The liberation of colonies all over the world is one of the landmarks of the twentieth century. Most of these colonies were in Africa and Asia. While colonialism has retraced its steps from Asia, it continues to maintain its foothold in certain pockets of Africa. The United Nations, playing significant role in the decolonization process, is exercising utmost pressure for the emancipation of the remaining colonies also. Perhaps the most vigorous activity of the United Nations in connection with this decolonization process has been in respect of South West Africa which was a mandate territory under the League of Nations. However, despite its vigorous efforts, the solution of the problem of South West Africa does not appear to be anywhere in sight.

This thesis deals primarily with the efforts of the Fourth Committee, which handles trusteeship matters, to solve the problem of South West Africa. The Fourth Committee is one of the six Main Committees of the United Nations General Assembly which are brought into being at the commencement of each new session every year. These Committees make suitable recommendations to the plenary session of the General Assembly in respect of the subjects assigned to them. Most, although not all, of the action of the General Assembly, in the form of resolutions, is based on the recommendations of the Main and Ad Hoc Committees. In most cases the General Assembly,
after a short debate, accords approval, without any change, to the draft resolutions recommended by the Committees to make them official General Assembly resolutions. Thus the Main Committees occupy a pivotal place in the whole functioning of the General Assembly. This is why it is not the role of the General Assembly but that of the Fourth Committee on the recommendation of which the General Assembly has mostly acted in respect of the problem of South West Africa that has been examined in this thesis. It is in the Fourth Committee that most of the important debates in connection with the South West African question have taken place. It is there that the conflicts among the Powers have taken place on various controversial questions relating to South West Africa. Again, it is there that hundreds of resolutions and amendments thereto have been tabled, discussed, rejected or approved before being forwarded to the General Assembly for approval. It is in the Fourth Committee that opposite viewpoints have been mostly compromised to produce agreed recommendations. The petitioners have also appeared in the Fourth Committee only. Therefore, a study in depth of the problem of South West Africa as handled by the United Nations can be made best by studying the part played by the Fourth Committee for its solution.

It may be clarified that the thesis deals exclusively with the political problem concerning South West Africa. It does not deal with the efforts that the Fourth Committee made
for the economic, cultural and social development of the people of South West Africa although, in passing, such activities have also been mentioned only to emphasize the multifarious nature of the activities of the Fourth Committee.

The thesis also excludes, except in passing, the consideration of the response of the Fourth Committee to the numerous petitions from the petitioners from South West Africa raising problems of personal nature. Although the thesis deals with the "Role of the Fourth Committee....", it does not exclude the part played by the Security Council also at a latter stage because the role of the Fourth Committee had been relegated to the background at the initiative of the Member States which wanted the Security Council to take charge of the situation after the Fourth Committee had exhausted all possibilities of a solution.

This thesis has been prepared under the scholarly guidance and supervision of an eminent professor of Political Science, Dr. S.A.H. Haqqi who is also the Head of the Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Although there were opportunities for doing research from elsewhere too, yet I chose to do it from Aligarh Muslim University because of the indisputable scholarship and eminence of my supervisor in the field of Political Science. Whatever good is found in this thesis must surely be attributed to the painstaking guidance of my learned supervisor without whose thorough scrutiny of the draft of the thesis many mistakes
in it would have gone unnoticed by me. Needless to say that I accept full responsibility for any error of omission or commission that may still have been left inadvertently in my thesis. I thank my supervisor from the core of my heart for all his help, encouragement and guidance. I have great pleasure in recording that I have incurred great intellectual debt to him in writing this thesis.

The study in connection with the thesis was conducted mostly at the Library of the Indian Council of World Affairs situated in Sapru House, New Delhi. Other libraries where also some useful material was collected are United Nations Information Centre, the Library of the Indian Council for Africa and the Library of the Historical Division of the External Affairs Ministry all of which are situated in New Delhi. The libraries of Delhi University and Aligarh University, besides the Central Secretariat Library, were also occasionally consulted.

The main body of the thesis is almost entirely based on the primary sources comprising the League of Nations and United Nations documents. Some help has, no doubt, been taken from some books and articles mostly written by reputed authorities in politics, international law and international organization.

In connection with the help that the author received at various libraries, one name prominently stands out - that of Shri S. Ansari, formerly Documentation Librarian at the
Library of Indian Council of World Affairs, but now Librarian of Jamia Millia Islamia. He helped the author not only by tracing books, journals, periodicals and documents but also by providing him with adequate library facilities so essential for collecting material for a thesis. The author is deeply indebted to him for all his help. The author is also indebted to Mrs. C. Andrade, Mrs. R. Grover, Miss N. Mathur and Mr. Kawal Kumar, all of Sapru House Library, and Mr. D.K. Bose of the U.N. Information Centre all of whom extended fullest cooperation, help and facilities whenever they were approached by the author.

Before concluding I must also express my gratitude to my wife, Mrs. Santosh Lata Saxena and my three children who, by relieving me of all domestic duties, enabled me to devote maximum time and attention to the research work. My thanks are also due, in abundant measure, to Sardar Labh Singh, Vice-Principal Incharge, Deshbandhu (Evening) College, Kalkaji, New Delhi, who, by not assigning any extra work to me and also by sanctioning me sufficient study leave from the College to fulfil residential requirements of Aligarh Muslim University, facilitated the expeditious completion of my research work.

28 July 1974
Aligarh (U.P.)