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Lines in the Sand: The Global Politics of Local Development in Apartheid-Era
Namibia, 1950-1980

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**Lines in the Sand: The Global Politics of Local Development in
Apartheid Era Namibia, 1950-1980**

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M.A., Emory University, 2009

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An abstract of
a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

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By Molly McCullers

During the Cold War and era of global decolonization, South Africa attempted to formally annex Namibia, its League of Nations Mandate. When the National Party government came to power in South Africa in 1948, it sought to implement apartheid policies in the territory. By masking apartheid as “development,” the South African government hoped to gain international and United Nations approval of its racially discriminatory policies. The state also intended development to justify its contested presence in Namibia and to silence African opposition to South African rule and apartheid. This dissertation explores how competing forces of decolonization and apartheid coalesced around intra-Herero identity and water politics in rural Namibia between 1950 and 1980. Oral and archival sources illuminate how local disputes over ethnicity and water control became powerfully fused with global decolonization struggles, apartheid, and Cold War tensions. This dissertation not only considers how these larger forces shaped rural Herero society, but also demonstrates the ways in which parochial ethnic and development politics profoundly influenced the ways in which regional and international issues such as race, democracy, and globalization impacted the uncertain process of decolonization. By examining the entanglement of rural Herero identity politics, apartheid state formation, and decolonization at the United Nations, this dissertation provides new insights into the ways that local people negotiated the interstices of local-global and ethno-racial political nexuses and attempted to claim sovereignty over their lives, lands, and futures in a moment of great uncertainty and possibility.

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Acknowledgements

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many a retractable salmon. Durba Mitra has always provided unwavering support, incisive comments, and a wonderfully irreverent sense of humor. Jane Hooper is one of the best marathon partners and friends a girl could have. She has been there for me through thick and thin and challenged and broadened my thinking on so many levels, for which I am extremely grateful. Finally, certain members of the section 3 militia at Levin High never fail to entertain me, always make me laugh, and have made Gainesville an oasis over the last two years – Seniors 2000.

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Common Acronyms

SWA – South West Africa

SWAA – South West Africa Administration – SWA’s semi-autonomous government

DNA – South Africa’s Department of Native Affairs

UN – United Nations

ICJ – International Court of Justice

BAD – South Africa’s Department of Bantu Administration and Development

CNC – Chief Native Commissioner

HBSK – Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (*Hoofbantoesakekommissaris*)

HHSK – Chief Herero Affairs Commissioner (*Hoofhererosakekommissaris*)

HSK – Herero Affairs Commissioner (*Hererosakekommissaris*)

NP – National Party

SWAPO – SWA People’s Organization – Ovambo-based liberation party, current
government of modern Namibia

SWANU – SWA National Union – Radically socialist nationalist liberation party

NUDO – National Unity Democratic Organization – Herero-based political party
front for the Herero Chief’s Council

NNC – Namibia National Convention – Umbrella Organization opposed to South
African rule, composed of SWANU, SWAPO, and NUDO

NCN – National Convention of Namibia – Kapuuo’s retaliation against the NNC

DTA – Democratic Turnhalle Alliance – Moderate Umbrella Group as a
counterbalance to SWAPO, first formal interracial political alliance in SWA

Dramatis Personae (in order of appearance)

Hosea Kutako – Herero Paramount Chief 1914-1970, Headman of Aminuis Reserve

H.J. Allen – Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) of SWA until 1958, later a consultant
to the Odendaal Commission

Hendrik Verwoerd – Minister of Bantu Affairs, Prime Minister of South Africa
(1958-1966)

Claudius Hueva – Mbanderu translator in Aminuis Reserve and later advisor to Chief
Munjuku Nguvauva II

Bruwer Blignaut – Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (HBSK) in SWA from (1958)
to (1963)

Stephanus Hoveka – Mbanderu Headman of Epukiro Reserve from 1951-1957

Clemens Kapuuo – Kutako’s chosen successor and secretary, leader of Herero Big
Group

Gerson Hoveka – Mbanderu Chief and Headman of Epukiro Reserve, leader of
Mbanderu Small Group, ally of Kapuuo

Munjuku Nguvauva II – Mbanderu Chief and Headman of Epukiro Reserve, leader of
Mbanderu Big Group, enemy of Gerson Hoveka

David Tjatjitua – leader of the Herero Small Group, Headman of Waterberg East

Ewald Kavetura – Influential Herero Big Group “Agitator” in Waterberg East

Elifas Tjingaete – Ally of Nguvauva, and Headman of Rietfontein Block

Rev. B.G. Karuaera – Herero Small Group Leader, President of the Society for the
Preservation of the Royal House of Tjamuaha/Maherero

Jariretundu Kozonguizi – Founding member of SWAPO and SWANU, later
Kapuuo’s legal advisor and close ally

J.J. van der Watt – HBSK (1965-ca. 1973)

B.J. Vorster – Prime Minister of South Africa (1966-1979)

Mr. Cronje – Assistant HBSK (ca. 1970-ca. 1980)

Dirk Mudge – Breakaway National Party Leader in SWA, Turnhalle leader, Founder
of Democratic Turnhalle Alliance

H.J. DuPlessis – National Party Leader in SWA

Eben van Zijl – National Party Leader in SWA

Timeline – 1945-1990

- 1945 – South Africa attempts to annex SWA
- 1946 – UN rejects South Africa’s annexation request
- 1947 – South Africa informs the UN it will continue to administer SWA as a mandate
- 1948 – National Party takes power in South Africa
- 1949 – South Africa deletes all references to the mandate in SWA’s constitution and grants seats to white SW Africans in the South African parliament
 - Michael Scott begins to petition the UN for the return of Herero lands
 - The UN asks the ICJ for an advisory opinion on South Africa’s occupation of SWA
- 1950 – NP passes Group Areas Acts
- 1950 – Hendrik Verwoerd appointed as Minister of Native Affairs
- 1953 – The UN forms a Permanent Commission on SWA
- 1955 – South Africa DNA takes over SWAA Division of Native Affairs
- 1956 – The ICJ upholds the UN’s right to adopt resolutions on SWA and hear oral testimony from petitioners
- 1957 – Mburumba Kerina joins Rev. Michael Scott at the UN
- 1958 – Hendrik Verwoerd becomes Prime Minister of South Africa
- 1959 – Windhoek Massacre
 - Jariretundu Kozonguizi & Hans Beukes join the delegation to the UN
- 1960 – Sharpeville Massacre
 - Liberia & Ethiopia demand a binding ICJ resolution on SWA
 - Munjuku Nguvauva II arrives from Bechuanaland
- 1962 – Carpio visit to SWA and South Africa
- 1963 – Odendaal Commission established

1964 – Odendaal Commission Report Published

1966 – ICJ rejects Liberia & Ethiopia's suit

- Hendrik Verwoerd assassinated, BJ Vorster becomes Prime Minister

1968 – Vorster passes the Development of Self-Government for Native Nations in
SWA Act

1970 – Hosea Kutako dies

1970 – Hereroland granted “independence” as a Bantustan

1971 – The ICJ declares South Africa's presence in SWA illegal

- Kapuuo forms the NC

1972 – Kurt Waldheim and later Alfred Escher lead UN delegations to visit SWA

1973 – The UN denies NUDO formal recognition

1974 – Carnation Revolution in Portugal, civil war breaks out in Angola and
Mozambique

1975 – Fighting breaks out in Border War

1975 – Turnhalle Talks commence

1977 – Western Contact Group forms

1978 – Kapuuo murdered

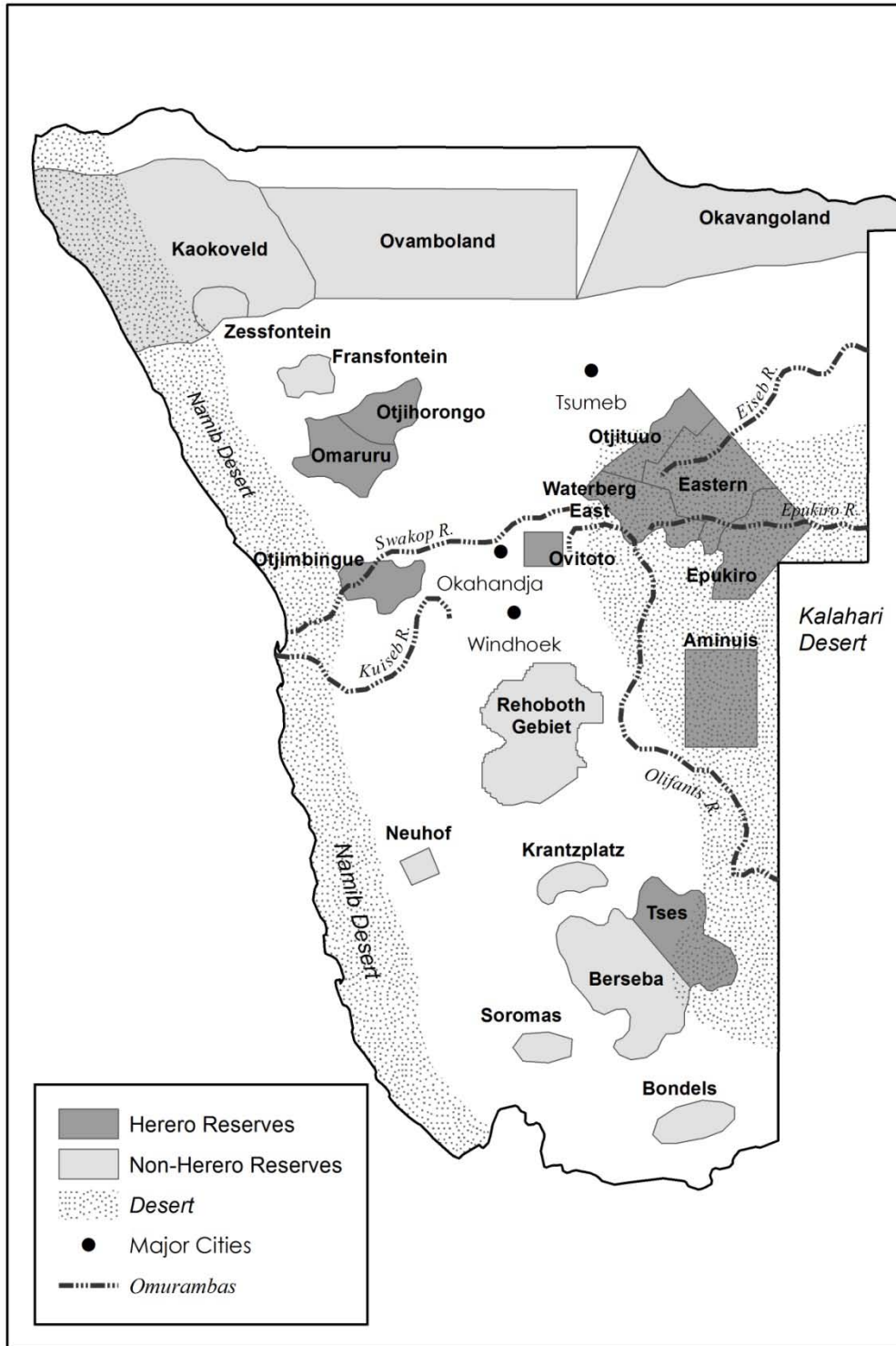
- South Africa invades Angola and attacks SWAPO camp at Cassinga

1980 – Interim Government established

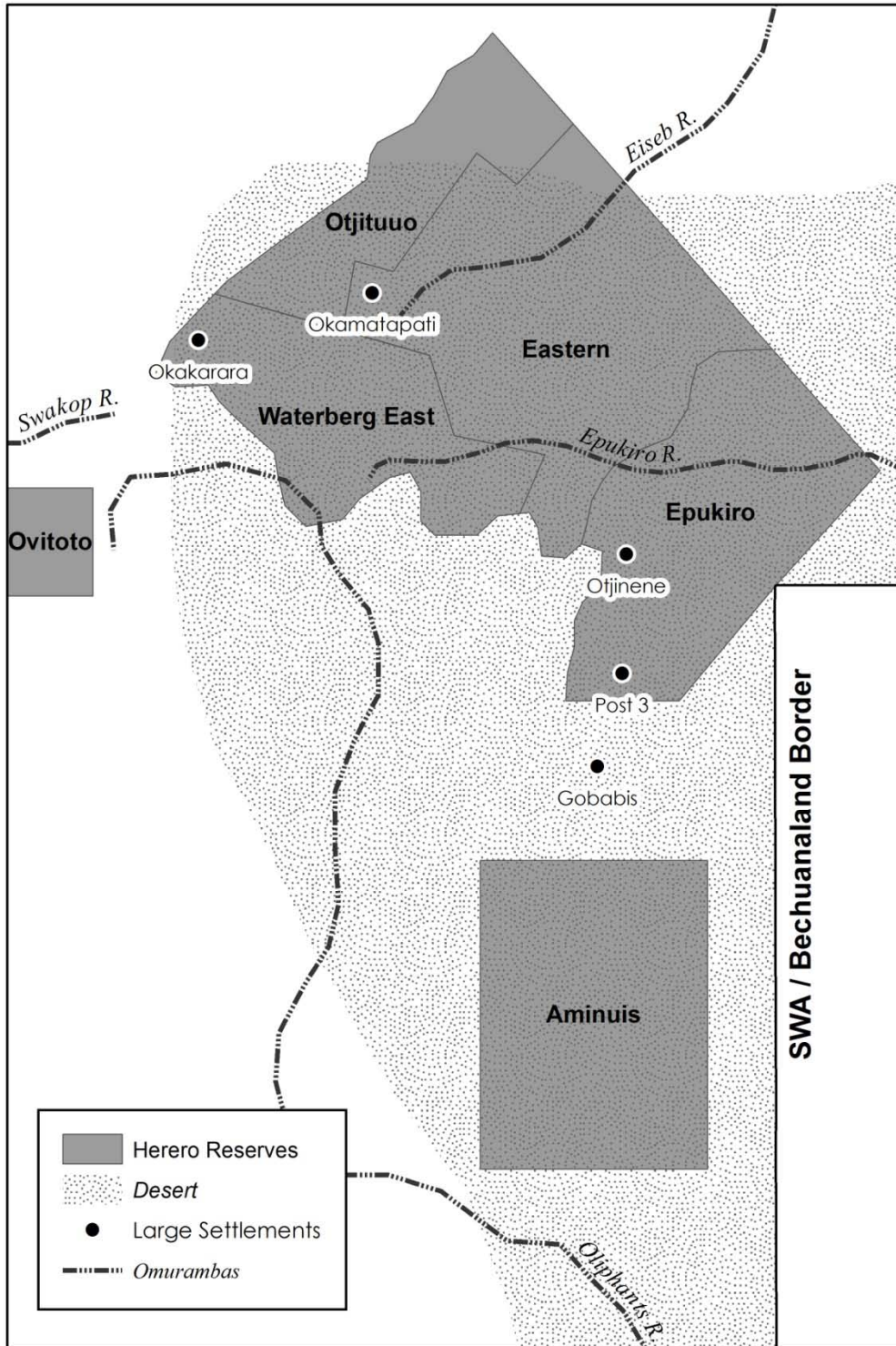
1990 – Namibia granted formal independence from South Africa

- Nelson Mandela released from prison on Robben Island

1994 – Majority rule established in South Africa



Map 1: South West Africa & Native Reserves, ca. 1950



Map 2: Hereroland, ca. 1950

“...South West Africa, a land, so we learn, as large as France and Italy together, a land of poverty and a land of terror....What is it like to be an African in South West; that spot on the map we never thought of till now? To read about it gives only the faintest candle-flicker in the dark of incomprehension. But it makes us shudder at the never-ending suffering of man, and rejoice at his everlasting endurance.” – *Presbyterian Life*, 15 January 1961

“Historians will undoubtedly find it amazing that, while revolutions and bloody rebellions were the order of the day in all of Africa, here in the Republic of South Africa, we have remained free of these, and for a period of more than thirty years there have been signs of good attitudes and signs of progress, prosperity, and development for all ethnic groups. All that has been achieved here reads like a fairy tale.”

– Dr. P.G.J. Koornhof, Minister of Cooperation & Development, former Secretary of the Broederbond, 18 January 1979

“Let me sleep under that tree, where I can afford it.”

– Herero Paramount Chief Hosea Kutako on apartheid resettlement schemes, circa 1960

INTRODUCTION

Hereroland has a spare kind of beauty. Pale tufts of grass and white sandy soil stretch endlessly against a relentlessly blue sky. Stretching over nearly six million hectares of the Kalahari Desert, Hereroland's vast and waterless interior was, and remains, largely uninhabited.¹ During the Cold War, livestock outstripped humans by a ratio of eight to one.² Hereroland's meagre pastoralist population struggled to eke out an existence by ranching cattle on the desert fringe; Herero pastoralists often lived and died (quite literally) by the erratic and never-sufficient rainfall between November and April.

Not much has changed since the 1950s. A visitor to Hereroland today would never know that the area was the object of an intensive development project sponsored by the South African apartheid government in the 1960s and 70s. There is little evidence of such. Nor would one suspect that deeply fraught development politics among Hereroland's culturally and linguistically homogenous communities would have profoundly shaped southern African history and the global politics of decolonization. Yet, this place which appears so marginal now sat at the juncture of regional and global politics not very long ago.

Modern Hereroland might aptly be described as the back of beyond. It is an out-of-the-way part of a rural country. With a modern population of just under two million, Namibia is the second least-densely populated nation in the world.³ Although it is a major global producer of gem-quality diamonds and uranium, Namibia, and certainly Hereroland, would generally be considered "peripheral" to global politics. And yet, this remote corner of the universe has not been historically marginal as a

¹*Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs, 1962-1963* (Pretoria: South Africa Government Printer, 1964), 95. (Henceforth referred to as *Odendaal Report*).

² Calculated from figures presented in the *Odendaal Report*.

³ Other dependent territories such as Greenland are less densely populated, but Mongolia is the only less densely populated sovereign nation.

cursory glance might suggest. Hereroland first sprang into historical prominence as the main theatre of the 1904 Herero Genocide, but quickly faded as the Genocide's commemorative emphasis shifted to Okahandja. Hereroland has since been forgotten, marginalized in history and politics by the more exciting sites of action in Namibia's "Liberation Struggle." Lubango, Cassinga, Lusaka, New York, and The Hague have claimed permanent positions in the minds of historians and politicians.

Between 1950 and 1980, the South African apartheid government endeavoured to consolidate its control over and extend its racially oppressive policies to Namibia (then South West Africa / SWA), its mandated territory. Amid the tumult of global decolonization and the Cold War, the United Nations contested both South Africa's claims to SWA and its expansionist objectives. Herero-speaking peoples in Namibia vocally opposed South African rule. Drawing on a long tradition of land restitution claims, Herero leaders petitioned the UN against South African rule and demanded independence. Framing its outmoded and objectionable policies in development discourse and a version of independence similar to the USSR's satellite republics, the South African government attempted to simultaneously appease the UN and international opinion while silencing Herero opposition. Apartheid officials sought to manipulate intra-ethnic Herero politics by first co-opting tractable Herero leaders into accepting water development and secondly by denying water access to the stubbornly resistant factions. Resistant rural Herero leaders retaliated by reporting as many instances of state interference in local politics and water access to the UN as possible. Throughout the three decades under consideration, apartheid, decolonization, and Herero identity politics became enmeshed through water development politics.

So what can the history and local politics of 13,000 people living on a sandy patch of desert in a marginal country contribute to our understanding of southern African history, much less, the history of our modern world? The answer is quite a lot. By exploring rural political-ecology in apartheid-era Hereroland, particularly water development and access, I argue for the importance of local history in understanding the production of regional and global phenomena. Secondly, and more specifically, I contend that local Herero politics played important roles not only in ethnic identity formation but also in South African state formation and the global decolonization process mediated by the UN. I consider how rural Herero leaders and South African administrators employed and manipulated water and land claims to sovereignty in South West Africa, imagined the future, and achieved their competing goals of independence and subjugation in a decolonizing world. Finally, development discourse and practice, which was first and foremost water development in SWA, linked intra-Herero identity politics, apartheid state formation, and global processes of state formation during the Cold War. These disputes over development were, at their root, contestations of sovereignty, which was arguably the most important and pressing political question facing the world in the immediate aftermath of WWII and the first few decades of the Cold War.

Theoretical Underpinnings

In exploring the global dimensions of local development politics in apartheid-era Hereroland, this dissertation begins by questioning and examining the meaning of “the local” as both an historical stage and an analytic category. Re-framing the way that we think about the local sphere’s position and influence sheds new light on our understanding of development as shaping intra-Herero identity politics, apartheid state

formation, and global decolonization at the UN. It also reveals the ways in which issues of sovereignty became diffused throughout and integrated into the local, regional, and global realms.

How, then, do we define “local?” The local sphere, as a dynamic and topological domain of popular politics loosely linked to geographical space, is centrally integrated with and mutually constitutive of regional and global dynamics. Africanist historiography has a strong tradition of demonstrating the profound ways in which local African actors have impacted larger global and regional processes such as the development of the transatlantic slave trade, the growth of the global commodities market, the spread of Christianity and Islam across the continent.⁴ However, dominant scholarship on the politics of apartheid and decolonization in Namibia tend to take a top-down approach that privileges state and elite political actors.⁵ Instead, I argue that rural Herero people drew on historical schema and expectations of the future to achieve immediate objectives and, in so doing, deeply shaped the nature of the apartheid state and the contested process of decolonization.

Though loosely bound by geography and rooted in a place, the local realm is more than a physical space. In their study of a Siaya district in Kenya, Cohen and

⁴ See for example, J. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); R. Law, *Ouidah: A Social History of a West African Slaving “Port,” 1727-1892* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004). S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); D. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Niimi, The Gambia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997); B. Jones, *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); J. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); J. Searing, *God Alone is King: Islam and Emancipation in Senegal: The Wolof Kingdoms of Kajoor and Bawol, 1859-1914* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003).

⁵ Leys & J. Saul, eds., *Namibia’s Liberation Struggle: The Two-edged Sword* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995). P. Katjavivi, *Church and Liberation in Namibia* (Winchester, MA: Pluto Press, 1989). P. Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (London: James Currey, 1988). S. Groth, *Namibia, the Wall of Silence: The Dark Days of the Liberation Struggle* (Wuppertal: P. Hammer, 1995). L. Dobell, *SWAPO’s Struggle for Namibia, 1960-1991: War by Other Means* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 2000). T. Emmett, *Popular Resistance*. Z. Ngavirue, *Political Parties*. M. Kerina, *Namibia*. M. Wallace, *A History of Namibia* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2011). A. DuPisani, *SWA/Namibia: The Politics of Continuity and Change* (Johannesburg: J. Ball, 1985).

