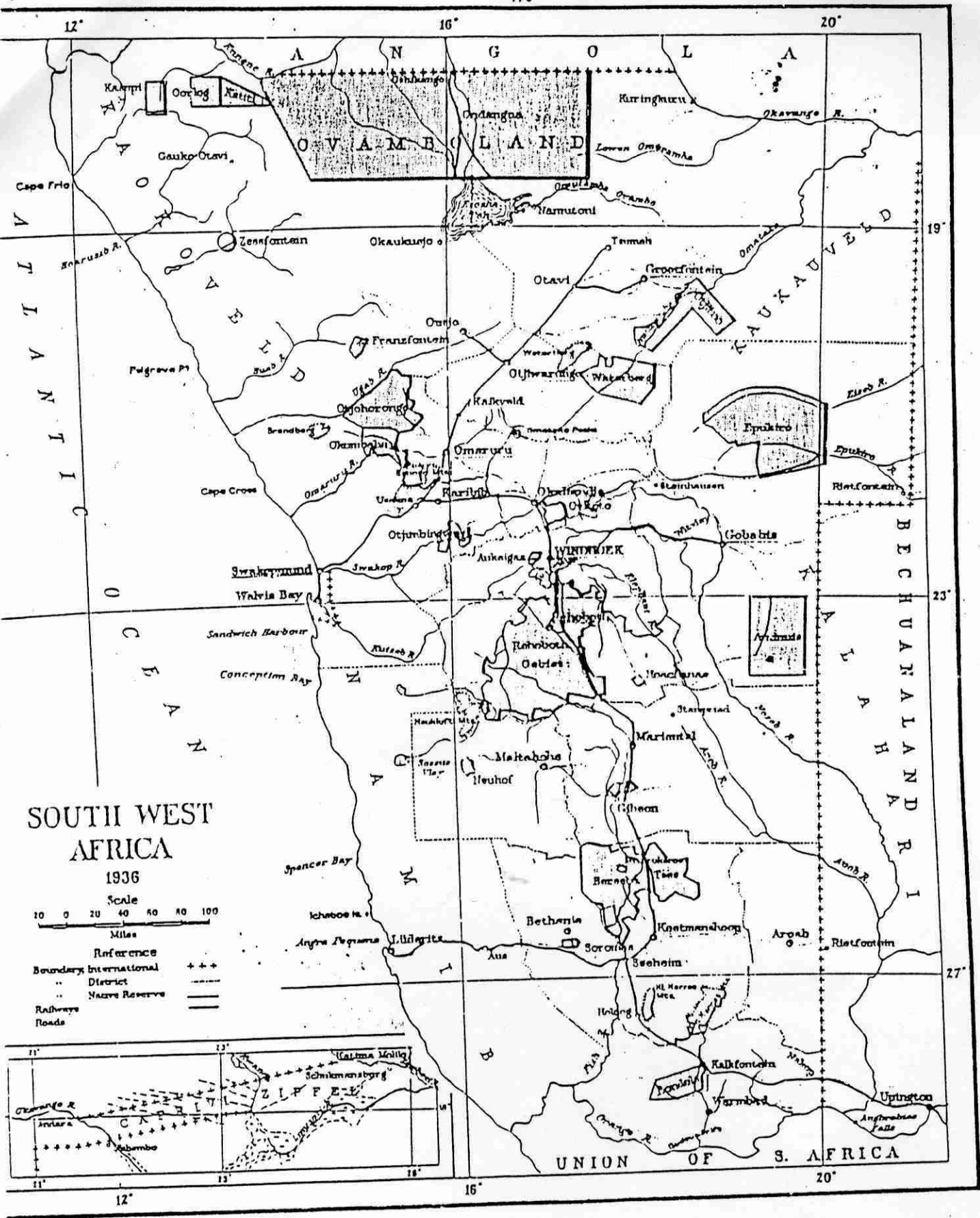


1911 The Police Zone



Legend to map from top to bottom

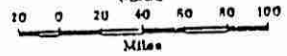
- British colony
- German colony
- French colony
- Spanish colony
- Portuguese colony
- Italian colony
- Frontiers in 1914
- Frontier treaty
- Imperialist campaign to subjugate area
- Anti-imperialist rising
- G. Gambia 1816
- P.G. Port. Guinea 1884
- B. Basutoland 1868
- S. Swaziland 1894
- O. R. Orange Free State, till 1902 Boer Republic
- T. Transvaal, till 1902 Boer Republic