Odhiambo understand the local as “something more elusive yet more important than a territory: the way in which people in other places nevertheless identify with Siaya in the ways in which they construct their identities and organize their lives.”⁶ As they point out, there is more to the local than just geographical parameters, and these, along with characters and issues may shift and change over time.

Nevertheless, the local also possesses certain key features such as discursive ties to the land and community or enduring cultural schemas that continually inform shifting politics as local actors interact with one another, governments, and international affairs. Paul Landau terms these enduring forms of knowledge or praxis “historical discursive fragments” and demonstrates how South Africa’s Highveld societies have drawn on such fragments to survive and negotiate increasingly oppressive iterations of the colonial state.⁷ De Certeau has variously named these abiding and highly useful historical discourses as “modes of operation” and “schemata of action.”⁸ As this dissertation illustrates, land restitution claims served as this kind of stable historical fragment or schema that underpinned apartheid-era Herero identity politics, creating an imagined Herero identity in the absence.⁹

The local perspective, which is microhistorical to some degree, is not a small history. Nor is it simply “history from the bottom up,” or *Alltagsgeschichte*, although questions of how everyday people experienced and perceived global and regional events such as apartheid and decolonization are certainly of central import to this investigation. Instead, the local scale of analysis, as defined above, begs questions of

⁶ D. Cohen & A. Odhiambo, *Siaya: The Historical Anthropology of an African Landscape* (Nairobi: East African Publishers, 1989): p. 4

⁷ P. Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa: 1400-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): pp. xii-xiii.

⁸ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1984): p. xi.

⁹ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983). See also P. Stallybrass & A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986): p. 2-3.

understanding the *interaction* among the local, regional, and global. How do the activities of local, everyday people precipitate and influence what happens regionally and globally? In short, to what extent does local history matter?

The top-down perspective of dominant scholarship, which focuses on elite international and regional politics, assumes that apartheid laws and UN resolutions *happened* to Namibian people, were self-evident in meaning, and were experienced uniformly by everyone. Yet, considering local events as fundamentally entangled with and mutually productive of regional and global developments challenges these assertions. As this dissertation will explore in detail, UN resolutions and apartheid laws rarely achieved their stated goals, but they were not without effect. By using the “historical discursive fragment” of land restitution claims, rural Hereros translated these statements and laws into the fabric of everyday politics and redeployed them in ways that the original promulgators never envisioned. Although de Certeau contends that such redeployment is already circumscribed by hegemonic discourse, I argue that local politics can nevertheless profoundly impinge upon, precipitate, and co-produce the global and regional events that comprise this “hegemonic net.”

Although the question of hegemonic power in colonial and apartheid Africa has been posed as being exercised in either “capillary” or “arterial” fashion, the terms of the argument assume that states unilaterally exercised power outwardly or downwardly *onto* an objectified populace. However, in his preface to Joseph and Nugent’s *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, James Scott turns this around by posing the question of the extent to which popular politics and expectations of revolutionary change shape states’ hegemonic projects.¹⁰ This dissertation takes up precisely this question by exploring local politics in Hereroland. The local as an

¹⁰J. Scott, Foreward to Joseph & Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994): p. viii.

analytical tool exposes the nitty-gritty interstices of large-scale processes and reveals how they operate at the quotidian level and how regular people shape them.

This dissertation explores the mutual constitution of rural politics in Hereroland with apartheid and decolonization. First, popular politics in Hereroland, though shaped by apartheid and decolonization, also deeply impacted intra-ethnic identity politics, South African state formation, and the decolonization process coordinated by the UN. Secondly, development, in a material and discursive sense, was the primary medium of interaction or the axis on which the debates turned among rural Herero communities, apartheid administrators, and UN actors. Local apartheid development politics became intimately bound up with questions of sovereignty, hegemony, and the flow and exercise of power. These arguments are, however, situated in a complex and relatively obscure history and historiography to which this dissertation jumps feet-first. Before they can be unpacked, an introduction to Namibia, a portion of its people, its histories, and its historians is required.

Historical and Historiographical Landscapes

Dominated by the Namib and Kalahari Deserts and almost twice the size of California, Namibia's landscape cannot be ignored. Instead of permanent water supplies or rivers, flash flood channels known as *Omurambas* cut into the parched earth and, in a good year, funnel the two to three hundred millimetres of rainwater to the Atlantic and the Okavango Delta. Nevertheless, this harsh landscape possesses diverse flora, fauna, and geography that comprise a riotous spectacle of nature.

Water, or its absence, has shaped Herero history and culture at least since Otjiherero-speaking transhumant pastoralists moved into the Kaokoveld from Angola

in the late seventeenth century.¹¹ Herero society was politically decentralized and structured by dual-descent lineage, gender, generation, and access to cattle.¹² A fluid coterie of Big Men, those wealthy in cattle and people brokered power rather than a formal chiefship system.¹³ Big Men could be born (inherit cattle) or be made (acquire herds through cunning); they attracted dependents through livestock-lending and strategic marriages.¹⁴ However, followers voted with their feet and rustling or a bovine epidemic could leave a Big Man destitute and force him to subordinate himself to a wealthy patron.¹⁵ Social power was unstable, not an enduring right.

The prominence of cattle in Herero culture made water and land key organizing features of Herero society in SWA's unforgiving terrain. The well-known maxim, "wherever a Herero cow sets her foot is Herero land," is a heuristic metric of Herero land tenure conceptions.¹⁶ But it is misleading. Grazing land is useless without water – cattle can only be so far from water and Herero transhumant culture emerged from the need to travel between water sources. Hereros laid claim to land by digging wells or proclaiming rights to springs and salt pans holding rainwater. Herero place names often correspond to water supplies. Okahandja, meaning "the small widening," refers to the confluence of Swakop and Black Nossob *omurambas*; Otjiwarongo, situated near a tributary of the Ugab *omuramba*, means "beautiful place" or "land of the fat cattle." Watering places held deep meanings for Hereros, providing a map of

¹¹ Vansina, J. *How Societies are Born: Governance in West-Central Africa Before 1600*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004): pp. 120-121.

¹² Gibson, G. "Double Descent and its Correlates among the Herero of Ngamiland," in *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 1 (1956): pp.109-139.; Vedder, H. *Native Tribes of South West Africa*. (London: Frank Cass, 1966), 185-187.

¹³ National Archives of Namibia (henceforth NAN), KSW 2/21, 'SWA Commission: Okahandja: Examination of Dr. Heinrich Vedder,' 31 Aug. 1935. Vedder, *Native Tribes*, 157-64. See also W. Werner, *No one will Become Rich: Economy and Society in the Herero Reserves in Namibia, 1915-1946* (Basel" P. Schlettwein, 1998), 28.

¹⁴ National Archives of South Africa (henceforth SAB), BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, State Ethnologist K.F.R. Budack, "Eropfolging – Huis van Tjamuaha/Maherero – Kommentaar," c. 1970.

¹⁵ Werner, 31.

¹⁶ Thomas, E. *The Harmless People* (New York: Random House, 1989).

the landscape at once topographical, historical, and genealogical. For instance, when Senior Headman Hosea Kutako considered relocating Hereros from the reserves to the Kaokoveld in 1945, he desired to examine the region's suitability and especially wished to visit the wells dug by his forefathers and pray to his ancestors there.¹⁷

Around the mid-eighteenth century, water dependence led groups of Otjiherero-speakers to migrate south and east from the Kaokoveld along the *omurambas*. Although Otjiherero –speakers mixed quite frequently with Nama, Damara, and Oorlam peoples, a sense of ethno-linguistic consciousness began to emerge that simultaneously bound them together in opposition to these other groups and created internal differentiations according to clan, locale, and lifestyle. By the mid 1800s, three main groups of Otjiherero-speakers had developed. *Mbanderus* (people of the reeds) migrated first towards Ghanzi in modern Botswana and became somewhat independent of other Herero groups.¹⁸ Wealthier cattle owners migrated south to the central highlands; these clans developed into the modern Herero. Poorer people remained in the Kaokoveld and became known as *Himba* and *Tjimba*, from the Otjiherero word for aardvark, referring to their cattle-poverty and reliance on *veldkos* for sustenance.¹⁹ Colonial rhetoric crystallized these categories, which persist to the present.

German Colonialism, Dislocation, & Public Memory

Herero history during the German colonial period is well-covered ground and will only be discussed here insofar as it informs rural Herero politics during apartheid

¹⁷ NAN SWAA 1209/A158/176 v.1, Officer-In-Charge Ohopoho to CNC, "Visit to the Kaokoveld: Police Zone Herero Headmen," 13 Dec. 1945.

¹⁸ T. Sundermeier, *The Mbanderu*. A. Heywood, trans. (Star Printers: Windhoek, 1986), 5-6.

¹⁹ More specifically, *ondjimbandjimba* means, "we have no large herds of cattle to give us subsistence, but very often have to dig our food out of the ground," Vedder, *Native Tribes*, 156. Werner describes class differentiation within Herero society south of the Kaokoveld in which poorer individuals were also referred to as *Tjimba*. Werner, 30.

– mainly Samuel Maherero’s appointment as Paramount Chief and land alienation during and after the Herero Genocide. By the 1870s, cattle wealth had become concentrated in the hands of a few Big Men: Manasse Tjisisseta at Omaruru, Tjamuaha Maherero at Okahandja, Kambazembi at Waterberg, and Mbanderu leader Kahimemua Nguvauva in the east.²⁰ European colonists described these men and a handful of others as “chiefs.”²¹ Although this designation caused considerable strife as the basis of the controversial idea of Herero “royal houses” during apartheid, German colonizers in the 1880s only saw a well-ordered society in the hands of a small coterie of chiefs.

Maherero signed a “protection” treaty with the German Colonial Governor in October 1885. In exchange for assistance against Nama enemies to the south, imperial Germany began to alienate Herero lands. Maherero’s son, Samuel, who had been educated by German missionaries and was familiar with primogeniture, convinced the new Governor to appoint him as “Paramount Chief” of all Hereros in 1895. His actions sidestepped Maherero’s legitimate heirs, Samuel’s cousin, Nikodemus Kavekunwa, and his uncle, Asser Riarua.²² By skilfully manipulating relations with the Germans and exchanging Herero lands for personal power at the expense of other

²⁰ Henrichsen describes how, after a period of near-complete cattle depletion by Oorlam raiders in the 1850s, by the 1870s, Herero leaders were aggressively pursuing a policy of “re-pastoralization” by extensive raiding. See D. Henrichsen. “Ozongombe Omavita Ozondjemo: The Process of (Re-)Pastoralization Among the Herero in Precolonial Nineteenth Century Central Namibia,” in M. Bollig & J. Gewalt, eds. *People, Cattle, and Land: Transformations of a Pastoral Society in Southwestern Africa* (Cologne: Köppe Verlag, 2000): pp. 149-186.

²¹ Drawing on Henrichsen’s work, Bollig and Gewalt note that many European explorers, missionaries, and German settlers encountered Herero society at the zenith of this re-pastoralization process, in which the stratification of pastoralist society was most pronounced. Bollig & Gewalt, pp. 18.

²² For a detailed account of Herero/German politics and the relations among Samuel Maherero, German Officials, and Samuel’s rivals, see J. Gewalt, *Herero Heroes: A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890-1923* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999), 193-204. See also Sundermeier, 33-47. According to Herero inheritance customs, Maherero’s property, with the exception of the Holy Fire and cattle associated with it, should have passed to the son of Maherero’s eldest brother – Nikodemus Kavikunwa. The Holy Fire and accompanying livestock would pass to the eldest member of the clan, Maherero’s half brother and son of his mother’s sister – Asser Riarua. Both men could also lay claim to Maherero’s status as Big Man, or by this time, his title as Chief. To complicate matters, Samuel had been having an affair with Kavikunwa’s wife.

Herero Big Men, Samuel Maherero contributed significantly to Herero impoverishment and oppression under German rule.²³

A series of misunderstandings and German paranoia caused the Herero-German War to erupt in 1904; the ensuing genocide devastated Herero society.²⁴ Between fifty to eighty per cent of Herero-speakers died from exposure and thirst as German soldiers forced Herero refugees into the northern Kalahari, poisoned water supplies, and condemned survivors to death in concentration camps.²⁵ A few Hereros, including Samuel Maherero, fled to Bechuanaland. When South African troops occupied SWA after defeating German forces in 1915 during the First World War, they found Hereros generally in poor condition and scattered about the territory, but on the move to reoccupy the lands lost to German colonists.²⁶

Historical examinations of the German era focus almost exclusively genocide. Fuelled primarily by the *Historikerstreit* in Germany, debates over the term “genocide,” the relationship between Herero history and the Holocaust, and the contemporary question of Herero reparations preoccupy this scholarship.²⁷ This scholarship focuses on links between the Herero Genocide and the Holocaust such as

²³ Gewalt notes that widespread dissatisfaction with and fear of Samuel Maherero led some Hereros to relocate to the Bechuanaland Protectorate and submit to Tswana Chief Sekgoma. See J. Gewalt, “I was Afraid of Samuel, Therefore I Came to Sekgoma,” in *Journal of African History* 43 (2002): 211-34.

²⁴ See Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 141-191.

²⁵ These figures and the use of the term genocide have been subject to heated debates, particularly as “genocide” only came into common use in the 1970s and is thus applied retrospectively. However, as contemporaries employed the word *vernichtung* or extermination, I find it appropriate for the German practices and policies between 1904 and 1907.

For comprehensive accounts of Herero experiences in the concentration camps, see Olusoga & Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010); G. Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewußtsein*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999); Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 187-190; and Silvester & Gewalt. *Words Cannot be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*. (Boston: Brill, 2003).

²⁶ Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 232.

²⁷ Notes from Tony Emmet Papers and personal conversation with Dag Henrichsen suggest Kerina first suggested the term and reparations during a conversation with Ruth First. For accounts of the Genocide, see D. Olusoga & C. Erichsen, G. Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); I. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

individuals engaged in both events, violent masculinities shared by the *Schutztruppe* and Hitler's SS, and medical experiments based on scientific racism.²⁸ Historians have examined ideas of *Lebensraum* and issues of *Realpolitik* shared between Bismarck's empire and Hitler's Third Reich.²⁹ Scholars have even debated whether the term "concentration camp" is valid in the Herero context as compared to the Holocaust.³⁰ This debate played out most famously in the battle of words between Brigitte Lau and Tilman Dederling.³¹

Herero voices tend to become lost in these thorny debates, although Namibianist scholars have effectively brought Herero histories to the fore through the recent upsurge in Memory Studies and the Herero Genocide's centennial anniversary in 2004. But memory politics immediately became contentious in independent Namibia, which retained the vast majority of its German and South African settler population. The liberators wished to replace all vestiges of the colonial past with their

²⁸ Such direct connections include many father-son relationships. For example, Dr. Heinrich Göring was the Governor of SWA during the Genocide and also the father of Hermann Göring, Nazi leader and Luftwaffe commander. The commandant of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Rudolph Höss was the son of a *Schutztruppe* officer in Tanganyika during the Maji Maji uprising. See Olusoga and Erichsen, 52-53. For the violent masculine culture of the German military, see K. Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) and G. Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung*.

Regarding eugenics, Herero skulls, cleaned by female concentration camp inmates, were sent to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute's Department of Anthropology to Professor Eugen Fischer, whose work on "*Mischlinge*" not only shaped intermarriage laws in SWA but fundamentally influenced Nazi ideology. As a member of the Nazi party, he was directly involved in medical experiments on prisoners and an influential supporter of the Jewish *Volkstod* or "final solution." See H. Schmuhl, *The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics, 1927-45* (New York: Springer, 2008).

²⁹ L. Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001). See also Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*.

³⁰ Hull provides an excellent account of the camps, but terms them "collection camps," arguing that the meaning of concentration camp has altered drastically since the Holocaust. However, as Zimmerer argues, the term concentration camp (*Konzentrationslager*) was not only used in SWA but served the same explicit purposes of extermination through starvation, forced labor, and exposure. Death rates in SWA's camps were also extremely high. See J. Zimmerer, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2004), 66.

³¹ The *Historikerstreit* or "Historian's Quarrel" was a fierce debate in the 1980s among German historians, primarily Jürgen Habermas and Ernst Nolte, over the historical interpretations of the Holocaust and its relationship to other genocides. The Herero Genocide figured prominently in these controversies. See B. Lau, "Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904," in *Mibagus* 2 (1989): 4-8. And T. Dederling, "The German-Herero War of 1904: Revisionism of Genocide or Imaginary Historiography?" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 1 (1993): 80-88.

own heroic icons while keeping white capital and expertise in the country.

Controversies over the *Reiterdenkmal* in downtown Windhoek are a case in point.³²

But these memory politics do not fit a simple racial binary. Namibia's extreme ethno-linguistic diversity makes things much more complicated.

SWAPO, the Ovambo-dominated ruling government party, co-opted the Herero Genocide into the grand narrative of "Namibia's Liberation Struggle," framing it as the first nationalist anti-colonial struggle. Instead of fostering cohesion, this formulation attempts to paper over historic tensions between Hereros and Ovambos and endeavours to channel any Herero reparations money to the state.³³ The centennial anniversary of the Herero Genocide was therefore a particularly fraught event. Scholars have examined how these commemorations and reparations have also transformed the Genocide into an integral but limiting component of modern Herero identity, raising the question of who counts as Herero.³⁴ But these questions of how Hereros use the past to make claims and define themselves in the present are not new,

³² Debates over whether to relocate the monument to the fallen *Schutztruppe* from its central location in Windhoek to the "Heroes Acre" – itself a controversial site – and the question of erecting crosses near the monument have been sources of vocal controversy in Namibia. The monument was not moved, but has been offset by a much larger memorial to Africans killed in the German era that sits just a few feet from the *Reiterdenkmal* and in front of the *Alte Feste*. See J. Gewald, "From the Old Location to Bishop's Hill: The Politics of Urban Planning and Landscape History in Windhoek, Namibia," in Böllig & Bubbenzer, Eds. *African Landscapes: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (New York: Springer, 2008). See also A. Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

³³ Herero hostility towards Ovambos began to emerge in the late 1940s and early 1950s, particularly with Smut's sham referendum regarding annexation for which Ovambos voted overwhelmingly in favour. Ovambo control over the "Liberation Struggle" beginning in the 1960s intensified Herero feelings. Herero leaders argued bitterly that Ovambos had never lost their land or been significantly impacted by white encroachment and therefore had no right to direct the independence struggle. The Ovambo migrant labor system never figured prominently in Herero approximations.

³⁴ See C. Erichsen, *What the Elders Used to Say: Namibian Perspectives on the Last Decade of German Colonial Rule* (Windhoek: Namibian Institute for Democracy, 2008). H. Melber, "The Genocide in 'German South-West Africa' and the Politics of Commemoration – How (not) to Come to Terms with the Past," in Perraudin & Zimmerer, Eds. *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 251-64. D. Schaller, "The Struggle for Genocidal Exclusivity: The Perception of the Murder of the Namibian Herero (1904-8) in the Age of a New International Morality," in Perraudin & Zimmerer, 265-77. J. Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century: The Socio-Legal Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904-1908* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009).

as illustrated in this dissertation. They only appear so because this scholarship links the Genocide directly to contemporary memory politics and overlooks seventy-five years of South African rule. Examining how the idiom of land claims fashioned Herero communities during apartheid elucidates contemporary memory politics.

South African Rule & Herero Land Claims

Herero genocide reparations are the most recent iteration of a long history of Herero land restitution claims resting first on German land alienation and social dislocation during the Genocide and secondly on South Africa's native reserve policies. Hereros interpreted South Africa's invasion of SWA in 1915 as liberation from German rule complete with the expulsion of settlers and a restoration of precolonial society. Hoping to annex SWA, South Africa encouraged this heroic self-image. To establish permanent control over SWA, South African authorities attempted to quell settler demands for Herero labor and assuage Herero agitation for land.³⁵ Determined to prove the beneficence of their rule compared to German brutality, South African administrators repealed German laws severely limiting livestock possession and mandating compulsory labor and ID tags for all Africans over the age of seven.³⁶ But succumbing to settler pressure for labor, officials relied on the South African Masters and Servants Ordinances and the 1913 Native Lands Act to establish native reserves as labour reservoirs.³⁷ Native Affairs officers gathered Hereros under the leadership of Hosea Kutako and Traugott Maherero, and

³⁵ Werner, *No One*, 70.

³⁶ Gewald, *Herero Heroes*, 239-246. Werner, *No one*, 71. This drive to prove South Africa superiority to the international community resulted in the publication of the 1918 Blue Book. See Sylvester & Gewald, 2003.

³⁷ Werner, *No one*, 77.

Mbanderus under Nikanor Hoveka, in temporary reserves until permanent reserves could be established.³⁸

By the mid-1920s, Hereros lived scattered in different reserves across the country, including Nama-speaking Hereros in the far south in Tses and Berseba, the smaller reserves of Ovitoto, Otjimbingue, and Otjohorongo, and the larger reserves that would become “Hereroland”: Aminuis, Waterberg East, Otjituuo, Eastern, and Epukiro (see Map 2).³⁹ Squarely within the Kalahari Desert and generally congruous with the area where most Hereros perished during the Genocide, these reserves lacked water supplies and any other amenities. Hereros refused to relocate.⁴⁰ In a fashion chillingly similar to the Genocide and one that would be repeated in the 1970s, South African administrators forced Hereros into the new reserves by shutting down water supplies in the temporary settlements and forcing them on long waterless treks that killed large numbers of livestock.⁴¹ By the 1950s, nearly one half of SWA’s 35,000 Hereros lived in sixteen different reserves; eighty-six percent of these (approximately 13,000) resided in the five “Hereroland” reserves.⁴²

Direct rule prevailed in the Herero reserves because Herero society was so thoroughly dislocated in the 1920s that there were not enough surviving chiefs to attempt indirect rule and because the South Africans feared tribal re-coalescence under indirect rule would result in a violent rebellion.⁴³ Instead, they established a hierarchy of Native Commissioners subject to the territorial Administrator, who was directly responsible to the South African Prime Minister. Within the reserves, white

³⁸ See NAN NAW 26 “Native Headmen”; NAN NAW 26/30/273 “Scheidthof”; NAN NAW 26/30/508 “Dam at Otjikundu”; and NAN NAW 26/30/122 “Removal of Hereros from Gebiet.” See also Werner, 77-79.

³⁹ Although Aminuis was not contiguous with the rest, it was politically and administratively integrated into Hereroland. The apartheid government also intended to deport the Aminuis population to Hereroland in the 1970s.

⁴⁰ See NAN NAW 26/30/122 “Removal of Hereros from Gebiet.”

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Figures calculated from those given in the *Odendaal Report*, 41.

⁴³ Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 247.

superintendents and welfare officers possessed considerable autonomy while local Herero headmen and advisory boards were expected to represent their communities and carry out Native Affairs' instructions. These headmen and boardmen were more or less powerless and could not collect or levy taxes or tribute, preside over disputes, mete out justice, or make any binding decisions. By framing administrators as "chiefs" and selecting headmen from the "chiefly" clans, Kössler argues, "the image of a 'tribal' policy was thus invoked... [and] reference to 'African' characteristics of government served to legitimate a strongly centralized administrative structure with patriarchal trappings."⁴⁴ Headman Hosea Kutako, who was both Samuel Maherero's regent and appointed by the South Africans, was the only Herero leader with real political clout, but this was due to the sheer force of his personality and masterful statesmanship. His influence proved increasingly formidable.

South African efforts to annex SWA after WWI were only partially successful; the League of Nations awarded South Africa a permanent mandate over SWA in 1919, but the fact that SWA was not legally incorporated into South Africa proved to be a persistent fly in the ointment. As Hereros resisted the migrant labor system through "re-pastoralization" or "self-peasantization," access to grazing land and adequate water became increasingly important.⁴⁵ Disillusioned by South African "liberation," Hereros demanded their lands be restored, a project requiring outside intervention. To this end, they flirted with Garveyism and even Nazi Germany before these land claims reached a fever pitch during apartheid and Hereros pinned their hopes on the UN.⁴⁶ Previous scholars describe these earlier movements in

⁴⁴ R. Kössler, "From Reserve to Homeland: Local Identities and South African Policy in Southern Namibia," in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26, no. 3 (2000): 451.

⁴⁵ Henrichsen, "Ozongombe." See also W. Werner, pp. 57

⁴⁶ W. Werner, pp. 131-2. Werner notes that Hereros were not enthusiastic about the ethnic pluralism implicit in the UNIA, while Emmett points out that the organization's elite and external leadership proved to be fatal flaws. See Emmett, p. 165.

millenarian terms. In contrast, I argue that, while Herero leaders sincerely believed the UN would liberate Namibia, consciously deployed the older quasi-millenarian discourse of land claims to challenge and resist apartheid South Africa's efforts to annex SWA.

Annexation, Apartheid, and “The Liberation Struggle”

South Africa attempted to annex SWA again in 1949 during the transition from the League of Nations to the UN. South Africa had always angled to join the ranks of Western imperial powers, but could never quite achieve this goal. By the end of WWII, Western thinking about empire, nation-states, and conquest had changed, as outlined in the Atlantic Charter. Development was the new watchword and South Africa's racial practices and efforts at territorial aggrandizement were becoming increasingly unfashionable. Moreover, Africans in SWA, particularly Chief Kutako, believed that the Atlantic Charter's promises of self-government applied to SWA. Kutako petitioned the UN against South African rule, which in turn blocked South Africa's efforts and attempted to assume trusteeship over SWA. This sparked a contentious thirty year battle for control over SWA, which the National Party's ascension to power intensified.

The Afrikaner-Nationalist and white supremacist National Party (NP) took control of South Africa's government in 1948, intensifying historical trends in South African governance. A slippery concept even in hindsight, apartheid resulted from nearly three decades of the *Broederbond's* careful planning towards Afrikaner political ascendancy and played on popular fears of African nationalism,

decolonization, and communism emergent in the post-war era.⁴⁷ Promising to maintain the long-standing system of segregation and white dominance, apartheid escalated oppression against Africans as the NP's sought to redeem South Africa from liberal *uitlanders* and fulfil a warped vision of their manifest destiny.

To ensure SWA's incorporation, the apartheid government granted white SW Africans (primarily German and Afrikaans NP supporters) seats in South Africa's parliament in 1950. In 1955, the central government in Pretoria began gradually dismembering and absorbing the semi-autonomous South West Africa Administration (SWAA) by bringing SWA's Division of Native Affairs directly under South Africa's Department of Native Affairs (DNA). Like South Africa, Afrikaners, many of whom were *Broederbond* members, soon replaced SWA's English-speaking public servants.⁴⁸ SWA's Administrators soon passed apartheid laws in SWA including the Natives (Urban Areas) Acts, the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act, and the Bantu Education Act. The government forcibly removed urban African communities to new townships and deported "surplus" people to the "homelands." Combining significant financial investment with administrative red tape would make extracting SWA from South Africa a mammoth task.

The UN continued to push for SWA to be placed under its trusteeship and the NP government, always suspicious of such liberal international bodies, simply refused to cooperate. Yet for all its blustery stubbornness, the NP was not immune to allure of

⁴⁷See B. Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969). I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, *The Broederbond* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979). J. Serfontein, *Brotherhood of Power: An Exposé of the Secret Afrikaner Broederbond* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978). C. Bloomberg & S. Dubow, *Christian Nationalism and the Rise of the Afrikaner Broederbond in South Africa, 1918-48* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990). W. Beinart & S. Dubow, *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1995). D. Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

⁴⁸This is particularly evident in the upper echelons of SWA's administration, the Executive Committee, and especially Native Affairs, which had been an almost exclusively English-speaking preserve. *Broederbond* membership among public servants relevant to this project has been ascertained by cross-referencing Wilkins and Strydom's extensive membership list.

Western acceptance, and it proceeded along a paradoxical path of non-cooperation juxtaposed with massive propaganda and development programs aimed at the international community. South Africa inconsistently contended that its mandate bound it with a perpetual duty or “sacred trust” to rule SWA “in the spirit of the mandate” - as an integral part of South Africa and custodian of indigenous peoples until they should be “capable of self government.”⁴⁹ As Mark Twain’s Connecticut Yankee so astutely noted, the latter phrase implies “that there has been a nation somewhere, sometime or other which *wasn’t* capable of it – wasn’t able to govern itself as some self-appointed specialists were or would be to govern it.”⁵⁰ Various claiming SW Africans were incapable of independence and then launching them towards Bantustans, South Africa averred an indissoluble duty to SWA. Under this logic, SWA was South Africa’s domestic affair and beyond the UN’s authority.

Proclaiming itself the League of Nations’ heir, the UN begged to differ and assumed the power to terminate all mandates and assume trusteeship over those territories. In 1949, the UN asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for an advisory opinion about South Africa’s duty to turn SWA over to the UN Trusteeship Committee (the Fourth Committee). In 1950, the ICJ ruled that the mandate was still in force and that, although South Africa was under no obligation to give up SWA, it could not incorporate the territory. Selectively adhering to this decision regarding UN Trusteeship, South Africa ignored the incorporation injunction and proceeded to annex SWA through development schemes.

In 1961, South Africa embarked on a massive and comprehensive development initiative for SWA - the Odendaal Plan. Predicated on Verwoerd’s

⁴⁹ A. Steward, *South West Africa: The Sacred Trust* (Johannesburg: Da Gama Publications, 1963). See also J. Wellington, *South West Africa and Its Human Issues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

⁵⁰ M. Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 245.

Bantustan policy, it was designed to contain the tide of African nationalism and mimic European development policies in preparation for decolonization. Odendaal was intended to convince the world that South African rule in SWA was beneficial - “model” villages and “demonstration” farms and factories were set up to show off to foreign visitors on carefully guided tours. Secondly, by controlling transport, investing millions of rand worth of South African capital, and exporting technical expertise, Odendaal would irrevocably tie SWA to South Africa. A glance at SWA’s transport system visually illustrates these strangulation tactics by linking SWA’s mineral, commercial, and agricultural areas directly to South Africa or Walvis Bay, its uncontested port.

The Odendaal Plan exacerbated tensions between South Africa and the UN, especially as rapid decolonization around the world and the consequent increase of newly independent member states reinforced the UN’s anti-colonial stance. These new member states took the lead in opposing South Africa - passing resolution after resolution against this colonial holdover.⁵¹ In 1960, Liberia and Ethiopia, as the only African League of Nations members, filed a suit at the ICJ claiming South Africa violated its mandate. Six years later, the ICJ found that these countries did not have the proper legal standing to bring a suit and named the UN as the responsible party. Although the ICJ later found in the UN’s favour as world opinion turned against South Africa, the creeping pace of international bureaucracy gave South Africa ample time to thoroughly entrench itself in SWA.

⁵¹ For detailed accounts of UN activities regarding SWA, see J. Dugard, *The South West Africa/Namibia Dispute: Documents and Scholarly Writings on the Controversy between South Africa and the United Nations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973). R. First, *South West Africa* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963). F. Carroll, *South West Africa and the United Nations* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967). R. Wilde, *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Went Away* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). G. Lawrie, *South West Africa and the United Nations* (Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1965).

African responses to apartheid measures and annexation were varied and fragmented in SWA. More and more African leaders joined Kutako's petitioning campaign and sent representatives to the UN along with Reverend Michael Scott, the radical Anglican cleric who represented the Hereros at the UN and demanded the return of their lands.⁵² Kutako, the "Father of Namibian Nationalism," variously cooperated with and resisted the South African government as it behoved the Herero people but always pressed for Herero land restoration and self-rule. Recognizing changes in international politics in the late 1940s, he began to rely heavily on the younger and highly educated Herero intelligentsia such as Barney Mbuha, Clemens Kapuuo Jr., Zed Ngavirue, and Jariretundu Kozonguizi to act as his intermediaries and petition the UN and other influential organizations.⁵³ He also aided future President Sam Nujoma in his nascent political career.

However, Kutako imagined a federal future for independent SWA and supported chiefship to govern Herero society. To the young Herero intelligentsia, primarily led by Kozonguizi and Ngavirue and highly influenced by socialist theory, Kutako's "tribalism" was an impediment to modernization and progress. They envisioned themselves as the leaders of a highly centralized Namibia. Breaking with Kutako and Kapuuo to form a rival political party in 1959, the SWA National Union (SWANU), Kutako's faction also grew increasingly distant from Nujoma's Marxist-Leninist SWA People's Organization (SWAPO).⁵⁴ Commanding the majority of

⁵² This included Mburumba Kerina, Jariretundu Kozonguizi, Sam Nujoma, and Markus Kooper. See Emmett, pp. 283-331. See also Emmett's transcripts and notes of interviews with Kerina and Kozonguizi at the Basler Afrika Bibliographien (henceforth BAB), which provide detailed insights into the interpersonal relationships and power struggles among these Namibian political elites. See also M. Kerina, *Namibia: The Making of a Nation* (New York: Books in Focus, 1981).

⁵³ For the role of the young intelligentsia in the Herero Chief's Council, see Emmett, 286-299 and Z. Ngavirue, *Political Parties and Interest Groups in South West Africa (Namibia): A Study of a Plural Society* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 1997), 191-214.

⁵⁴ For detailed accounts of the politics surrounding the creation of SWANU and the ensuing split among the Chief's Council, SWANU, and SWAPO, see Emmett, 299-336 and Ngavirue, 243-252. Kozonguizi later left SWANU and returned to the Herero fold as Kapuuo's legal counsel in 1976.

Ovambo support, SWAPO eventually won the UN's recognition as the sole representative of black Namibians and embarked on a guerrilla campaign from Angola in the late sixties. After Namibia's independence in 1990, Nujoma and SWAPO leaders were elected to power, from which they have yet to retreat.⁵⁵

These events form the backbone of Namibian historiography and have become the teleological grand narrative of "the Liberation Struggle."⁵⁶ This literature is broadly divided into that concentrating on resolutions, petitions, and politics at the UN and that examining elite politicians, SWAPO, and the Border War. These foci are mainly the result of Namibian independence in 1990 and limited source material up to that point. Until very recently, scholars could only access UN documents or materials from other bodies like the World Council of Churches. As conducting fieldwork in the region was virtually impossible, scholars could only engage with Namibian political exiles, many of whom later became the political elite. Limited sources and scholarly excitement over independence have combined to paint a picture of Namibian history as a seamless narrative of resistance and nationalism.⁵⁷

Twenty years of independence have cast a more cynical light on "the Liberation Struggle." Accusations and criticism regarding the lack of government transparency, ethnic chauvinism, nepotism, state corruption, and continuing crushing poverty feature regularly in local papers. Scholars have also begun to challenge the dominant narrative. Christian Williams' recent dissertation examining ethnicity in

⁵⁵ Although Nujoma broke the African mold by stepping down after his constitutionally limited two terms, he was replaced by his hand-picked successor, Pohamba, and is still very much involved in SWAPO's activities and the Namibian government.

⁵⁶ Many versions of "the Struggle" go as far back as the turn of the century and co-opt the Herero Genocide and Bondelswarts Rebellion into the narrative of Namibian nationalism.

⁵⁷ C. Leys & J. Saul, *Namibia's Liberation Struggle*. P. Katjavivi, *Church and Liberation in Namibia*. P. Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia*. S. Groth, *Namibia, the Wall of Silence*. L. Dobell, *SWAPO's Struggle for Namibia*; T. Emmett, *Popular Resistance*. Z. Ngavirue, *Political Parties*. M. Kerina, *Namibia*. A. DuPisani, *SWA/Namibia*. M. Wallace, *A History of Namibia*. Wallace's overview of Namibian history, while following the general trajectory of the Liberation Struggle, presents a much more complicated and nuanced account of the post-1950 period than previous nationalist narratives.

exile politics demonstrates that most SWAPO members denounced as “traitors” and subsequently tortured and detained in Angola were overwhelmingly non-Ovambos from southern Namibia.⁵⁸ And, as Richard Rathbone wrote of nationalist historiography in Ghanaian scholarship, “...there was more to Ghana’s recent history than nationalist triumph. There was another story, that of the ways in which the nationalists and nationalist governments sought to control the countryside.”⁵⁹ Likewise, there is another story in Namibia and it too is rooted in the countryside.

Specific Arguments

This other story in SWA, the narrative explored in this dissertation, fleshes out general theoretical questions about the role of local politics in shaping larger global and regional processes by illustrating the more case-specific arguments. Local Herero politics were not merely responding to or passively molded by apartheid and decolonization. Rather, through working out intra-ethnic identity issues, local Herero politics impinged upon the processes of apartheid state formation and contributed to global decolonization at the UN by putting the Atlantic Charter to the test and ensuring that SWA’s prolonged subjugation remained within international purview. These local, regional, and global realms interacted and became entangled through the medium of development. Development, as both a discourse and a set of material practices, was ultimately a contentious negotiation about sovereignty over land, persons, self-determination, and identity.

Development and Identity in Hereroland

⁵⁸ C. Williams, *Exile History: An Ethnography of the SWAPO Camps* (PhD Diss. University of Michigan, 2011).

⁵⁹ R. Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp. viii.

During apartheid, development became an integral component of Herero ethnic identity and a key issue that divided Herero communities. At the most local level, water development became a site where Herero communities resisted the apartheid state, laid claim to Herero identity, and debated local politics. Water development in Hereroland became what Brubaker terms “a group-making project” (as well as an “un-making” project); Herero responses to apartheid water development became quickly translated into an all-or-nothing language of ethnic loyalty and identity.⁶⁰ Development and culturally embedded land claims stemming from the Herero Genocide polarized Otjiherero-speakers into Hereros and Mbanderus and the so-called Big and Small Groups, entangling them in tortuous debates over the meanings and parameters of Herero identity and the right to claim it. The so-called Big Group considered themselves to be “true” Hereros, resisted development, and trusted the UN to bring independence. In contrast, those Hereros who saw opportunity in apartheid development or feared the state were branded as traitors, stripped of Herero identity, called “white-feet,” and lumped into the “Small Group.” For Mbanderus, cooperation with the state was more ambivalent, but cooperating with the Herero Big Group meant losing Mbanderu identity and becoming “Herero.” In Hereroland, reworking land claims and development discourses transformed identity and apartheid politics into water politics. In turn, water politics were identity and apartheid politics.

Despite widespread literature examining the creation and construction of ethnicity in Africa, consolidated and prefabricated ethnic categories continue to persist in scholarship and African politics.⁶¹ Scholarly interest in (ethnic) nationalism

⁶⁰ R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004): p. 13.

⁶¹ See for example, the essays in L. Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). B. Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and Their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800-1950* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998). T. Spear & R.

has encouraged the tendency to use ethnic categories as “fundamental units of social analysis” and treat them as “internally homogenous, externally bounded, or even unitary actors with common purposes.”⁶² Reinhart Kössler’s work on intra-communal conflict in Berseba Reserve demonstrates how ethnic identities are “processes rather than fixed and solid states’ and simultaneously ‘instrument(s) of division, wielded or engineered by the state, a stubborn block resisting state control, [and] a rallying point for resistance against the state.”⁶³ Local politics surrounding apartheid water development reveal the ways that colonial definitions continued to influence Herero-speakers ethnic identities as well as how popular politics encouraged locally-rooted and shifting identities that defy colonial parameters.

That these ethnic identity debates did not overstep the bounds of colonial categories demonstrates the depth to which these compartmentalizations penetrated society. Herero ethnic identity politics did not question the categories of Herero and Mbanderu, but attempted to redefine what they meant in light of local concerns and contemporary values in order to discern who counted as a “true” member. However, water development politics also reveal the mutability and versatility of Herero ethnic identities, which were more than just a label. Ethnic identity became a way of seeing and engaging with the world that evolved in conjunction with the international and regional politics of making Hereroland.

Although many Namibianist scholars and contemporary Namibian politicians viewed community and intra-ethnic identity politics as a mere hindrance to national unity, this dissertation challenges the supposed provincialism of parochial affairs.

Waller, *Being Masaai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (London: James Currey, 1993). B. Berman, et. al. *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa* (London: James Currey, 2003). P. Yeros, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa: Constructivist Reflections and Contemporary Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1999). J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁶² R. Brubaker, p. 8.

⁶³ R. Kössler, ‘The Berseba Captaincy after 1938: Collective Identity and Conflict in a Traditional Community in Southern Namibia’, *Africa Spectrum*, 36, 3, (2001), p. 347- 48.

Local politics shed new light on the everyday struggles to survive in apartheid SWA. These struggles were not characterized by cut and dry racial or ethnic dualisms, but were complicated affairs in which the lines were at once blurry and firmly drawn. Because water politics, land claims, and intra-ethnic identity politics were inextricably integrated with apartheid policies and international tensions, local questions became regionally and globally important.

Local Politics and Apartheid State Formation

Hereroland's political ecology illustrates the ways in which South African government officials refitted modern liberal development discourses to the project of racial subjugation and dominance in the southern African region. At the local level, South African officials attempted to implement apartheid Bantustan policies in Hereroland by creating easily controlled chiefs or "traditional authorities." They attempted to achieve this by manipulating intra-Herero identity politics, promising water development to cooperative factions and denying it to the resistant majority. However, the barrage of Herero petitions to the UN hampered the state's ability to consolidate control over SWA. In order to justify its internationally contested presence in SWA, South Africa framed apartheid intervention as "development" in preparation for "independence."

Although decolonization seems so inexorable in hindsight, the question of whether it would prevail over the rapidly expanding apartheid state in SWA and South Africa was far from clear. Examining local politics and apartheid development schemes in Hereroland provides a window into the process of apartheid state formation, of how the state developed, expanded, and responded to challenges from local people and the international community. Local politics in Hereroland give us a

sense of the apartheid state's long-term and ideological objectives as well as its variability and responsiveness to changing circumstances. The apartheid state was not an unknowable, opaque monolith, but a constantly changing web of people, events, and power relations that was not only enmeshed in local and global political networks, but sought to act as a gatekeeper between the local and global. By considering how rural Herero leaders forged direct connections with the UN and how those connections seriously threatened state administrators and forced them to change tactics frequently, this dissertation illustrates the central influence of local politics in shaping states, their policies, their projects, and their international relations.

The nature of the apartheid state has been a subject of great debate among scholars. It often appears as a sort of modern, real incarnation of Tolkien's Mordor, solely concerned with establishing an oppressive racial dominance within and avoiding contact with the outside world, lest the danger of majority rule come to South Africa. While this reputation was certainly well-deserved, as government censorship and severely restricted mobility attest, the apartheid state should not be understood as strictly insular. Nevertheless, apartheid historiography tends to analyze South Africa more or less in isolation. For example, the questions of whether there was a "grand plan" for apartheid or whether it was a series of responses to fluctuating social, political, and economic imperatives is focused on factors within South Africa.⁶⁴ This perspective was most recently manifested in Cooper and Burbank's argument that South Africa was *not* an empire and that the repressive racial policies of

⁶⁴ B. Bunting, *South African Reich*. D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Adrian Guelke argues that while Posel is right to protest the idea of a preconceived plan, Verwoerd did indeed possess a coherent, ambitious, and radical vision, but one which he modified as needed. Vorster continued these policies in the decade after Verwoerd's death. A. Guelke, *Rethinking the Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 104.

apartheid were nationally bound, rather than internationally or imperially oriented.⁶⁵ Focusing solely on South Africa naturalizes this picture of the apartheid state as an inwardly-focused entity unto itself. Instead, as Crais argues, focusing on the ways in which the relationship between state administrators and state subjects shapes the nature of everyday domination provides a much more nuanced understanding of southern African history than simply focusing on what the state does and its subjects' reactions.⁶⁶

Taking SWA into consideration, particularly as the apartheid government adamantly insisted that SWA *was* South Africa, sheds new light on these questions and challenges the boundaries of this insular historiography. The apartheid state was not a self-contained and inwardly oriented state; it was highly concerned with external factors and extremely ambitious. The apartheid state was historically forged through a complex and often violent colonial history. The seeds of Afrikaner nationalism were sewn on the cusp of European imperial twilight and the dawn of the nation-state, which conspired to foster the drive for an Afrikaans state and territorial or influential expansion across southern Africa. On the one hand, the Afrikaans cultural ethos of *bloed en grond* influenced these long-term and somewhat vague objectives for "Afrikanerdom."⁶⁷ On the other hand, there was not a clear consensus of what

⁶⁵ J. Burbank & F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011): p. 427.

⁶⁶ C. Crais, *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003). Cooper makes a similar argument for exploring the political imaginations and interactions of rulers and ruled to push beyond the binary categories characteristic of colonial studies. See F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

⁶⁷ Blood and ground – Afrikaans newspapers in SWA repeatedly referred to Afrikaners having spilt their blood for SWA. Giliomee provides an excellent account of both the continuity and change characteristic of twentieth century Afrikaans culture and political thought in chapters 9 – 13 of *The Afrikaners: A Biography of a People* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003). Operating from a Marxist perspective, O'Meara also argues that "Afrikanerdom" was not a unified or monolithic concept, but considers Afrikaner nationalism as the product of differentiated and changing class forces. D. O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital, and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1983), pp. 11-17. However, Norval

Afrikanerdom should look like or how it should be achieved – these definitions changed with time and circumstance.⁶⁸ SWA was intended to serve as a bridge between an Afrikaans national state and its desired hegemony in southern Africa as well as a place in which to showcase the benefits of apartheid development to an increasingly hostile international community. For all of its well-deserved reputation of rigidity, the apartheid state was remarkably flexible, willing to outwardly reinvent itself to fit changing circumstances. However, because South Africa could not exercise unquestionably sovereign control over SWA, the territory became a vulnerable Achilles heel. Local politics in Hereroland clarify bureaucratic logic as the state sought to balance carrying out its long-term and ideological objectives with mediating international opinion and dealing with local challenges.