**SOUTH WEST AFRICA**

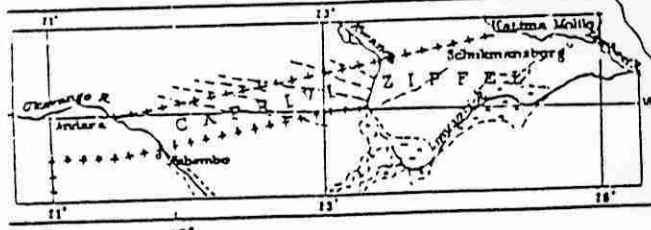
1936

Scale



Reference

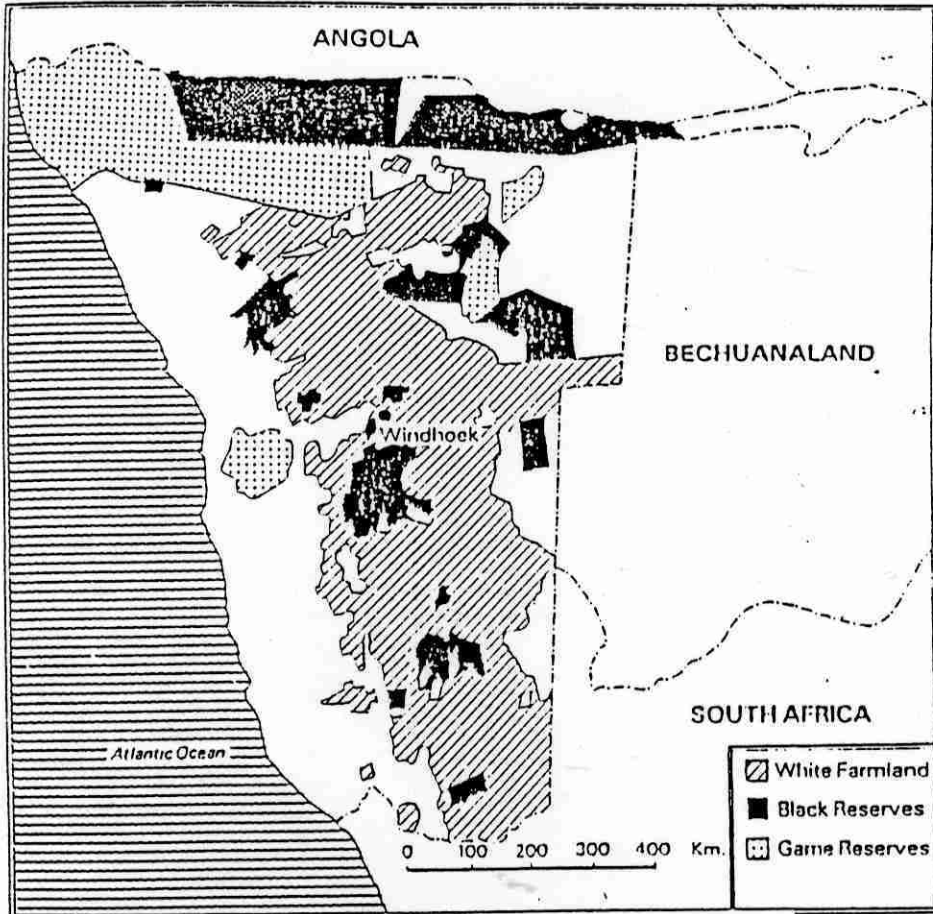
- Boundary, International + + +
- .. District - - - -
- .. Native Reserve = = = =
- Railways ————
- Roads ————



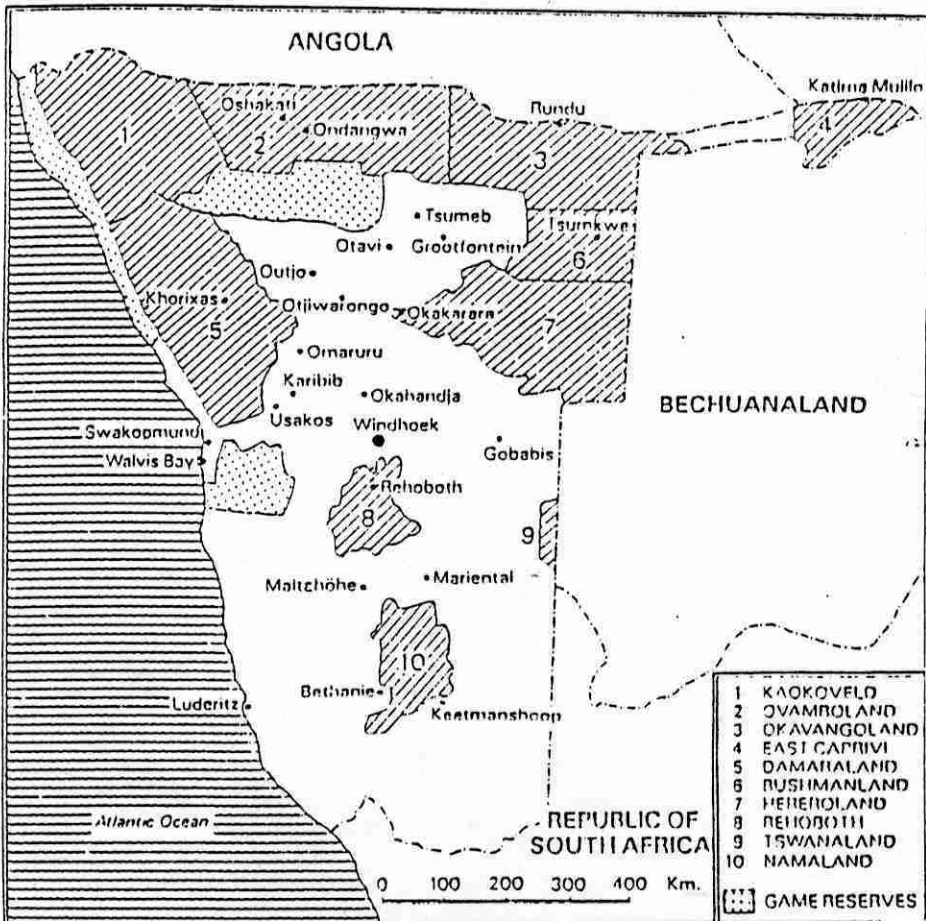
UNION OF S. AFRICA



- I.



1937 Colonial agrarian fragmentation



1963 Odendaal Plan: Creation of Territories and Communal lands of Namibia.