How did the apartheid government achieve rule in SWA? Violence was unquestionably a prominent weapon in the state arsenal, but international scrutiny limited its use somewhat in SWA. Overt and large-scale violence was relatively rare until the 1970s. Instead, the apartheid state emerged in SWA through a quieter kind of everyday violence characterized by bribery, cajolery, propaganda, denial, threats, intimidation, interference, surveillance, rumor-mongering, and “development” at the local level. The state emerged through daily interactions in which these kinds of

contends that both O’Meara and Posel reproduce totalizing categories such as Afrikanerdom and apartheid by reducing them to class and influx control, respectively. A. Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse* (New York: Verso, 1996): pp. 58. In his examination of twentieth century South Africa, Beinart frames apartheid’s apparent contradictions by considering the interwar era, in which more concrete NP objectives were born, as “a time of extremes.” See W. Beinart, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): pp. 137.

⁶⁸ *Verkrampste* (narrow) refers to those NP adherents who supported total white domination and African subservience. They did not support the homeland policy and viewed it as suspiciously liberal. *Verligte* (enlightened) NP members attempted to operate within a changing global milieu by appearing to conform to civil rights and decolonization trends and attempting to stave off dangerous African nationalism through homeland policies. However, the violence accompanying these policies makes any suggestion of “enlightenment” ludicrous. Nevertheless, the seriousness of the split reflects the lack of a coherent “grand plan” or even common definition of apartheid objectives.

violence became ordinary and mundane.⁶⁹ Exploring how local politics in Hereroland shaped the apartheid state further demonstrates that community-government relations were not characterized by large-scale revolt, as James Scott has illustrated in Malaysia.⁷⁰ Instead, rural Herero communities responded to and interpreted state policies within the context of their daily lives and enduring historical schema. Generalized Herero opposition to the apartheid government was hardly a “hidden transcript” and the 1959 Windhoek Massacre is the only instance of revolt in which Hereros participated in significant numbers. Herero resistance, in both rural and urban contexts, typically assumed more subtle forms such as petitioning the UN, non-compliance with local administrators, foot-dragging, and sabotaging “development” projects. Though subtle, these tactics were extremely effective on the ground in shaping policy implementation and particularly at disrupting South Africa’s international relations.

Going Global

While local Herero politics and the League of Nations had little to do with one another, the United Nations was another matter. Herero leaders, particularly Chief Kutako, were not only politically astute; they were also well aware of global politics. They used this knowledge to their fullest advantage in dealing with the apartheid state and in turn influenced international debates about decolonization and self-determination. Herero leaders caused SWA to be one of the first tests of the UN’s authority and the extent to which it would uphold the Atlantic Charter – especially the clauses addressing no territorial aggrandizement, no territorial changes against the

⁶⁹ V. Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁷⁰ J. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

wishes of the people, and self-government to those deprived of it. Herero responses to South African efforts to annex SWA in 1945 opened the door making local Herero politics an international matter.

When Chief Kutako first petitioned the UN in 1945 to object to South African annexation, he forced the UN to confront the question of whether or not and how it would uphold its stated ideals. Kutako was one of the first colonized persons to petition the United Nations, an act that South Africa challenged on the grounds that only governments, not individuals, could address the UN. The UN's decision to receive Herero petitions opened the door for other colonized peoples to petition that body for independence. The ability of colonized peoples to speak directly to their condition reached a new level when the UN granted hearings to Namibians in 1956.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the UN's precise power to intervene in colonial situations was unclear. As the UN had been organized to mediate international relations, the question of whether SWA as a League of Nations mandate should be considered as an international issue or South Africa's domestic affair became hotly disputed. This difference of opinion raised the question of the extent to which the UN could intervene in human rights abuses under apartheid. Because of this uncertainty and the degree of attention the UN paid to SWA, Kutako and other Herero leaders threatened to take (and often did) any South African oppression or interference in Herero politics to the UN. As this dissertation illustrates, this was a very effective threat in mediating apartheid policy implementation in Hereroland and SWA. Herero petitioning ensured continued international attention on South African activities in SWA and forced the government to embark on a contradictory and difficult path of international appeasement and apartheid. Herero petitions kept the issues of apartheid and decolonization at the forefront of international affairs,

especially in the fifties and sixties, and prompted debates about the place of empires in the age of nation-states and the relationship between the state and nation in newly or soon to be independent plural societies. South Africa sought to navigate these questions to its benefit under the auspices of “separate development.”

Development and Debates over Sovereignty

Development, as a discourse and as a material activity, served as the medium through which local Herero politics, the apartheid state, and the UN interacted and became enmeshed. It also became a critical mode for actors in these three spheres to debate and negotiate questions of sovereignty. Development, in SWA, meant water. Every development scheme, from roads to schools to hospitals required water and before these kinds of projects could even be contemplated. While water development was a very real and serious problem in Hereroland, debates over water and land claims were rarely just about water and land. As Pauline Peters and Jacob Tropp have demonstrated in Botswana and South Africa respectively, negotiations over natural resource allocation became intertwined with the entire functioning of the local social fabric and shaped the nature of colonial rule for both colonizer and colonized.⁷¹ Similarly, in rural Hereroland, water and land were loaded with debates about identity, the ICJ, chiefship, and questions of legitimate authority and sovereignty.

Within Hereroland, water development became a measuring stick for who was or was not a Herero or Mbanderu and who could speak and make decisions for Hereros. “True” Hereros rejected apartheid water development while “true”

⁷¹ P. Peters, *Dividing the Commons: Politics, Policy, and Culture in Botswana* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994). J. Tropp, *Natures of Colonial Change: Environmental Relations in the Making of the Transkei* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006). See also N. Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). R. Edgecombe, *South Africa's Environmental History: Cases and Comparisons* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003). W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment, 1770-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Mbanderus accepted it; to act otherwise made a person a traitor. The Herero Big Group disciplined the “disloyal” Small Group and attempted to intimidate them into acquiescence by forcibly denying them access to water and, in so doing, threatened their livestock and livelihoods. The Mbanderu Big and Small Groups fought openly, and sometimes came to blows, over access to water supplies. While actual water access was a part of these disputes, they were about much more – who were the legitimate Herero and Mbanderu Paramount Chiefs? Were Mbanderus actually Hereros? What were the stakes of cooperating with the apartheid government? How did Herero land claims shape their expectations of decolonization?

Water development served as the crux of Herero negotiations with the apartheid state. Whereas some factions viewed it, along with chiefship, as a benefit of cooperating with the government, which was too strong to challenge anyhow, Big Group leaders understood water development as a web of power from which it would be increasingly difficult to escape. Accepting water development was, in their opinion, acquiescing to domination and the final alienation of their lands, their rights, and their ability to govern themselves. Although the Big Group would negotiate its stance as circumstances in SWA changed during the 1970s, their anti-development position generally underpinned their attitude toward the apartheid government.

Water development was a dangerously subtle dimension or technology of apartheid power that complemented and mutually supported their better known strategies of patent violence and excessive legislation. Scholars have recently begun to demonstrate how conservationist and development discourses frequently had little to do with conservation and everything to do with masking a host of other goals such

as land appropriation or controlling urbanization.⁷² On the ground, water development permitted the apartheid government to control and combat Herero anti-apartheid activity by denying water access to discipline defiant communities, lavishing water supplies on cooperative neighbourhoods, and encouraging intra-ethnic factionalism.

In addition to being a disciplinary and coercive tool, water development provided the state with considerable power to manage and control the populace. As Scott contends for high-modernist states, a category which easily encompasses apartheid South Africa, development improved the state's surveillance capabilities and its ability to exercise control over its subjects.⁷³ Ferguson describes this kind of development as an "interpretive grid through which the impoverished regions of the world are known...[and]...a host of everyday observations are rendered intelligible and meaningful."⁷⁴ In rural Hereroland, water development and agricultural projects like fencing water holes and grazing or inoculation camps did not serve to "repair the veld" by preventing overstocking, but instead to control Herero society. Fenced water holes and camps not only provided the state with a spatial map of Herero movements, but also limited Herero economic reliance on ranching in order to force "idle natives" into the migrant labor force. Moreover, by controlling water access the apartheid state could bring a recalcitrant community to its knees or bribe local leaders into cooperation.

Development functioned as a key discursive tool for the apartheid state to negotiate and shore up its fraying international relations. It rhetorically solved the

⁷² See W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservationism in South Africa*. F. Mackenzie, *Land, Ecology, and Resistance in Kenya, 1880-1952* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998). D. Anderson, "Depression, Dust Bowl, Demography, and Drought: The Colonial State and Soil Conservation in East Africa During the 1930s," in *African Affairs* 83 (1984): 321-43.

⁷³ J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁷⁴ J. Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990): p. viii.

tension between South African efforts to gain international approval for annexing SWA and implementing apartheid in the territory; such approval was not forthcoming given growing discourses of development and decolonization. Apartheid development, slated to address everything from soup to nuts, depended on water access and South African officials framed it as a responsible answer to nearly three decades of Herero pleas for water as well as an essential component for future “self-determination” in SWA’s Bantustans. Development discourse allowed the government to place apartheid Bantustans within the context of responsible decolonization, such as that undertaken by Britain and France, while quietly strengthening its ties to SWA and preparing for even further expansion. Although the international move away from territorial empire hampered South African efforts in SWA, apartheid leaders were not blind. Following the USSR and USA, they quickly translated development into a neo-colonial tool through which they could export dominance across southern Africa in the form of technical expertise, transport, and aid. SWA became the proving ground and jumping off point for this more ambitious expansion plan.

By constructing development as a precursor to “independence” and “self-government,” the apartheid government not only attempted to mask the everyday violence characteristic of its propagation, but intended development to fail in its stated objectives. In classic Fergusonian formulation, apartheid development was instead designed to ensure annexation, continued South African rule, and neo-imperial expansion. This question of “failure” illuminates the ways in which the state exercised and was forced to negotiate power. For South Africa to achieve its dual objectives of consolidating and enlarging its influence in southern Africa while reconciling with the UN, the state needed to uncouple the local and global and act as a mediator or filter

between these spheres. Development was to be the means of this gate-keeping. But the apartheid government's inability to maintain, or even achieve, this separation meant that the state was never sure-footed in exercising power through development as Ferguson's model suggests. Instead, development ultimately failed to entrench South African power not just because it failed adequately to encompass local considerations as Scott argues, but because it was unable to break the links between local and global constituencies.⁷⁵

Development became the proverbial line in sand dividing communities from one another, dividing certain factions of Herero society and the apartheid state, and the government from the United Nations and international community. James Smith has argued for modern Kenya that tensions in local development are "related to competing understandings of temporal unfolding, and that different groups of people work to assert their control, or sovereignty, over this unfolding and in the process try to insinuate themselves in history."⁷⁶ Smith contends that development is neither unidirectional nor universally valid over time and space.⁷⁷ Rather, as the case of SWA demonstrates, the various lines of debate surrounding development blurred and shifted like sand in the wind but remained firm and real at the same time. Daring one another to cross these lines demarcated by development, Herero communities debated the parameters of ethnic identity and legitimate authority. Herero leaders and apartheid administrators vied to gain control of the future of Hereroland and SWA, a struggle fought out over bore holes on the ground and petitions at the UN.

Finally, the apartheid government challenged the UN's authority and its ability to take meaningful action by crossing the line repeatedly and wasting no time

⁷⁵ Scott argues that large-scale improvement or betterment schemes ultimately fail because high modernist states destroy local knowledge or *métis* in their drive to make society "legible."

⁷⁶ J. Smith, *Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): p. 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

implementing apartheid development projects. These debates over development, these lines drawn in the sand, so meaningless and meaningful, became thoroughly entangled with arguments over sovereignty in SWA: the right to determine the future of the territory, her people, southern Africa, the relationship between the developed and developing worlds, and the rights of nation-states versus the will of the “global community.”

SOURCES AND ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

This dissertation is based on eighteen months of comprehensive archival and oral research in Europe and Africa. In Namibia and South Africa, I have been fortunate to be one of the first people to use internal apartheid state documents dating to 1980, including un-catalogued documents of the Odendaal Commission and subsequent Liaison Committees. While state documents certainly provide a biased interpretation of events in Hereroland and must be read against the grain, they are also extremely candid. This ingenuousness not only provides greater insight into the situation on the ground than more official documents reveal, it also sheds light on the process and manner in which official discourse and policies were constructed, framed, and carried out. As well, these fairly unreserved documents help get us around the problem of an opaque unknowable state that Ivan Evans describes as “a black box.”⁷⁸ We get to know the personalities, insecurities, and idiosyncrasies of the men (women could generally only aspire to be stenographers within the apartheid government) who comprised the state. State documents also provide critical information about the objectives of development plans and the ways in which they were strategically carried out (or not). Namibian and South African archival sources also include copies of

⁷⁸ I. Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997): p. 17.

Herero petitions to the UN, photographs, climate and geological surveys, and Namibian newspapers.

Research at non-state European archives provided an important counterbalance to the official perspective prevailing in African national repositories. At the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, a private archive in Basel, Switzerland specializing in Namibia, I examined Tony Emmett's transcripts of his extensive interviews with Jariretundu Kozonguizi and Mburumba Kerina regarding elite politics in SWA and the UN involving SWANU, SWAPO, and NUDO. I also examined Theo Sundermeier's papers including Mbanderu oral histories and Herero praise poetry. BAB also houses a collection of Namibian pop culture materials including posters, badges, and pamphlets as well as private photograph collections that I was able to use. In Wuppertal, Germany I visited the Rhenish Mission Archive in which missionary letters and reports provided rich material regarding rural Herero life during the first years of South African rule as well as the Herero exodus from the Rhenish Mission in the 1950s. The mission archive also possesses the letters and papers of a leading anti-apartheid activist in SWA, Siegfried Groth, and the World Council of Churches.

In order to gain an understanding of Herero experiences of apartheid and perspectives on the past, I collected over a hundred hours of oral history from Herero people across southern Africa. These interviews provided detailed information about local Herero politics, intra-ethnic tensions that still persist today, and they gave me a vivid idea of what apartheid looked like in rural SWA. Because of gender dynamics in Herero culture, most of the people I interviewed were elderly women. These women were generally the most vulnerable to apartheid homeland removals. Their stories provide an important counterpoint to what is otherwise an overwhelmingly masculine

history. Taken as a whole, this diverse body of source material yields a complex and detailed picture of the creation of Hereroland.

This dissertation is organized around a series of local vignettes in overlapping chronological order from 1950 to 1980. The first two chapters cover the 1950s and the period in which the apartheid government attempted to establish itself and no one quite knew the United Nations' precise capabilities. The first chapter examines disputes between Chief Hosea Kutako and Bantu Affairs officials over a couple of remote boreholes in the Aminius Corridor. This chapter explores the initial and unclear relationship among Herero leaders, the UN, and the apartheid state and early battles between apartheid administrators and rural Hereros over water control and development in the 1950s. It also introduces developing tensions between Hereros and Mbanderus in rural areas. The second chapter explores this early intra-ethnic friction in detail as it blossomed in Epukiro reserve over ethnic identity, chiefship, and water development in the fifties. This chapter sets the stage for intense ethnic politics within and between Herero and Mbanderu communities in rural SWA during the sixties and seventies and state efforts to interfere in and manipulate these politics.

The next three chapters examine the intense politics of the 1960s. The third chapter explores the inner-workings of the Odendaal Commission and its efforts to tie SWA to South Africa and begin infiltrating the region through an extensive hydro-electric dam and canal system originating in Angola and serving SWA's mining centers and white cities. The fourth and fifth chapters focus on the division of Herero and Mbanderu society into the Big and Small Groups over development issues, international politics, and questions of legitimate chiefship. Chapter four explores how a local succession dispute in Waterberg East Reserve led to the polarization of Herero society and realignments between Herero and Mbanderu factions. Chapter five

explores the contentious debates over Mbanderu chiefship and apartheid administrators' efforts to control these politics using water development.

The final two chapters bring local concerns and larger developments together by examining the paradox of "reconciliation," characterized by the conflicted Turnhalle Alliance, relative cooperation between Herero leaders and the apartheid government, and South Africa's efforts to carry out homeland policies amid the fever-pitch of anti-apartheid sentiment. Focusing on the late 1960s through late 1970s, Chapter Six explores how apartheid administrators attempted to convince Herero communities to relocate voluntarily to Hereroland with promises of abundant water and grazing but systematically forced Hereros into the homeland by shutting off water supplies when fanciful tales failed. This chapter considers how Hereros from other regions were received by homeland dwellers and new questions of identity emerged. Chapter Seven examines Herero leaders' reorientation towards cooperating with the apartheid government amid changing relations with the UN and other political groups in SWA. This chapter investigates the ways in which this shift impacted community and ethnic-identity politics as well as the ways in which events in the late 1970s have continued to shape Namibian politics into the present.

PART I – THE 1950S

Immediately following WWII, Prime Minister Smuts, a founding member of the United Nations and author of the Preamble to its Charter, attempted to legally incorporate SWA into South Africa. However, The Atlantic Charter, the UN's foundational document, prohibited territorial aggrandizement and territorial changes made against the inhabitants' wishes while guaranteeing self-government to those so deprived. As the world began to move increasingly away from outright imperialism towards a discourse of protecting and encouraging human rights and progress for all peoples centered on the nation-state, principles outlined in Smuts's Preamble, South Africa's request was jarringly anachronistic and out of place.

The UN accordingly denied South Africa's annexation petition unless Smuts could prove that SWA's African populations desired incorporation. To this end, Smuts conducted a sham referendum in April 1946, sending out pre-worded statements supporting incorporation to a handful of "chiefs" to sign on behalf of their "tribes." The government's generally good relationship with the Ovambo chiefs, whose constituencies comprised over half of SWA's African population, assured Smuts majority support by consulting just a few individuals. Nevertheless, the referendum alarmed Herero leaders who were aware of the Atlantic Charter and influenced by growing demands for decolonization throughout the continent. Herero Paramount Chief and Aminuis Reserve Headman, Hosea Kutako, petitioned the UN against the referendum and incorporation in 1946. As one of the first colonized peoples to consult this body, Kutako set off a flood of petitions demanding independence that would pour in from the global south over the next fifty years. These requests would lead the UN to seriously push for global decolonization in the

1960s. Kutako's petitioning campaign was partially successful – Herero opposition was essential to preventing SWA's annexation, but South Africa's mandate over SWA remained in force.

Although the UN's refutation of the referendum seemed to have restored the status quo, the National Party's accession to power in 1948 and its efforts to implement apartheid policies complicated South Africa's international relations over SWA. Although South Africa's racial policies were becoming objectionable, such sentiments had not vanished from the West. South Africa justified itself by referencing the US's persistent Jim Crow laws and suppression of the burgeoning Civil Rights movement. Like Smuts, the NP also wished to annex SWA in order to prove equal to the West of a bygone era, fulfil the Afrikaner nationalist ethos of manifest destiny, and create a protective buffer from and sphere of influence in "black Africa."

The new Prime Minister, D.F. Malan, refused to apply for UN approval for incorporation and pressed ahead with annexation. He extended apartheid laws to the territory, granted seats in South Africa's parliament to white SW Africans, and deleted all references to the mandate in SWA's constitution. Although the UN demanded South Africa turn over SWA to UN trusteeship and appealed to the ICJ to support their position, the ICJ's 1950 advisory opinion contended that South Africa was under no obligation to relinquish control over SWA and that its mandate remained valid. This was a victory for the apartheid government, though in the same opinion the ICJ denied South Africa's right to change SWA's territorial status. This was Chief Kutako's victory.

Over the course of the decade, the UN and South Africa embarked on a fraught series of ultimately futile negotiations over SWA. South Africa

simultaneously pursued SWA's annexation via apartheid policy implementation. The apartheid government's first serious move towards outright takeover occurred in 1955 when its Department of Native Affairs (DNA) assumed direct control over SWA's semi-autonomous Native Affairs Division. During the 1950s, the DNA became particularly highly organized under Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd. Although SWA's remote reserves were hardly a DNA priority in the 1950s, Herero anti-South African agitation and petitioning campaigns to the UN caused government officials at the highest echelons to become directly involved in local politics. DNA officers attempted to quell resistance and implement apartheid policies by manipulating local politics to encourage ethnic factionalism. As the DNA became more involved in everyday affairs, rural Hereros began to mobilize against the government by linking local politics to international protest to the UN through land restitution claims.

Chief Kutako began to organize Herero resistance to the South African state by incorporating educated Herero youths, such as Clemens Kapuuo, to serve on his Chief's Council to write petitions to the UN and to translate newspapers. In 1949, Kutako empowered Reverend Michael Scott to represent Herero land claims at the UN. Scott made SWA's situation known to the world by arguing that Hereros had historical rights to lands now occupied by white settlers, which would be forever lost if incorporation succeeded. Such a course of events would directly contradict the Atlantic Charter. South Africa objected to Herero petitions and Michael Scott's testimony on the grounds that only sovereign nation states had the right to approach the UN, not private individuals. A 1956 ICJ advisory opinion on SWA gave the UN the right to receive these petitions and grant oral hearings to petitioners. In 1957, Kutako responded by sending Mburumba Kerina and Jariretundu Kozonguizi to speak before the UN regarding Herero land claims and the status of SWA.

As the next two chapters demonstrate, Hereros coupled this international resistance with on-the-ground action. Physical development (or a lack thereof) was a key dimension of apartheid policy and, because all development in SWA depended on water access, water soon became a contentious political arena. These chapters illustrate the ways in which water became a prime weapon for Hereros to hamper the state, for the state to retaliate against Hereros and facilitate annexation, and for Hereros to debate long-standing questions of ethnic identity in the 1950s.

CHAPTER 1: THE AMINUIS CORRIDOR, 1955-1960

The Aminuis Corridor was a narrow ribbon of land in the Kalahari sandwiched between Aminuis Native Reserve and SWA's border with the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Both Aminuis Hereros and neighboring white settlers wished to use the Corridor for additional grazing and water supplies. An intense drought in the 1950s transformed the Corridor into the object of fierce competition between these groups and led to the first battles between rural Hereros and the apartheid state. Aminuis Hereros had desired the Corridor since the 1920s, and in 1952 they asked the SWA Administration (SWAA) Division of Native Affairs to add it to the reserve. However, the SWAA primarily represented white colonists and their interests and simultaneously proposed to settle "European" farmers in the Corridor.⁷⁹ This proposal inflamed Herero opposition to South African rule and led Herero leaders to take their grievances over the Corridor to the UN.

As the controversy quickly transcended local frictions, the Corridor came to embody much larger contestations over the definitions and limits of South African power in SWA. By examining how and why this obscure swath of land became so contentious, this chapter explores how local struggles over scarce resources became the loci through which broader tensions converged and ignited. Although disputes over the Corridor remained locally rooted, they became tightly entwined with the regional and global politics of apartheid and decolonization. These skirmishes over

⁷⁹ The SWAA was a semi-autonomous government presided over by an Administrator General, who was selected and closely monitored by the South African Prime Minister. The franchise was extended to white colonists who were permitted to elect certain officials and vote on certain legislation. The SWAA was comprised of a variety of divisions such as Roads, Lands, Waterways, and, until 1955, Native Affairs. Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, its administrative divisions were systematically eroded and placed under direct South African control.

land, water, and sovereignty were simultaneously fought on local and international stages.

The Aminuis Corridor demonstrates the centrality of local Herero politics to South African state formation and policy implementation as well as international relations and decolonization debates. The Corridor became a battleground for debating SWA's international status and the parameters of apartheid policies within the territory.⁸⁰ It begged the question of the UN's power to intervene in SWA while testing South Africa's ability to unrestrictedly implement its policies in the territory. The Aminuis Corridor not only brought regional and global politics into the realm of local tension and action, but also placed very rural politics at the center of executive processes surrounding apartheid and decolonization taking place in New York and Pretoria. Politics in Aminuis Reserve demonstrate rural Hereros' ability to harness local knowledge with international power in order to evade and thwart the government. The Corridor Affair simultaneously begins to sketch the state's tenacity and the UN's limits.

Given SWA's overwhelmingly rural environment, apartheid policies and politics pivoted on controlling land and water access. The Corridor became a key space in which the South African government aimed to solve the tension between controlling black opposition and meeting the needs of white constituents on one hand and gaining the UN's approval to annex SWA on the other. By drilling illegal boreholes and petitioning the UN over the Corridor, rural Herero leaders challenged

⁸⁰ SWA was a German colony from 1884-1915. The League of Nations permanently mandated the territory to South Africa in 1919. The territory's status and the validity of the mandate became a highly contentious debate with the League's dissolution and the establishment of the United Nations. South Africa claimed the right to annex the territory without UN interference while the UN denied South Africa's right to rule SWA. These issues were debated in the International Court of Justice from the late 1950s through the 1980s, as will be seen throughout this dissertation. For detailed information regarding events at the UN and ICJ, see DuPisani, *SWA/Namibia*. I. Goldblatt, *The Conflict between the United Nations and the Union of South Africa in Regard to South West Africa*. (Windhoek: Goldblatt, 1961).

the legitimacy of South African rule and claimed sovereignty over their lives, lands, and livelihoods. Commanding access to the Corridor became an important way for the apartheid state to monitor and discipline Aminuis Hereros while making a claim to responsible governance through “development.”⁸¹ Negotiations over water control in the Aminuis Corridor reveal the subtle kinds of manipulation and retaliation that underpinned everyday interactions between administrators and Herero subjects.

Herero resistance to apartheid incursions occurred within these day to day relationships, largely through passive-aggressive means. Yet, rural Herero leaders’ reliance on petitioning the UN added a more sophisticated layer to this resistance strategy that was neither hidden nor an open insurrection. This relationship with the UN proved critically important to Herero relations with the apartheid state, but in ways Hereros and administrators did not anticipate – the threat of UN intervention and Herero faith in the UN would prove more effective in challenging the state than the UN itself. By sending their complaints to a potentially powerful international audience, communities in Aminuis circumvented the South African government and forced officials at the highest echelons to negotiate on the ground.

The Aminuis Corridor and its concomitant water politics became a prism through which Herero communities made claims to the land and contested questions of sovereignty and state power. Herero actions forced the state to take an erratic and reactionary path in annexing the territory and carrying out apartheid. The Aminuis Corridor not only illustrates South African officers’ unpreparedness in SWA, but also shows how government policies were contingent on local politics, unevenly applied, and capricious yet intransigent. Water development became an important weapon for

⁸¹ J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. J. Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine*, p. viii.

rural Herero communities and apartheid administrators to navigate these contentious local politics increasingly entangled with international affairs.

Politicizing the Corridor

Chronic drought in the 1950s exacerbated the changes wrought by the South African government's apartheid policies. The Corridor became a flashpoint for SWA's major political issues and set the tone for apartheid policies over the next three decades. Annexation efforts, increasing white settlement, and South Africa's Department of Native Affairs' takeover of the SWAA's Native Affairs Division transformed Herero leaders' generally cordial pre-war relationship with the government into open hostility in the 1950s. The Corridor became the initial battleground in which tensions erupted between the state and Herero society, within Herero society, and among Hereros, the state, and the UN.

Smuts's annexation efforts in the late 1940s first raised serious Herero opposition to South African rule. Smuts intensified Herero resistance to annexation by awarding farms in SWA to white WWII veterans, infuriating Herero veterans. After 1948, NP commitments to its rural Afrikaner voter base accentuated this increase in white settlement in SWA. Prime Minister Malan granted farms in SWA to landless and impoverished Afrikaners in an effort to alleviate South Africa's "poor white" problem. These settlements, often on the fringes of native reserves, curtailed the possibility of much needed expansion in the reserves. Whereas Aminuis residents historically mitigated drought conditions and land pressure by expanding onto unoccupied farms, there was nowhere to move their stock in the 1950s droughts except the Corridor. Tensions between Hereros and white settlers intensified as they

competed for grazing and water. Herero stock losses increased dramatically as state policies, racial politics, and environmental conditions became enmeshed in Aminuis.

The DNA takeover of SWAA's Division of Native Affairs in 1955 further exacerbated the tensions roused by annexation and white settlement. Herero leaders astutely understood the DNA takeover as de facto annexation and DNA officers' new involvement in Herero local politics created considerable friction in Aminuis.

Whereas Herero leaders' contact with high officials in Windhoek, much less Pretoria, had historically been limited to engaging with the CNC and the Secretary for SWA, Herero leaders soon found themselves negotiating fairly directly with the Minister of Native Affairs over intimate parochial politics. In response, rural Hereros in Aminuis mobilized historical land claims to resist and impede the state, which proved highly effective as the Corridor affair demonstrates.

The collision of annexation, white settlement, and the DNA takeover with prolonged drought and growing global agitation for decolonization raised crucial questions of sovereignty that became encapsulated in borehole development in the Aminuis Corridor. Requiring enormous tracts of land and regular water points to support and encourage the rejuvenation of a pastoralist lifestyle, Herero conceptions of land tenure based on water claims clashed with South African reserve and apartheid policies. By drilling illegal water holes and taking land claims to the UN, Herero leaders made both physical and ideological claims for independence by linking global and local politics to create an effective and transnational resistance movement. The Corridor became so controversial because it raised fundamental questions about legitimate rights to SWA's land and its critical resources. These localized disputes over the Aminuis Corridor acted as a metaphor for Herero relationships with the apartheid government and its policies.

The Corridor's Origins

The Aminuis Corridor's history is intimately bound up with Herero experiences of South African rule and native reserves. In 1923, the South African Native Reserves Commission proclaimed Aminuis Reserve as part of a larger effort to "tighten up Native Administration to prevent vagrancy and idleness."⁸² Operating on general principles of racial segregation, the Commission sought to prevent "black islands" from forming in "European" areas. Displaced Herero Genocide survivors actively attempted to reclaim their prime ranching lands in central SWA from departed German settlers after WWI. Uncomfortable with this mobile population and desirous of these central lands, the new South African government targeted reserve measures at these Hereros.⁸³

The Native Reserves Commission and SWA's nascent Division of Native Affairs demarcated a mere two million hectares in the Kalahari and Namib Deserts for African reserves. New reserve superintendents faced considerable difficulties finding water to make them remotely habitable. The first Aminuis superintendent complained, "The government is killing the people – they sent the Hereros out here to croak! They sent me out here without pick or shovel and I'm supposed to get water for the people!"⁸⁴ Although basic water supplies had not yet been opened, by 1925 Native Affairs officials began to force Hereros into the new reserves due to Herero involvement in the Rehoboth Baster Rebellion, population pressure in the temporary reserves, and the complaints of white settlers living near the temporary reserves.⁸⁵ Despite reserve superintendents' entreaties to delay sending trekkers until sufficient

⁸² J. Grotper, *Historical Dictionary of Namibia*. (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994): 354.

⁸³ In 1904, the German colonial regime perpetrated genocide against Hereros, annihilating approximately 80% of all Herero speakers. There is a very rich historiography on German rule. See J. Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*; I. Hull, *Absolute Destruction*; W. Werner, *No One will Become Rich*.

⁸⁴ RMS 2.501a Gobabis. "Halbjahresbericht 1925/26."

⁸⁵ Ibid. See also NAN NAW 26/30/173, "Scheidthof" and NAN NAW 28/68 "Reserve Report 1922." On the Baster Rebellion and Herero involvement in said event, see Emmett, pp. 159-65.

water was available, officials in the temporary reserves claimed that waiting would “not only delay, but in many cases, defeat, our object, which is to settle natives and their stock as expeditiously as possible.”⁸⁶ In 1925, Paramount Chief Hosea Kutako and his followers trekked along eighty miles of waterless roads to Aminuis, losing significant numbers of stock along the way.

A rectangle of 230,000 hectares in the south-western Kalahari, just ten miles from the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Aminuis Reserve was neither forgiving nor beguiling. Despite a 1921 report that grazing and water were scarce and, “should cattle be kept there permanently, they will all die,” the Reserves Commission proceeded with plans to settle Hereros in Aminuis.⁸⁷ A veterinary report produced in 1925 described poisonous water, anthrax, and *Gallamsiekte* (botulism) in the reserve, yet concluded that the territory was “good stock country with ample grass and a sufficiency of water for thousands of head of stock.”⁸⁸ This assessment contrasts starkly to a vivid description by Aminuis’ first superintendent the same year:

I find things not too good, grazing is poor. The oxen that were in fair condition when I was last there have fallen off considerably in condition and are quite unfit for market. How the women and children exist is beyond my poor comprehension. At all events they are all thin and appear to be half starved. The Hereros have found lots of water and are quite satisfied that should rain come they will be well away, but it is hell in the meantime. Water in the pans has sunk considerably,

⁸⁶ NAN SWAA 410 A50/20, “The Native Commissioner,” 22 Dec. 1925.

⁸⁷ NAN NAW 28/68, “Proposed Native Reserve at Aminuis,” report to Officer in Charge of Native Affairs, 28 Oct 1921.

⁸⁸ NAN NAW 28/68, “Copy of Stock Inspector Macpherson’s Report on Aminuis,” 23 July 1925.

but I think it is mainly due to extreme heat and evaporation. There are still a devil of a lot of natives and stock to come here.⁸⁹

Although not an expert on the mysteries of the water cycle, the superintendent's letter reveals the sheer difficulty of Herero life in Aminuis and raises lasting and vexing issues of water development.

Colonial authorities in SWA approached water development in reserves ambivalently. The SWAA simply did not have the financial or physical means to carry out basic development. Residents were consequently encouraged to "improve" reserves themselves by opening up water supplies. However, as Hereros demarcated land claims by digging wells, this thrifty plan inevitably led to serious friction.⁹⁰ In official logic, Hereros did not own reserves, but merely occupied them at the state's pleasure. However, the SWAA encouraged a sense of Herero proprietorship to mute allegations of white land theft and induce them to make improvements. Yet the degree of "ownership" administrators accorded Hereros over the reserves varied with the most expedient solution to the problem at hand. This tricky situation ballooned into a serious problem with apartheid development schemes.

Struggles to survive and eke out a living despite drought, disease, and poverty characterized life in Aminuis. To alleviate these problems, in 1928 Herero residents petitioned the SWAA to add the Corridor to their reserve. The government was prepared to accede pending a feasibility study, but the matter lapsed in the wake of the Great Depression and the Corridor became a *cordon sanitaire* against stock diseases arriving from Bechuanaland.⁹¹ The Aminuis Hereros asked for the Corridor again in 1939, but the outbreak of WWII postponed any action. When the issue was resurrected in 1952, incorporation and white settlement schemes politicized the Corridor anew.

⁸⁹ NAN NAW 28/68, "Letter to Mr. Cope," 15 Nov. 1925.

⁹⁰ Werner, pp. 104-108, 147-149

⁹¹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, Untitled letter from Blignaut to Allen, 2 Dec. 1957.

Incorporation and the Corridor

Drought in the early 1950s ratcheted up tensions between Aminuis Hereros and white settlers seeking new pastures and water for livestock. White farmers hemmed in Aminuis Hereros on three sides; the Corridor was the reserve's only option for respite, although it did not possess open water. In 1952, desperate Aminuis Hereros asked the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC), H.J. Allen, for the "strip, which has been named as crown land, to be extended [to the reserve]."⁹² The SWAA's decision-making organ, the Executive Committee (ExCom), rejected the request on the grounds they desired "an uninhabited strip along the whole [Bechuanaland] border."⁹³ The ExCom nevertheless promised to give the Corridor to Native Affairs for emergency grazing. However, when drought conditions worsened in 1953 and adjacent white farmers demanded access to the Corridor for emergency grazing, the ExCom proposed an immediate boring plan in the Corridor to relieve drought stricken farmers.⁹⁴

As dissention began to brew over the Corridor, the UN established a permanent committee on SWA in 1953 as a result of Chief Kutako's petitions and the UN's failed negotiations with South Africa to place SWA under UN trusteeship. The UN resolved to supervise SWA without South African cooperation. Although this ultimately proved futile, the SWAA began to tread more carefully around Hereros. Attuned to possible international difficulties if Kutako petitioned the UN about the Corridor, CNC Allen vehemently criticized the ExCom, arguing, "To allow European farmers into the strip in times of drought will only lead to difficulty with the natives."⁹⁵ He demanded the ExCom comply with its resolution granting Native Affairs the right to use the Corridor or "withdraw the decision at once and

⁹² NAN BAC 4 HN1/1/7/4, "Extract of Minutes from 1952 Herero Tribal Council Meeting," 17 Oct.1952. Crown land was land owned inalienably by the government.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Report of Mr. J. Nesor, Secretary to Administrator-in-Executive Committee," 14 April1953.

⁹⁵ NAN BAC 4 HN1/1/7/4, "Untitled Memo to Executive Committee from CNC HJ Allen," 9 Feb.1923.

make us fence [Aminuis's] eastern boundary."⁹⁶ He noted the latter decision would "lay us open to criticism from the [Aminuis] residents on the grounds of vacillation."⁹⁷ The ExCom contended however that "thousands of pounds' capital value...lies unused in the corridor strip. There are still many landless white farmers that look to the administration to help them with land."⁹⁸ Anxious to avoid settler wrath, the SWAA ExCom insisted that Corridor tensions could be resolved by demarcating areas for farmers and Hereros. In March 1955, the ExCom asked CNC Allen if he objected to settling farmers in the corridor. Now requiring formal approval from the DNA head office in Pretoria, Allen duly consulted his superiors on the matter.⁹⁹ Before he received a response, the ExCom caved to settler pressure and sank twenty-two boreholes in the corridor, opting to sort out land-use questions later.¹⁰⁰

Although CNC Allen long served under the SWAA's relatively liberal Native Affairs Administration, his role in the Corridor affair and later events reveal his enthusiasm for DNA authority and the possibilities of apartheid, which was still relatively undefined. Contacting the DNA regarding the ExCom's proposal to settle farmers in the Corridor, Allen criticized the plan on the grounds that the strip was too narrow, would require a public road through Aminuis, and would provoke the Hereros. "To entirely surround a native area with European-owned land when this can be avoided," he argued, "seems entirely contrary to the principles of apartheid."¹⁰¹ The chief problem, Allen contended, was "the natives think that the Executive Committee's [1952] decision to hand over the Corridor to Native Affairs was a preparatory step to add it to the reserve."¹⁰² The CNC warned "if the Executive Committee's

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Memo from CF Marais as Secretary to the Administrator-in-Executive Committee," Dec. 1957.

⁹⁹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Corridor between Aminuis Reserve and Bechuanaland Border," CNC Allen to Secretary for Native Affairs, CB Young, 16 April 1955.

¹⁰⁰ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Report of Mr. J. Nesor, Secretary to Administrator-in-Executive Committee," 14 April 1953. NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Corridor between Aminuis Reserve and Bechuanaland Border," CNC Allen to Secretary for Native Affairs, CB Young, 16 April 1955.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

latest resolution is put into effect, [the Hereros] will go to the UN. They will blame the Department (DNA) and not the Administration (SWAA) if the corridor is given to Europeans and that will be an unfortunate beginning to the Department's assumption of control."¹⁰³

Granting the Corridor to the Hereros was also problematic for the DNA. The boreholes already sunk by the SWAA ExCom were over 1,000 feet deep and, according to Allen, "too deep to be suitable for natives farming in communal conditions."¹⁰⁴ Because these boreholes required special pumping equipment, he concluded "it would hardly be a sound economical proposition to allow native peasant farmers to have the use of such supplies."¹⁰⁵ Allen's logic reveals the racialized prejudices underpinning apartheid rationalizations. He implies that Africans would inevitably waste expensive resources by overstocking and overgrazing. Yet, this formulation overlooks the structural inevitability of overstocking by confining transhumant pastoralists to a fraction of desert fringe in which grazing was limited to a small radius surrounding each borehole.

CNC Allen offered an alternate solution to the DNA: "rather than Europeans should be allowed into the Corridor, it would, in my opinion, be preferable to cut off portions of the existing reserve along western and northern boundaries for European settlement, and add the Corridor to the reserve."¹⁰⁶ Allen's plan appears contradictory, considering he had just contended that resources in the Corridor were too expensive and unsuitable for Hereros. However, this proposal would appease settlers' and Herero demands without creating a black spot. The CNC did not actually intend to give these portions of the Corridor to the Aminuis Hereros. His plan was designed to give them the illusion of satisfaction while, in reality, the DNA would retain control over the Corridor and its boreholes. He hoped to gain Herero cooperation for this land swap by suggesting any excision from Aminuis be subject to

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Aminuis residents' agreement. Allen also proposed a commission of enquiry similar to the Tomlinson Commission in the Union to "consider the question of areas for natives in the territory in connection with the application of "apartheid" as a long-term policy so that the corridor question might be held in abeyance until that commission has reported."¹⁰⁷ As detailed in Chapter Three, the Odendaal Commission was established for SWA in 1962. Whether it was all CNC Allen's idea remains a mystery. Allen shared his land swap plan with the ExCom, which approached the Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrik Verwoerd, about it in 1955.¹⁰⁸

The Problem of Private Boreholes

Concurrent with these exchange plans, the Assistant Native Commissioner (ANC) wrote to C.B. Young, the Undersecretary for Native Affairs, regarding the growing problem of private boreholes in the Aminuis Reserve.¹⁰⁹ Aminuis Hereros had drilled and equipped four boreholes in the reserve at their own expense without DNA permission, "apparently because they thought that they in this way would alone have rights to the water and make use of it and ensure minimally overgrazed posts for themselves – in other words, they paid the costs for a personal share."¹¹⁰ The ANC was in a quandary. On one hand he felt "the initiative of the natives doing something for themselves must not be oppressed without good reason," but on the other "the question exists that if the natives were allowed to open their own water points on their own, it may be detrimental for the... authorities."¹¹¹ The ANC's uncertainty about these "improvements" reflects tensions between older paternalist Native Affairs tendencies and newer authoritarian measures.

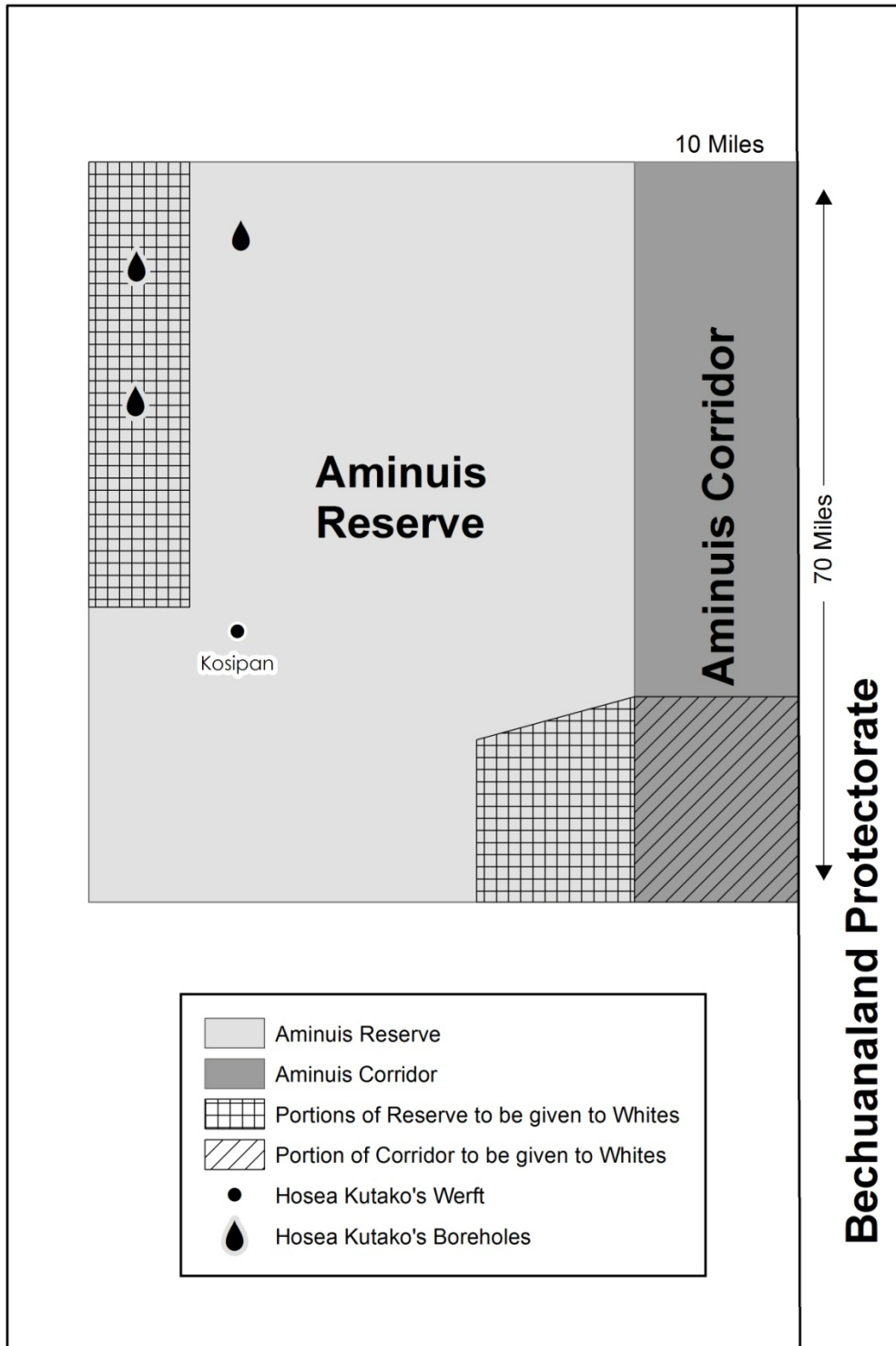
¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ NAN BAC 37 HN 1/15/2 v. 3, "Southwest Affairs," CNC Allen to Secretary for Native Affairs, 18 June 1956.

¹⁰⁹ NAN BAC 100 HN 5/1/2 v. 1, "Private Boreholes and Supplies in Native Reserves," CNC Du Preez to Secretary of Native Affairs, 21 April 1955.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.



Map 3: The Aminuis Corridor

(Showing Allen's proposed land exchange & Chief Kutako's boreholes)

Horrified that the boreholes had been drilled in the first place, Young was even more appalled that there was even a question of how to handle the situation. He replied, “so far as native areas in the Union are concerned, it is the policy of the Department not to allow individuals ownership of water provisions in native reserves. In similar cases, the Department has...taken over such water supplies and the relevant native is compensated.”¹¹² He ordered the ANC to send estimated compensation costs to Pretoria immediately. Ten days later, Headman Kutako signed an agreement in which the Aminuis Trust Fund, a DNA controlled account, would take over one of the boreholes for communal use.¹¹³

Herero boreholes raised unsettling questions about power, permission, and ownership in native reserves. Private boreholes provoked a debate concerning the degree of African “ownership” of reserve lands and African freedoms therein. The DNA retained all rights over what Africans could do in reserves but divested itself of all responsibility for what they actually did. CNC Allen clarified this position to the Aminuis reserve board members at a meeting in October 1955. He informed them that residents had every right to sink boreholes, but that the DNA would not remunerate them for unsuccessful holes. He plainly concluded, “No residents have the right to obtain such water supplies but the Department (DNA) will always have the right to such transfers before or after said waterhole is made as it sees fit.”¹¹⁴ Shortly after Allen’s speech, Chief Kutako contracted a white bore operator, F.W.B. Burger, to drill another private borehole in Aminuis. Kutako obtained permission from CNC

¹¹² NAN BAC 100 HN 5/1/2 v. 1, “RE: Private Boreholes and Supplies in Native Reserves,” Secretary of Native Affairs to CNC DuPreez, 16 May 1955.

¹¹³ NAN BAC 103 HN 5/1/3/12 v. 1, “Agreement Signed by Hosea and Aminuis Board men over Dawidsputz Borehole,” 27 May 1955.

¹¹⁴ BAC 103 HN 5/1/3/12 v. 1, “Extract of Notes of a Herero Tribal Meeting held at Aminuis Native Reserve by the CNC,” 19 Oct. 1955.

Allen for this borehole and then contracted Burger for two additional holes. These boreholes precipitated what would shortly become the Aminuis Corridor affair.

The Affair Begins

During the last quarter of 1955, government officials busied themselves with arranging the Aminuis Corridor land swap. In September, CNC Allen informed the Administrator of SWA that Minister Verwoerd supported the ExCom's proposal "that a part of the Aminuis Reserve of equivalent ranching and agriculturally valuable land on the northern and northwestern side [of Aminuis] be cut off and exchanged for the remaining section of the Corridor."¹¹⁵ Despite Allen's original proposal to obtain Herero approval, the DNA determined not to inform Aminuis residents of the swap until it was *fait accompli*. Officials presumed the *promise* of the corridor would be sufficient to prevent the Hereros from going to the UN. The DNA considered, but never seriously entertained, the possibility of Hereros refusing the exchange. That is, however, precisely what happened.

The ExCom announced its decision to proceed with the land exchange in July 1956. Kutako wrote to CNC Allen at this time regarding the swap. Kutako informed Allen that he was "not in favor of the exchange of land of the Aminuis Reserve with the corridor. We have already repeatedly asked that the corridor be attached to the reserve as the reserve is too small."¹¹⁶ On Verwoerd's orders, Allen threatened the Chief with a surefire means of guaranteeing capitulation: immediate white settlement in the Corridor. The ExCom's announcement reiterated this point: "in the case the natives are against the proposed exchange, they [will] be informed that the administration will immediately take steps to rent farms in the corridor to Boers without further delay."¹¹⁷ However, Kutako by no means

¹¹⁵ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Corridor between the Aminuis Native Reserve and the Bechuanaland Border," CNC Allen to Administrator Viljoen, 6 Sept. 1955.

¹¹⁶ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Letter from Hosea Kutako to HJ Allen," 3 July 1956.

¹¹⁷ NAN BAC 4 HN1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Executive Committee Decision," 6 July 1956.

acquiesced to Verwoerd's threat. He unequivocally concluded, "I will not have that piece of land given to whites."¹¹⁸

Kutako's upfront refusal to accept the Corridor exchange served as a metaphorical rejection of South African rule. Amid these negotiations over the Corridor, Prime Minister Strijdom made a statement on 21 May 1956 confirming South Africa's right to incorporate SWA. No one would intimidate or hinder South Africa in SWA. Such a declaration undoubtedly inflamed Kutako and strengthened his resolve to not cooperate with the land swap. Kutako had proven himself a masterful statesman in his sixty years of dealing with colonial governments. He would not be fooled, intimidated, or allow the South African government to walk away unscathed. In refusing the land swap, Kutako tested state limits by asserting his traditional rights over reserve lands and forced the DNA to either back down or proceed with white settlement. Both options guaranteed damaging repercussions for the government.

Emergent Tensions

The Aminuis Hereros discussed the proposed exchange extensively and most residents generally supported Chief Kutako. CNC Allen was nevertheless determined to obtain Herero cooperation for the land exchange and called a meeting of Aminuis residents in July 1956 to convince them of the benefits of the swap. Allen had designed the proposed exchange to minimize community displacement; however, his plan consisted of irregular strips of white farms jabbing into the reserve and allocating the Corridor's north and south ends to whites. Each side would exchange six boreholes, including two holes that Kutako had commissioned.¹¹⁹ The Aminuis residents immediately refused Allen's proposals. They

¹¹⁸ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Letter from Hosea Kutako to HJ Allen," 3 July 1956.

¹¹⁹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Aminuis Corridor," CNC Allen to Secretary for Native Affairs, September 1, 1956. See also NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Telex," CNC Allen to Secretary for Native Affairs, 27 Sept. 1956.

dismissed his calculations, insisting “We don’t understand hectares and miles, or how big or how far it is,” and simply reiterated their demand, “We want the land attached to our reserve.”¹²⁰ CNC Allen exhorted them to “trust the Minister; he will do his best for you. Remember there are white farmers that also want to have the land.”¹²¹ The Herero translator, Claudius Heuva, completed this dysfunctional meeting by announcing, “I and my family would gladly go to the corridor. I am a servant of the government and support the decision that the Minister took in regard to the corridor.”¹²²

After the meeting, Heuva wrote to CNC Allen again confirming his allegiance in the hopes of being allowed to trek to the Corridor. Claudius Heuva’s missive clarifies the Aminuis Hereros’ reasoning in refusing the exchange and illustrates power dynamics within the reserve. As an Mbanderu, Claudius Heuva was not aligned with Kutako and his position as a quasi-outsider affords a valuable perspective on Herero politics.¹²³ He explained that the Aminuis residents decided to refuse the exchange before the meeting began because:

...their hearts and souls are on the UN. They are waiting for their freedom from the UN and don’t listen, although it is perhaps the best plan what the welfare officer said to us. They would never believe because they hear but their hearts and ears and eyes are just on the other side.¹²⁴

The resulting conflict that arose between Heuva and Kutako’s advisors reveals how Herero confidence in the UN emerged from enduring cultural patterns of land claims and seeking outside help. Heuva’s statement also demonstrates how the amalgamation of local and international politics in Aminuis transformed the Corridor into a test of ethnic loyalty. In

¹²⁰ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Extract of Notes of 1956 Tribal Meeting of Herero leaders,” 26 July 1956.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Statement Claudius Heuva,” 26 Oct.1956.

¹²³ T. Sundermeier, *The Mbanderu*.

¹²⁴ BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v.1, “Letter from Claudius Hueva to CNC Allen,” August 5, 1956.

general, Hereros would support the UN while Mbanderus backed the South African government. Herero-Mbanderu ethnic identity politics subsequently intensified over the next twenty years, exacerbated by apartheid development schemes and on-going debates at the UN and International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In Aminuis, Claudius Heuva steadfastly supported government policies despite intense social and political pressure. In October 1956, he gave a sworn statement relating trouble following Allen's abovementioned meeting. After making his pledge to the government at the meeting, Heuva "immediately noticed that the whole Herero tribe turned against me."¹²⁵ Two weeks later, Hosea Kutako's advisor arrived at Heuva's home with "a group of men who had come in Hosea's car," to publically enumerate "the complaints against me in connection to the corridor and that all Mbanderu Hereros had pledged loyalty to the government."¹²⁶

A few days later, "Hosea himself came to Kosipan (Heuva's village) and there were almost seventy residents with him."¹²⁷ Kutako's advisor, Heinrich, then accused Claudius Heuva of "[pledging] loyalty to the government and [binding] all the Mbanderu Hereros to the Government and [deciding] to trek to the Corridor with forty-four of the Mbanderu Hereros." Heuva "answered Heinrich and said that I and my household were servants of the government and were willing to trek and what other people did made no difference to me. When I asked Heinrich if he then was a servant of the government, he answered that he stood under the UN and his name was already there."¹²⁸ The meeting ended at this point when "the big men then stood up and went away because Hosea said that he wanted nothing to do with the complaints."¹²⁹ Heuva was more bewildered than intimidated by these delegations and

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

particularly “[wanted] to know where Heinrich got that I was going to take forty-four Mbanderus to the Corridor and that I had bound all Mbanderus to the Union.”¹³⁰

Claudius Heuva’s statement provides a view into Herero politics otherwise occluded in available sources. It first reveals that Aminuis residents were not united on the Corridor, which is confirmed by residents’ requests to the Aminuis superintendent to visit the Corridor once while Kutako was away.¹³¹ More importantly, this account reveals that political differences were beginning to be discursively constructed along ethnic lines. Kutako’s advisors’ depictions of Hereros as government detractors and Mbanderus as government supporters reflect growing divisions between Hereros and Mbanderus in SWA that would soon polarize Otjiherero-speaking society. Disenchanted with Herero political dominance, Mbanderus saw government policy changes as a possible chance to gain autonomy. These tensions erupted most violently in Epukiro Reserve; Kutako had actually been called in to mediate there (see Chapter Two) and he and his advisors were intimately familiar with this growing discord. While it is unclear to what extent Claudius Heuva was aware of these disputes at this point (his protestations suggest naivety while Kutako’s response suggests a deeper knowledge and involvement), Heuva later emerged as a vocal Mbanderu nationalist and Kutako detractor.

The statements made by Kutako’s advisor Heinrich regarding the UN illuminate rural Herero perceptions of this body and foreshadows their growing faith in its ability to bring independence over the next decade. While rural Hereros may not have been acquainted with the UN’s inner-workings, Kutako certainly understood the UN very well. Rural constituencies, which were predominantly illiterate and untraveled, were exceedingly

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ That other residents were interested in the corridor option but perhaps intimidated by Hosea’s vehement opposition is supported by a letter written by Aminuis Welfare Officer Henning, who noted that several residents asked him to take them to look at the Corridor while Hosea was away in Keetmanshoop. Henning does not mention if these residents are Herero, Mbanderu, Tswana, etc. NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Corridor Matters,” Henning to Magistrate/ Native Commissioner at Gobabis, October 29, 1956.

attentive to Herero relations with the UN through Kutako's petitions and the activities of Reverend Michael Scott.¹³² Rural Hereros conceived of the UN in terms of leadership, loyalty, and deliverance. "Standing under" the UN is a Herero expression of loyalty with strong historical overtones. Hereros used it at the turn of the century to claim allegiance to a chief or clan. Having his "name already there" is reminiscent of mission Christianity's concepts of salvation, with which Hereros were well acquainted.¹³³ Rural Hereros placed considerable, almost religious, hope in the UN and overestimated the degree, speed, and kind of assistance it might provide. However, in the mid-1950s no one knew the exact parameters of the UN's jurisdiction or how much power it would wield. Through local politics like the Aminuis Corridor, SWA became one of the UN's first test cases.

The Local Global Exchange

The ICJ's upholding of the UN's right to grant hearings to petitioners from SWA in 1956 and renewed UN negotiations with South Africa over trusteeship raised the stakes of the Corridor affair and enhanced Kutako's bargaining position. Events in Aminuis could potentially be vitally important to South Africa's control over SWA and possibly destabilize South Africa's international relations with the West, which were beginning to fray. As CNC Allen and Minister Verwoerd feared, Kutako promptly wrote to the UN in reference to Allen's meeting regarding the Corridor exchange. Chief Kutako explained, the CNC "informed us that a portion of Aminuis Native Reserve was to be given to European farmers and that a small part of land called *kuridora* to the south east of Aminuis Native Reserve was to be given to the Hereros in exchange for their land."¹³⁴ Kutako framed this exchange historically, as simply part of a South African pattern of promising Hereros land just to push

¹³² DuPisani, 1985.

¹³³ Gewald, *Herero Heroes*: 220-226.

¹³⁴ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, "Letter to the United Nations," from Chief Hosea Kutako, 30 Oct. 1956.

them further into the desert. The Corridor, he insinuated, was just another example: “Previous removals caused many hardships and were responsible for the loss of much livestock and other property.”¹³⁵

Kutako made his next assault on South Africa’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs and UN delegate, Erich Louw. In a publicity stunt designed to exhibit South Africa’s responsiveness to African interests in SWA, Louw toured the reserves in July 1956.¹³⁶ However, Kutako contended that Mr. Louw “did not meet the Herero Chief and headmen, which means that he is coming to the United Nations being unconscious of our views.”¹³⁷ South Africa had refused to meet with Herero leaders due to their intransigence. However, this plan inadvertently crippled South Africa’s intended image of itself as a responsible government. By bringing the Corridor and Louw’s visit to the international stage, Kutako’s petition damaged South Africa’s delegation to the UN and brought international politics home to roost.

Kutako’s petition deeply distressed Minister Verwoerd. He began to doubt the wisdom of the Corridor exchange and the white settlement threat. In a letter to the Administrator of SWA, Verwoerd admitted he was “worried that we want to do the wrong thing (both whites and natives see it that way) just to prevent foreign noise.”¹³⁸ Besides his concern with world opinion, Verwoerd acknowledged that forcing the exchange without “tangible proof of the benefits to the Hereros in terms of the expenses of the Corridor and the actual availability of water,” would only create “still more unpleasantness and foreign noise in the light that Hosea and his people claim that they have a right to the Corridor and should

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Letter from Verwoerd to Administrator Viljoen,” 24 Aug. 1956.

¹³⁷ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Letter to the United Nations,” from Chief Hosea Kutako, 30 Oct. 1956.

¹³⁸ BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Letter from Verwoerd to Administrator Viljoen,” August 24, 1956.

say the whites must get out.”¹³⁹ His problem was not moral, but simply one of locating irrefutable evidence of the exchange’s beneficence.

Because conjuring such evidence could be difficult, Verwoerd resolved to bribe Herero leaders. Making them complicit in the exchange would effectively prevent them from complaining to the UN. The Minister instructed CNC Allen to entice the Aminuis residents by promising financial “help with [equipping] the new boreholes.” If Hereros refused this offer, Verwoerd threatened to personally make “the final decision on the SWAA’s lovely offer of better land and exploited water in exchange for weaker land without developed water.”¹⁴⁰ Still, wanting above all for Kutako to accept the offer himself, Verwoerd concluded his letter to Allen by musing whether “Hosea can be convinced by giving him special rights to one of the best new springs.”¹⁴¹ Verwoerd grossly underestimated Kutako’s appreciation of the Corridor’s stakes.

Mr. Burger & the Boreholes

Kutako refused Verwoerd’s offer and Verwoerd commanded the land exchange proceed as planned. However, the private boreholes that Kutako commissioned Mr. Burger to drill in 1955 became a serious impediment to the Corridor exchange. The DNA planned to exchange two of these boreholes to the SWAA for the Corridor, but because Kutako had not yet paid Burger for his work, the question of who owed the bore man became extremely controversial. CNC Allen had approved Kutako’s first borehole, but not the second two, even though these were the ones the DNA planned to exchange. The DNA wanted to assume control over the boreholes and exchange them, but they did not want to pay for them on the technicality that the holes had not been officially approved.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Kutako initially agreed to pay Burger for his work in kind and, amid drilling the third hole in 1956, Burger applied for a permit to remove cattle from the reserve in payment for the first two holes, totaling £1,198. The Aminuis Welfare Officer informed Burger that the holes were to be exchanged and that CNC Allen would handle the payment. Burger was satisfied “so long as I would be paid for my work.”¹⁴² However, CNC Allen refused to grant Burger a livestock permit and would not guarantee DNA remuneration to the Hereros. Unless the Hereros could come up with cash, which was unlikely, Burger would not be paid for these three boreholes. The CNC ordered Burger to desist drilling the third hole and assured him that he (Allen) “had nothing to do with the costs that were already accrued.”¹⁴³ Kutako promised to cover the costs of the boreholes and persuaded Burger to complete the third, very expensive (£1,689) borehole. However, when Burger completed the third hole at the end of 1956, the Aminuis Welfare officer reported, “[Kutako] places no more importance in the borehole and will not carry the costs for it because the government has decided to hand over this section to the SWAA.”¹⁴⁴ Now severely distressed, Burger again approached Allen. The CNC agreed to pay for the first two holes, pending DNA approval, but refused to pay for the third hole because he had insisted Burger abandon the project. However, Burger maintained that the third borehole had been started “after approval from the CNC was gotten.”¹⁴⁵ Allen’s inflexibility regarding the third borehole and Kutako’s refusal to pay were the final straws. Burger appealed directly to Verwoerd in February 1957.

Burger found himself entangled in an interpersonal power struggle between Allen and Kutako over the Corridor. Kutako knew the last two boreholes would be excised from the

¹⁴² NAN BAC 103 HN 5/1/3/12 v. 1, “Letter from FWP Burger to Minister of Native Affairs Verwoerd,” 21 Feb. 1957.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ NAN BAC 103 HN 5/1/3/12 v. 1, “Extract from Monthly Report Aminuis Reserve: Water Supplies,” December 1956.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

reserve when he commissioned them.¹⁴⁶ He intended for these boreholes to derail DNA negotiations with the SWAA over the Corridor by adding significantly to the cost of the exchange. The boreholes the SWAA drilled in the Corridor were considerably more expensive than the ones in Aminuis and the DNA was expected to pay for the difference in value, roughly £2,000 per hole. In addition to the £12,000 the Department owed the SWAA for the six exchanged boreholes, the DNA would now have to bear the full cost of Kutako's boreholes as well – nearly an additional £4,000. The Chief's strategy proved to be a highly effective and expensive retaliation against the DNA over the Corridor. While Kutako knew the exchange would proceed regardless of his opinion, he refused to go quietly and left the DNA with a maimed international reputation and a £16,000 bill.

Disarray and communication breakdowns within the newly expanded DNA made Kutako's actions particularly effective. When the Secretary of Native Affairs demanded the ANC, Bruwer Blignaut, explain why the situation escalated so far, Blignaut replied that he contacted head office repeatedly, "but an answer was never received."¹⁴⁷ The DNA quietly settled the bill, despite a wish to "teach the bore man a lesson," on the grounds that "it is unnecessary to irritate Hosea."¹⁴⁸ The DNA could not afford for Kutako to inform the UN that it had reneged on expenses for which it was clearly responsible. These debates over paying for the boreholes illustrate the DNA's incoherent policies, internal disorganization, unclear relationship with the SWAA, and contingency on local events in the 1950s. Moreover, the situation demonstrates that Kutako's influence with the UN and its potential to intervene in SWA proved formidable brakes on the apartheid state's ability to locally exercise power. Verwoerd nevertheless determined to proceed with the land exchange.

¹⁴⁶ NAN BAC 103 HN 5/1/3/12 v. 1, "Boreholes in Aminuis Corridor: SWA," CNC Blignaut to Secretary of Native Affairs Eiselen, March 12, 1957.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ NAN BAC 103 HN 5/1/3/12 v. 1, "Boreholes in Aminuis Reserve, SWA," Secretary of Bantu Affairs Eiselen to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner Blignaut, 6 Mar. 1957.

A shut & Open Case

In December 1956, Kutako requested a personal meeting with Verwoerd to discuss the Corridor. The Aminuis Welfare Officer commented, “It is clear that Hosea and the great majority of the residents of Aminuis are altogether against the decision of his Honor the Minister and [Kutako] is attempting to have the Minister reconsider his decision.”¹⁴⁹ Allen recommended that Verwoerd agree to the meeting because “it will be a good impression not only for the residents of Aminuis, but also on the leaders of the Herero tribe.”¹⁵⁰ Although still determined to obtain Kutako’s cooperation, Verwoerd was reluctant to meet with him. Verwoerd instructed his personal secretary to persuade Kutako to agree to the exchange in February 1957, promising sixteen equipped boreholes, capacity for an additional 7,000 cattle units, and a £157,340 increase in property value.¹⁵¹ Verwoerd’s secretary concluded his persuasive letter, “After this full explanation, the Minister presumes you will no longer feel the need to have a personal interview with him, since you will understand from the above that the advantageous agreement cannot be, and should not be, undone.”¹⁵²

Unfortunately for Verwoerd, the month of March destroyed any appeal the exchange may have had in Aminuis. The Welfare Officer reported “cattle have been dying at the outposts from a disease known as ‘*snotsiekte*’ brought in by wildebeest,” and “the Corridor had insufficient rain and the grazing position is not satisfactory.”¹⁵³ He added, “Very good grazing is only available in the north-western portion of the reserve exchanged to the SWAA

¹⁴⁹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Corridor Matters,” Henning to Magistrate/Native Commissioner at Gobabis, December 8, 1956.

¹⁵⁰ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Aminuis Corridor,” CNC Allen to Secretary of Native Affairs, January 8, 1957.

¹⁵¹ BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Aminuis Corridor,” J. Fred Barnard to Hosea Kutako, 22 Feb. 1957. A cattle unit was defined as one bovine animal or two sheep/goats. Carrying capacity was calculated by the amount of land required to support one unit. Twenty-five hectares per unit is a common ratio for the Kalahari.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ NAN BAC 52 HN 1/15/6/1, “Monthly Report: Aminuis Native Reserve,” Welfare Officer Henning to Magistrate/Native Commissioner at Gobabis, March 1957. *Snotsiekte* is a bovine herpes virus known as Bovine Malignant Catarrhal Fever in English.

for the Corridor.”¹⁵⁴ These immediate ecological problems confirmed Herero suspicions of state underhandedness. Kutako again refused the exchange and demanded to meet with Verwoerd.

Verwoerd consented instead to Kutako meeting with the Administrator of SWA as his personal representative in April 1957. The Administrator’s cajoling failed to persuade Kutako and his delegation. The Hereros contended, “We will come out worse if the exchange goes through.”¹⁵⁵ In August, the Undersecretary of Native Affairs, CB Young, sent Verwoerd’s final regrets to Kutako that they had not achieved resolution on the Corridor. Young informed Kutako that he “and the tribe were extremely foolish and short-sighted in rejecting the offer. It is not fair to delay any longer and allow the expensive developments to lie unused. The Administration is at liberty to allot the corridor to European farmers and will immediately proceed to do so.”¹⁵⁶ Young formally announced Verwoerd’s withdrawal from all Corridor negotiations and concluded: “It is regrettable that it will be on record for the information of future generations of Hereros that nobody except yourself and your council are to blame for their having lost the advantage of an exchange of land which would have meant so much material benefit to the tribe.”¹⁵⁷ The Corridor affair should have ended on this insulting note. Kutako’s reply insured it did not.

Kutako responded by asserting, “The Corridor was part of our reserve ever since we inhabited the Aminuis reserve in 1925 and we drilled seven wells in it and our cattle were grazing in that area.”¹⁵⁸ This allegation does not concur with earlier Herero insistence that they *requested* the Corridor since the 1920s. Kutako now claimed the land always belonged

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4 v. 1, “Notes of Meeting on April 5 at Windhoek over Aminuis Corridor,” 5 April 1957.

¹⁵⁶ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Acting Secretary of Native Affairs to Chief Hosea Kutako,” 31 Aug. 1957.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Chief Hosea Kutako to Minister of Native Affairs Verwoerd,” 28 Oct. 1958.

to the Hereros and averred their claim through the traditional modes of wells and grazing. If Kutako's new claim was true, there could be no exchange. The state would simply be stealing reserve land for white settlement, which was illegal without parliamentary consent. Kutako's delay in making this claim is unclear. The 1957 Edwards Report by the UN Special Committee on SWA noted that the Administrator for SWA promised to add the Corridor to Aminuis in 1933, which the SWAA and Aminuis Hereros appeared to have forgotten. This report may have jogged Kutako's memory and/or he may have gambled on its veracity. Regardless, his new argument and its timing radically changed the dynamics of the Corridor dispute and dramatically undermined the DNA.

Kutako again petitioned the UN regarding Young's insulting letter but the DNA never sent the petition on the litigious grounds that he failed to apply to Verwoerd for permission.¹⁵⁹ This delay bought the DNA time to plan a response before the fiasco became public. Verwoerd's letter to CB Young reveals both his discomfiture and propensity for calculated planning.¹⁶⁰ Verwoerd surmised the new claim would become:

The steps whereby the Hereros will agitate in the future...and we will be blamed for Hosea throwing away the chance for his people. On these grounds they will petition the UN for their own land and the value of our last letter will be swept away, i.e. they will claim that the strip of land was theirs the whole time and that they therefore cannot exchange it because it is their land and not crown land.¹⁶¹

Responding to Kutako would drag Verwoerd "into another corner," but the DNA had to answer the letter because "it is clear that advisers, possibly lawyers, will see that it goes before the UN and possibly elsewhere. If it remains unanswered, it

¹⁵⁹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Aminuis Reserve: Southwest Africa," Secretary of Native Affairs to Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 2 Nov. 1957.

¹⁶⁰ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "RE: Letter from Hosea Kutako," Minister Verwoerd to Secretary Young, 6 Nov. 1957.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

will be published that we tried to pull a trick and cannot answer on ‘these grounds.’”¹⁶² Verwoerd instructed Young to publish a statement reaffirming Verwoerd’s final decision and regret that, “the chance for the Corridor to be added onto the Aminuis Reserve legally has been thrown away finally and for all time by Hosea and his advisors to the great and unpardonable harm to his followers.”¹⁶³ The DNA desperately needed evidence refuting Kutako’s claim because, “It will be the cornerstone and a danger point of the coming assault by the UN. Good evidence must be clearly established by the Department because these allegations are a very good attack point in the UN and it will be noted against the Union Administration in SWA. Thus this is very serious.”¹⁶⁴

Finding evidence was a problem. A Windhoek newspaper described “certain sections of the SWAA and DNA running around in circles...because nobody could disprove that the land concerned had not been promised by a previous administrator to the natives.”¹⁶⁵ The mammoth task of locating evidence fell to ANC Blignaut. While the Administrator’s 1933 speech reaffirmed a promise made by the previous Administrator in 1928, the original pledge could not be found. The only evidence was a 1928 statement by the CNC that the Administrator was inclined to extend Aminuis pending “careful investigation to make sure it is worthwhile and has water and grazing.”¹⁶⁶

Based on this questionable shred of support, ANC Blignaut felt confident enough to recommend the Corridor swap proceed. He surmised “the desired report on water and grazing in the Corridor strip as a proviso of the Administrator’s approval to

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Despite Goodwill Intentions, They Landed in a Flat Spin,” unidentified news clipping (most likely from *Windhoek Advertiser*), 11 Nov. 1957.

¹⁶⁶ NAN BAC 4 HN1/1/7/4, “Native Commissioner Windhoek to Magistrate Gobabis,” 28 July 1928. NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Untitled Letter from Blignaut to Allen,” 2 Dec. 1957.

extend the Aminuis Reserve by adding ground in the corridor was not forthcoming because no investigation could at that time indicate whether there was permanent water in the area or not.”¹⁶⁷ He concluded “the administration implemented such a promise by giving land adjoining other reserves like Epukiro, etc. because it could not see its way clear to add the corridor to Aminuis as no favorable report on its water and grazing potential was available.”¹⁶⁸

The 1934 Report to the League of Nations supported this supposition. The report stated that land was added to other reserves “in accordance with last year’s promise to Headman Hosea at Aminuis.”¹⁶⁹ The Administrator’s 1933 speech pointedly noted the Corridor “has not actually been proclaimed (as part of Aminuis),” which clearly contradicted Kutako’s assertion.¹⁷⁰ The DNA argued that the 1933 speech only reflected “a general policy to extend native reserves” which was carried out the next year.¹⁷¹ This position divested the DNA and SWAA of all obligations to add the Corridor to Aminuis and demonstrated that the Administrator’s 1933 promise had been satisfied. ANC Blignaut complained that Allen should have foreseen Kutako’s allegations, having personally written to the Gobabis Magistrate in 1939 that “the extension in question was agreed to some years ago... but no trace of such approval can be found.”¹⁷²

The UN’s apparent interference in the Corridor affair by alerting Kutako to the 1933 promise galled state officials most of all. As the Administrator of SWA put it, “One cannot escape the conclusion that this paragraph in Hosea’s letter was prompted

¹⁶⁷ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Untitled Letter from Blignaut to Allen,” 2 Dec. 1957.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “The Administrator in Executive Committee Report on the Aminuis Corridor – Its History and Destination,” January 1958.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid. See also NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Aminuis Reserve: Extension Of,” CNC HJ Allen to Native Commissioner, Gobabis, 20 July 1939.

by the South West Africa Committee.”¹⁷³ Apartheid officials were not prepared for UN incursions into what they considered domestic issues. Nevertheless, the Administrator of SWA argued that the DNA had “no obligation ...to add the corridor to the reserve,” and should “abide by its decision to make the Corridor available to European settlement.”

Minister Verwoerd, concerned with the international ramifications of DNA action regarding the Corridor, was not so ready to proceed with white settlement. Instead, he demanded further investigation.¹⁷⁴ He sent the Secretary of Native Affairs, Dr. Eiselen, to reconnoiter the Herero reserves in April 1958 and examine the additions to reserves which supposedly fulfilled the 1933 promise. During the tour he “personally saw the seriousness of the water shortage in Aminuis Reserve.”¹⁷⁵ Eiselen instructed ANC Blignaut to drill five boreholes as emergency relief, which “had nothing to do with the eastern border of the reserve.”¹⁷⁶ Blignaut accompanied Eiselen on this tour. The experience shook his moral confidence in Native Affairs and the DNA. He confided his observations to the Undersecretary for Native Affairs:

A lot of this country is no good. All [extensions] are in the Sandveld (Kalahari) and except for a few chalk pans, there is no water. Where underground water is concerned, it is nonexistent or only obtainable very deeply. In this respect, these areas don't outshine the corridor. After ten years, we have still only developed a few water points near the southwestern border of Eastern Reserve. So far the rest of the reserve is altogether uninhabitable

¹⁷⁴ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, “Letter from Verwoerd to Secretary of Native Affairs,” 28 Feb. 1958.

¹⁷⁵ NAN BAC 52 HN 1/15/6/1, “Aminuis Monthly Report,” Aminuis Welfare Officer, April 1958.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

except possibly by Bushmen immediately after the rain. To sum up, in my opinion it is impossible to substantiate the assertion that these places were later given to the natives in place of the Corridor because of their favorable water sources.¹⁷⁷

Blignaut's candid observations attest to the essential validity of Herero claims that South African rule was characterized by relocating Hereros ever deeper into the desert on increasingly inferior land. Despite Blignaut's apparent twinge of conscience or Eiselen's response to Aminuis' true precariousness, the trend of pushing the Hereros further into the desert continued throughout the apartheid period.

Corridor negotiations stalled in 1958. Kutako's allegations and clear support from the UN deterred the DNA and SWAA from following through with white settlement. Allen's retirement and Verwoerd's promotion to Prime Minister most likely finalized the exchange's lapse at official levels. The DNA and ExCom continued to argue about the Corridor but resolved nothing. The Corridor reverted to shared emergency grazing and tensions between settlers and Hereros escalated again.¹⁷⁸ When the Aminuis Hereros asked to whom the Corridor belonged in 1960, the Magistrate replied, "it belongs to the administration and no white or nonwhite has rights to it."¹⁷⁹ In 1960, the ExCom and the DNA agreed to reserve three boreholes as emergency grazing for Aminuis residents.¹⁸⁰ The DNA's decision to apportion one of these holes specifically for Aminuis's 425 Tswana residents (who pledged allegiance to the apartheid state), exacerbated Herero hostility towards the government. The

¹⁷⁷ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Aminuis Corridor," Blignaut to CB Young, May 12, 1958.

¹⁷⁸ NAN BAC 41 HN 1/15/4/4, "Quarterly Meeting: Aminuis Reserve: February 27, 1959, CNC Blignaut to NC Gobabis, April 20, 1959.

¹⁷⁹ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Notes of Advisory Board Meeting Held March 9, 1960," Aminuis Superintendent to NC Gobabis, March 16, 1960.

¹⁸⁰ NAN BAC 4 HN 1/1/7/4, "Emergency Grazing in Aminuis Corridor," HBSK van der Watt to Magistrate Gobabis, August 13, 1960.

situation remained in limbo until the 1962 Odendaal Commission proclaimed the Corridor as the new “Tswanaland.”¹⁸¹

Conclusion

The Aminuis Corridor case exemplifies the first years of apartheid rule in SWA. The Corridor became a flash point for several interrelated issues arising from early South African attempts to extend its control over SWA through apartheid policies. First, the contentious debates arising over a remote piece of land illustrate how apartheid politics were manifested in SWA through struggles to control local water sources and their development. Control over these resources in Aminuis reveals that apartheid policy implementation involved confrontations between administrators and residents over fundamental questions of ownership, sovereignty, and responsibility in reserves. Because of its scarcity, water quickly became a powerful and politicized tool for the state to control African resistance and establish dominance. It also became a weapon for Hereros to resist and retaliate against apartheid policies, increased state domination, and interference in local politics.

Secondly, the Aminuis Corridor demonstrates how Herero resistance became entangled with international politics over local resources and how this local/global interaction became a formidable impediment to the exercise of state power. Although the Aminuis Hereros were not successful in having the Corridor attached to the reserve without giving up land, their strong connections to the UN caused Verwoerd and the DNA to tread cautiously and prevented the DNA from pushing the exchange through or settling whites in the Corridor. The international politicization of the Aminuis Corridor clearly demonstrated that SWA’s contested international status made the South African apartheid state dangerously vulnerable. South Africa must either ensure its unequivocal dominance over the territory or relinquish

¹⁸¹ *Odendaal Report*, p. 99.

claims to it. The potential for UN intervention in SWA initially limited the apartheid government's use of force to maintain dominance in the territory.

As the Corridor instance reveals, the DNA's own disorganization and lack of clear direction in the 1950s made Herero resistance and its potential international repercussions particularly effective. The Aminuis Corridor and Herero refusals to cooperate with the land exchange threw the DNA into disarray. The situation's international implications emphasized the DNA's weaknesses and limitations. Short-sighted and unclear policies regarding water supplies, communication breakdowns, and Verwoerd's refusal to show anything that might be construed as weakness, even if it meant contravening ideological doctrines, ensured the brilliance of Kutako's boreholes. The boreholes betrayed the limits of DNA power in the face of UN-backed local resistance.

Finally, the Aminuis corridor illustrates rural Herero understandings and expectations of the UN and how apartheid politics became enmeshed with intensifying Herero and Mbanderu identity politics. From the early 1950s, apartheid development in Hereroland became a question of loyalty to the UN or the government. Rural Hereros constructed UN intervention in increasingly ethnicized terms. True Hereros were loyal to the UN while those who supported the government were not really Herero, i.e. Mbanderu. These identity politics became increasingly tied to water development in the 1960s, as will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: ETHNIC POLITICS IN EPUKIRO RESERVE

Epukiro Reserve was a complicated place to begin with. Events in the 1950s only compounded existing ethnic tensions between and among Hereros and Mbanderus, which have persisted to the present. Epukiro was known as an “Mbanderu” reserve, but the majority of its population was Herero. Tensions had been simmering between the two groups since the 1880s through the establishment of the reserve in the 1920s, but the close alliance between Herero Headman Hosea Kutako and Mbanderu Headman Nikanor Hoveka had kept these troubles below the surface.¹⁸² However, Nikanor’s death in 1951 and the subsequent appointment of his successor, Stephanus Hoveka, as Epukiro headman unleashed decades’ worth of suppressed hostility between Mbanderus and Hereros in Epukiro. The Herero majority in Epukiro resented having an Mbanderu headman, Mbanderus’ political overrepresentation, and disproportionate water development in Mbanderu areas. Intra-ethnic tensions began to emerge among Mbanderus when Stephanus Hoveka became Epukiro headman in 1951.

The friction that erupted in Epukiro in 1951 stemmed from a long history of complicated, shifting, and unclear ethnic relations and distinctions between Mbanderus and Hereros in SWA. The renewal of intra-ethnic antagonism, coupled with increasingly frequent state incursions into Epukiro residents’ lives during the 1950s, illustrate the shifting polyvalence of ethnic identity in Hereroland. DNA efforts to cut through these complicated ethnic politics and produce easily readable and uniformly ethnicized African subjects in clearly defined spaces simultaneously encouraged and militated against intra-Herero ethnic unity in apartheid SWA.

¹⁸²This hostility was due to Mbanderu Chief Kahimemua Nguvauva’s betrayal by Samuel Maherero and Kanangatie Hoveka. See below as well as the Introduction to this dissertation for further information.

Epukiro's ethnic politics stemmed in part from South African reserve policies in the inter-war era, but major transformations in SWA's relationship with South Africa in the 1950s served to further intensify and complicate matters. SWA's pre-apartheid Native Affairs policies had contradictory effects on questions of ethnic identity, leadership, and relations with the government in Epukiro. Although most of SWA's reserves were ethnically heterogeneous, they became heuristically known as "Herero," "Damara," or "Nama." Native Affairs officers often appointed the descendants of "traditional chiefs" as headmen of SWA's native reserves in order to give the illusion of direct rule. However, this practice simultaneously reinforced ethnic factionalism on one hand while it promoted the development of local identities that cut across ethno-linguistic divisions on the other.¹⁸³ As the Epukiro case demonstrates, these seemingly conflicting circumstances provided individuals and communities with a range of strategies for mobilizing ethnicity and identity to achieve various ends and to respond to changing situations.

Government appointed headmen played a pivotal role in the complicated identity politics of SWA's reserves. On the one hand, headmen in the Police Zone had little formal power; on the other, their position as liaisons with the government could strengthen their position by encouraging politics to coalesce around parochial issues.¹⁸⁴ As I have demonstrated elsewhere, cooperating with the state offered Otjiherero-speaking leaders a chance to recuperate authority and standing destroyed under German rule.¹⁸⁵ However, as illustrated in Epukiro, headmen were not created equal. Legitimacy and respect had to be earned and did not necessarily correspond to position or family name. Moreover, in its effort to divide and conquer, DNA officers

¹⁸³ See also R. Kössler, "The Berseba Captaincy after 1938." Emmett, 284

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. See also Kössler (2000), 452. He refers specifically to power to try cases, collect taxes, and administer justice.

¹⁸⁵ M. McCullers, "We do it That We Will be Men': Masculinity Politics in Colonial South West Africa, 1915-1949," *Journal of African History* (2011).

did not hesitate to undermine headmen or appoint their rivals as headmen of discontented factions.

Politics in Epukiro during the 1950s reveal how multi-faceted ethnic identity politics became enmeshed with native affairs policies to shape the business of rule in ways that rarely corresponded to official plans. Major transformations in SWA's relationship with South Africa during the 1950s, characterized by unofficial but very real annexation, impacted South Africa's international relations and spurred the formation of African nationalist political parties in SWA. Yet the questions of what incorporation meant on a day to day basis, particularly in rural areas, or how local politics shaped the ways and extent to which incorporation was carried out remain unasked.

Politics in Epukiro Reserve shed new light on the ways in which local intra-ethnic tensions and identity politics meshed with South African efforts to annex SWA and apply apartheid development schemes in the territory. As this chapter demonstrates, although policy was promulgated in Pretoria, rule was made and enacted through everyday negotiations among reserve residents, families, headmen and their advisory boards, and DNA officers. These negotiations cannot be mapped out neatly. Rather, debates over water rights, access, and development became central sites of struggle and negotiation in Herero/Mbanderu politics, local relations with DNA officers, and the DNA's ability to implement apartheid policies.

Prior to the DNA takeover in 1955, the relatively local command structure of SWA's Native Affairs branch was vulnerable to considerable leverage by African leaders who were often able to influence policy in their favor by forming long-term relationships with officials. The DNA sought to radically alter this apparently disorganized and locally contingent system of rule by establishing a clear chain of

command to enact uniform policies emanating from Pretoria. While this ideal of panoptic rule and standardized effects could and would never be achieved, the effort to make it a reality drastically changed the nature of rule and relationships between state administrators and African leaders. As the events in Epukiro will show, ethnicity and apartheid became mutually constitutive politics largely fashioned around highly local concerns of water access.

Water, as a critical resource and key means of making land claims, became pivotal in negotiating apartheid policy and ethnic identity politics in Epukiro. Water claims and access became the object of intense competition between Hereros and Mbanderus and, as such, a key object of state control. By manipulating water access and development, DNA officers encouraged ethnic factionalism in Epukiro in an attempt to break the power of Herero petitions to the UN based on shared land restitution claims. However, these land claims were not just a rhetorical device for demanding national independence, but a powerful means of creating an imagined Herero community across SWA. This paradigm succeeded in mobilizing people because it easily encompassed local concerns about water and land scarcity as well as apartheid development. The question was whether DNA interventions into water development and politics could cancel out this imagined Herero community or if intra-ethnic tensions within Epukiro could co-exist with a larger Herero identity. This chapter explores how Epukiro residents, having clamored for water development for decades, responded to state water development initiatives. Exploring the centrality of water to parochial politics reveals the ways in which residents mobilized varying ethnic identities to meet a variety of local, regional, and global challenges.

The Curse of Kahimemua: Origins of Ethnic Strife

Friction among Mbanderus and between Mbanderus and Hereros did not begin during the apartheid era. Understanding these fraught and, at times, incendiary politics requires attention to historical developments, particularly events transpiring at the tail end of the nineteenth century. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, Hereros and Mbanderus formed one ethno-linguistic unit, until Mbanderus trekked to what is now eastern Namibia.¹⁸⁶ However, Mbanderus and Hereros continued to intermarry, shared culture and language, and allied against incursions from Nama groups to the south.¹⁸⁷ According to Mbanderu oral traditions, Mbanderu Paramount Chief, Kahimemua Nguvauva, and the powerful Herero Chief, Maherero, “worked together as one man” to overthrow Nama Oorlam suzerainty and halt German colonial encroachment.¹⁸⁸

These cordial relations broke off when the German Governor made Samuel Maherero Paramount Chief over Chief Kahimemua Nguvauva, who refused to accept any sort of overrule, especially by Samuel Maherero. A war broke out between Kahimemua’s Mbanderus on one side and a Maherero-German alliance on the other. However, an alliance between Samuel Maherero’s cousin and rival, Nikodemus Kavekunwa, and Chief Kahimemua and the defection of Kahimemua’s nephew and heir, Kanangatie Hoveka, to Samuel Maherero complicated these ethnic politics.¹⁸⁹ Chief Kahimemua surrendered to German forces in May 1896 and was executed a month later. Prior to his death, Chief Kahimemua cursed the Hereros and Hoveka’s Mbanderus, forecasting the total destruction of land and society. Uncannily, the

¹⁸⁶ T. Sundermeier, *The Mbanderu*. See also J. Vansina, *How Societies are Born*.

¹⁸⁷ I. Goldblatt, *History of South West Africa from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* (Cape Town: 1971): 20-31.

¹⁸⁸ Sundermeier, 19.

¹⁸⁹ Nikodemus Kavekunwa was the rightful heir to Tjamuaha/Maherero’s stool and Samuel’s cousin/ rival. The two disliked each other personally because Samuel was sleeping with Nikodemus’s wife. Nikodemus sought refuge for his life with Kahimemua. Samuel believed Kahimemua would attempt to kill him and appoint Kavekunwa as the Maherero paramount chief. See Sundermeier, 35-6.

fateful rinderpest epidemic that ultimately made Herero society vulnerable to German predations broke out just a few months after Kahimemua's execution.

Kanangatie Hoveka was never formally confirmed as Mbanderu Paramount Chief and was filled with remorse over his treachery. He attempted to rectify his wrongs by allying with Nama groups against the Herero/German alliance, but was poisoned to death before he could accomplish his objective.¹⁹⁰ Kanangatie's nephew, Nikanor, assumed the position of de facto Mbanderu Paramount Chief, joining Samuel Maherero against the Germans when the Herero-German war broke out in 1904.¹⁹¹ Nikanor Hoveka's decision to ally with Samuel Maherero was highly controversial among Mbanderus. Members of the Nguvauva clan, who considered the Hovekas as traitorous usurpers, organized under Kahimemua's nephew, Nikodemus, and moved to Bechuanaland.¹⁹²

The South African authorities regarded Nikanor Hoveka as the Mbanderu Chief as early as 1915, a position Chief Hosea Kutako also recognized.¹⁹³ In the interwar era, the extent to which state officials recognized Mbanderus as separate from Hereros varied depending on politics, individual officers, and particular circumstances. Despite this official ambiguity, Hoveka and Kutako remained closely allied and Hoveka often deferred to the Herero Paramount. Despite this support within SWA, Nguvauva factions in Bechuanaland agitated among Mbanderus in SWA to

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 49.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 53.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ According to Klaus Dierks, the German regime also formally recognized Nikanor following the Herero-German War. See K. Dierks, *Chronology of Namibian History* (Windhoek: 1999): 124.

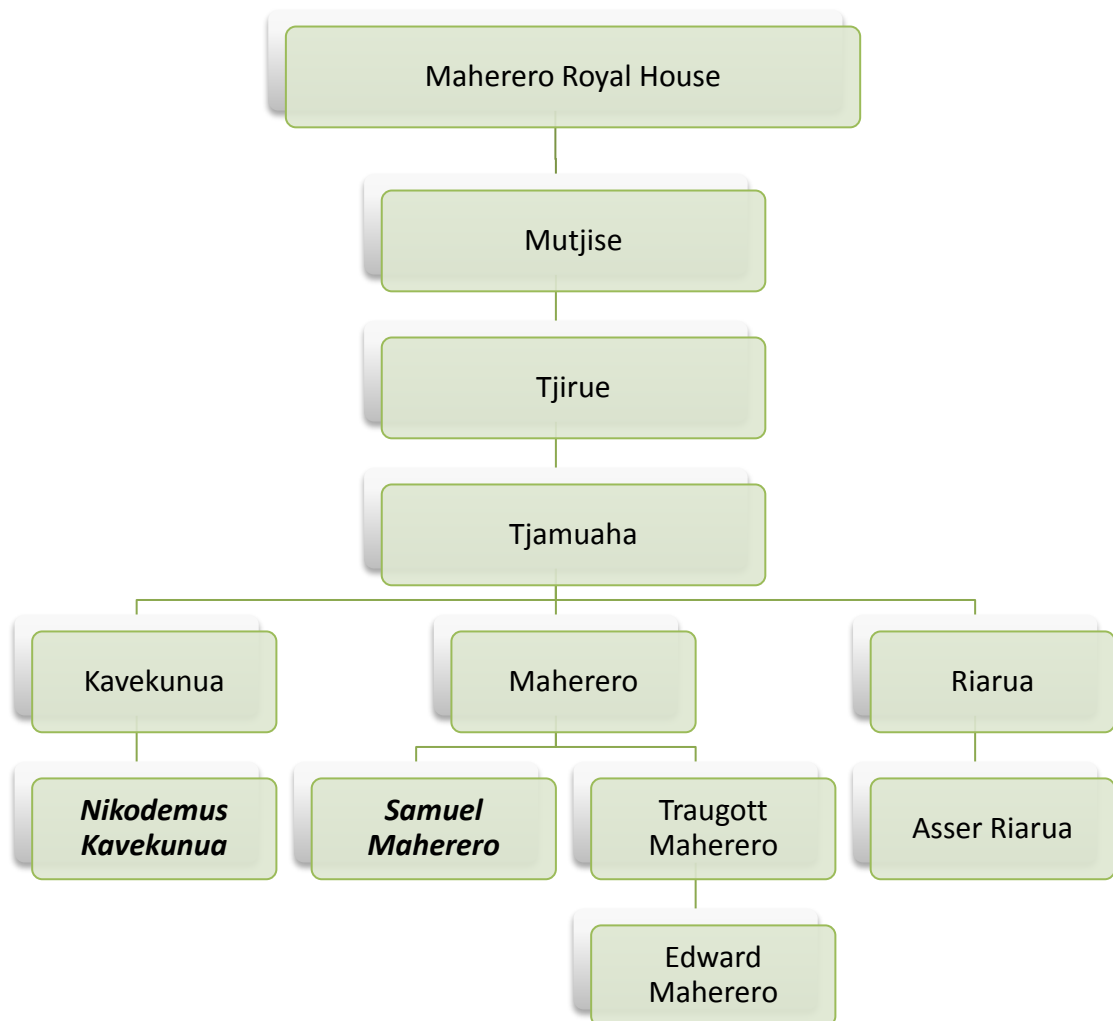


Figure 1: Family Tree of Maherero House¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Compiled from Sundermeier and Klaus Dierks, "Database of Namibian Biographies," *Namibia Library of Dr. Klaus Dierks*, 31 Oct. 2004, <http://klausdierks.com/FrontpageMain.html>, 2 May 2011.

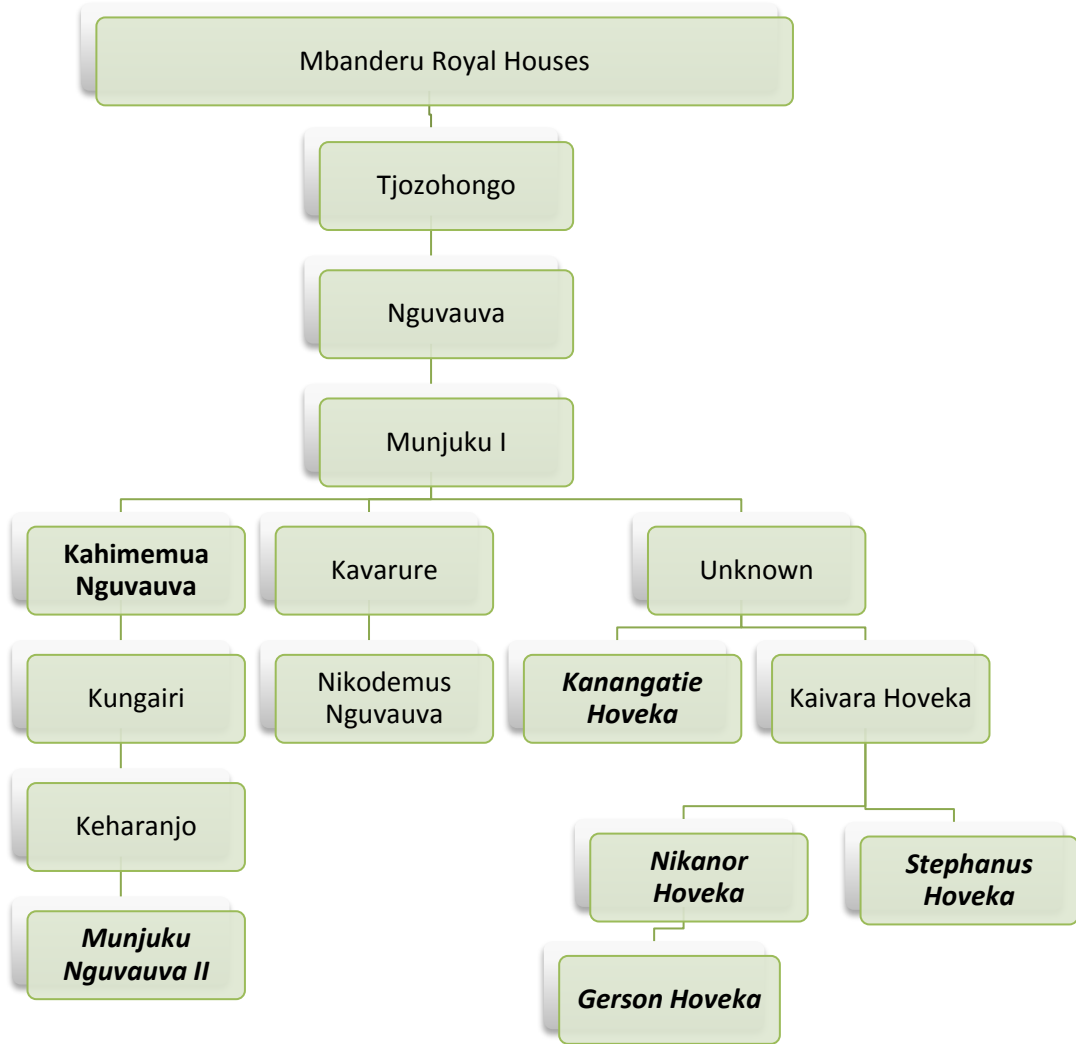


Figure 2: Family Tree of Mbanderu Houses

unite under Nikodemus Nguvauva and overthrow Nikanor Hoveka.¹⁹⁵ Although Nikanor Hoveka was never deposed, many Mbanderus in SWA were openly sympathetic to the Nguvauvas and they became a rallying point for those disaffected with the Hovekas. A well-known prophecy that an Nguvauva would return to rule the Mbanderus in SWA added fuel to this Mbanderu faction fight and raised a hope of ousting the Hovekas.¹⁹⁶

Epukiro Native Reserve opened in the early 1920s and, like all Herero reserves, it desperately lacked water. Boreholes and settlements were largely confined to the dry Eiseb, Epukiro, and Alexeck Omurambas; consequently, most of the reserve's extensive grazing could not be utilized due to distance from water sources. Because of its water position, Hereros resisted moving to Epukiro but Nikanor Hoveka agreed to relocate with his followers. As a result of his acquiescence, which the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of Native Affairs over-enthusiastically interpreted as "wholehearted support," Hoveka was given first dibs to choose his area; although, as the OIC balefully confessed, "At the present moment, the choice is very limited."¹⁹⁷ Nikanor Hoveka also received a raise because, as the OIC wrote to the Native Commissioner for SWA, "unlike other so-called headmen, his people do not appear to question his decision and his presence at Epukiro will be of good effect and create confidence there."¹⁹⁸ Hoveka and his followers thus settled in the south-eastern portion of the reserve near Post 3 in 1924 while Herero Headman Traugott Maherero

¹⁹⁵ P.H. van Rooyen & R. Reiner, "The Mbanderu Reassert their Identity," *The Municipality of Gobabis: Brief History of the Town and Region*, 18 Mar. 2009, <http://www.gobmun.com/history.htm> 2 May 2011.

¹⁹⁶ Sundermeier, 55. As will be seen in Chapter 5, Keharanjo's son Munjuku II would return to SWA as Mbanderu Chief as a (self-fulfilling?) result of this prophecy made by Tswana Chief Mathibe ca. 1896.

¹⁹⁷ NAN NAW n26/30/a23, OIC Cope to Secty for SWA, "Epukiro Native Reserve," 11 Feb. 1924.

¹⁹⁸ NAN NAW n26/30/a23, OIC Cope to Native Commissioner for SWA, "Epukiro Native Reserve," 3 April 1924.

settled in the northwest at Otjinene in 1926.¹⁹⁹

Relations between Mbanderus and Hereros in Epukiro between the 1920s and 1940s were generally cordial, though not always easy, but they began to break down immediately after WWII. When Nikodemus Nguvauva died in 1947 and was buried near Gobabis, Mbanderus turned out at his funeral en masse, despite the fact that Nikanor Hoveka was the official Mbanderu Headman of SWA. Moreover, Mbanderus only permitted their green flag at the funeral and banned Herero red and white flags, symbolically distancing themselves from Hereros politically and culturally.²⁰⁰ Despite tensions between Hoveka and Nguvauva followers within Mbanderu society, anti-Herero sentiment appears to have cut across these divisions and been reciprocated by Hereros. When Headman Nikanor Hoveka died in 1951, open hostilities between Hereros and Mbanderus erupted in Epukiro.

¹⁹⁹ NAN SWAA 1124 A158/7 v.2, Administrator to Superintendent Epukiro, "Movement of Native Headman Traugott and Followers to Epukiro Reserve," 7 Aug. 1926.

²⁰⁰ P.H. van Rooyen & R. Reiner, "The Mbanderu Reassert their Identity."



Figure 3: Second Borehole in Epukiro, 1923 ²⁰¹

²⁰¹ NAN SWAA 1127 A158/9 v.1, OIC Native Affairs to Secty for SWA, "Epukiro Native Reserve: Enclosure A," 2 Nov. 1923.

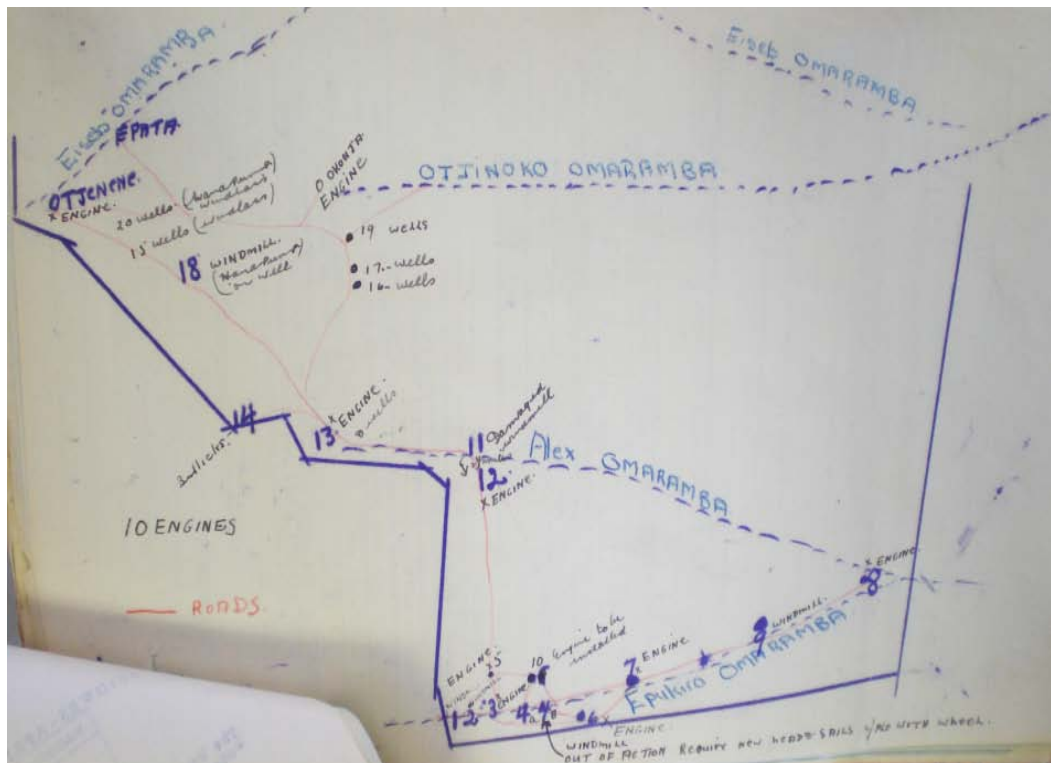


Figure 4: Map of Epukiro, ca. 1949 ²⁰²

Thicker than Water? Resources and Ethnic Division in Epukiro

The battles that ignited in Epukiro in the 1950s revolved around disproportionate representation in the reserve, unequal water development between Herero and Mbanderu areas, and interpersonal differences between Herero and Mbanderu leaders. Although most Mbanderus in SWA lived in Epukiro, they comprised only 3/8 of the total reserve population. Although not strictly segregated, Mbanderus generally lived in the southeast along the Epukiro Omuramba and Hereros were mostly settled in the northwest near the Eiseb Omuramba. Their “headquarters,” Post 3 and Otjinene, respectively, lay nearly seventy miles apart on bad roads. Despite these distances and differences, Epukiro remained a single reserve, with each ethnic faction receiving essentially one vote on any given matter. Administrative decisions

²⁰² NAN SWAA 1128 A158/9 v.4, Epukiro Welfare Officer to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Water Facilities: Borehole No. 5 Epukiro Reserve,” 31 Oct. 1949.

applied uniformly to the entire reserve regardless of local preference or circumstances. Thus, questions of whether a cream scheme should be adopted or grazing fees raised by a few shillings became incendiary politics as the Mbanderu minority had equal say to the Herero majority.

Nikanor's death precipitated a hostile dispute over the question of the headmanship of Epukiro Reserve. Hereros were not prepared to recognize Nikanor's brother, Stephanus Hoveka, and pressed Native Affairs to divide the reserve and give them their own headman. Herero leaders informed the Epukiro Welfare Officer they "[did] not want to be 'bossed' by the Mbanderu."²⁰³ When the Welfare Officer countered that the administration placed confidence in Stephanus, the Herero leaders replied, "He may be a good man, but he is essentially Mbanderu and blood is thicker than water."²⁰⁴

While such a statement may not have been strictly true in Epukiro, given intermarriage between Hereros and Mbanderus, disputes over water threatened to sever whatever blood, historical, and cultural ties linking communities in Epukiro. In addition to disproportionate clout, water had been disproportionately developed in the Mbanderu section of the reserve due to more abundant groundwater in the Epukiro Omuramba than the Eiseb. Because Nikanor Hoveka laid claim to the Epukiro in the 1920s, Mbanderus consequently benefitted from more and better water supplies, which opened grazing and facilitated stock accumulation.

After WWII, the SWAA Division of Native Affairs attempted to develop water supplies along the Eiseb to liquidate the smaller Herero reserves and resettle their populations in Epukiro. Reconnaissance reports were not encouraging - in 1948,

²⁰³ NAN SWAA 1124 A158/7 v.6, Welfare Officer to NC Gobabis, "Hereros and Ovambanderu in the Epukiro Reserve," 3 Nov. 1951.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

the water inspector described the Eiseb as “a barren sandy waste.”²⁰⁵ Nonexistent infrastructure and the extreme depth of the water table also meant that boreholes would be incredibly expensive to drill and inevitably involve numerous failed attempts. Beyond these initial costs, probable low yield combined with costs for gasoline, lubricants, and maintenance meant that each successful borehole in northwestern Epukiro would have to be run at an annual net loss of approximately £70. Developing water in the Eiseb was an extremely risky and expensive proposition that would undoubtedly cost more than the financially strapped SWAA wished to spend on African settlement. Water issues combined with rampant stock diseases, poor veld, poisonous plants, and abundant carnivora to make northwestern Epukiro “entirely unsuited to native settlement.”²⁰⁶ The Mbanderu area in southeastern Epukiro, along the Epukiro Omuramba, was clearly superior.

These water development and land quality issues were tied up with ethnic tension and personal animosity. According to Herero leader Edward Maherero, the late Headman, Nikanor Hoveka, “said that Herero men must not carry the keys to the water taps to turn them on at the posts – only Mbanderus could carry them.”²⁰⁷ This claim or state of affairs reflects the centrality of water control to Herero/Mbanderu conceptions of chiefly authority and the exercise of power. The keys to the water taps were the keys to the political kingdom in Epukiro and appear to have been an important means for Nikanor Hoveka to ensure Mbanderu power in Epukiro despite the Herero majority.

Although the possession of the keys following Nikanor Hoveka’s death is unclear, his successor, Stephanus Hoveka, greatly exacerbated ethnic friction

²⁰⁵ NANA SWAA 1124 A158/7 v.5, Welfare Officer to NC Gobabis, “Epukiro and Eastern Native Reserve Inspection,” 23 Jan. 1948.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, HJ Allen to CNC Naser, “Verskille tussen Hereros and Ovambanderu in Epukiro Reserwe,” 4 Nov. 1951.

surrounding water control in Epukiro. Stephanus claimed to have opened at least eight wells in Epukiro and openly stated that he planned to open a well in Otjinene - the Herero section of the reserve.²⁰⁸ By implying an extension of Mbanderu control of critical resources in a distinctly Herero area, Stephanus's statement inflamed anti-Mbanderu sentiment among Hereros.²⁰⁹ Combined with the fact that Stephanus's son held the contract to the only concession store in Otjinene, this plan to dig a well was the final straw. Herero leaders demanded that Epukiro be divided into a Herero reserve and an Mbanderu reserve. Headman Stephanus Hoveka, fearing the loss of the lucrative store contract, fought the division tooth and nail and insisted on Edward Maherero's expulsion from Epukiro as a "troublemaker."²¹⁰

Adding fuel to the fire, Headman Stephanus made inflammatory comments that sparked a conflagration of ethnic politics in Epukiro. Herero leaders accused Stephanus of saying that the Hereros "shot [Chief Kahimemua] down like a dog."²¹¹ When CNC H.J. Allen questioned Headman Stephanus, he admitted to the accusation but claimed to have been misunderstood. Headman Stephanus argued that he "meant no ill will... although the Hereros killed their head chief like a dog, the Mbanderus didn't hold it against the Hereros in the reserve."²¹² Unsurprisingly, this assurance failed to mollify Herero leaders.

²⁰⁸ NAN SWAA 1128 A158/9 v.4, Stephanus Hoveka to CNC, "My Work in the Above Native Reserve," 31 Aug. 1947. See also Welfare Officer Epukiro to NC Gobabis, "Water Supply: Epukiro Reserve," 15 Nov. 1947.

²⁰⁹ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, HJ Allen to CNC Naser, "Verskille tussen Hereros and Ovambanderu in Epukiro Reserwe," 4 Nov. 1951.

²¹⁰ NAN SWAA 1124, 158/7 v.6, Report by Welfare Officer, "The Herero and Mbanderu," 2 Nov. 1951.

²¹¹ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, HJ Allen to CNC Naser, "Verskille tussen Hereros and Ovambanderu in Epukiro Reserwe," 4 Nov. 1951.

²¹² Ibid.

A Very Dirty Deal Right Through

The relatively new apartheid regime began to make its presence felt in rural SWA just as ethnic tensions in Epukiro came to a head in the early fifties. Treading carefully in the early years, apartheid leaders sought to win popular support for their policies at home and abroad.²¹³ Because Chief Kutako played such a key role in blocking annexation, South African officials believed that gaining Herero support could go a long way in South Africa's campaign at the UN. The tensions in Epukiro reserve appeared to be a useful opportunity to gain Herero cooperation and illustrate apartheid's ability to create ethnic harmony.

Although SWA's Native Affairs Division was nominally independent, Prime Minister Malan pressured Native Affairs to tow the apartheid line. This was not a particularly onerous task for many officers who eagerly seized on the chance to manipulate the situation in Epukiro and champion the causes of apartheid and annexation in SWA.²¹⁴ The Epukiro Welfare Officer felt it would be quite easy to convince the Hereros of apartheid. He reported, "The Hereros have one object in mind and that is to be separated from the Mbanderu...As far as the Hereros are concerned, they would welcome apartheid in the reserve. Hereros in the north and Mbanderus in the South and the Mbanderu Headman to have no say in the northern area."²¹⁵

The Welfare Officer's usage of apartheid reflects the term's ambiguous meaning in the early 1950s. He employs it as a singular, transparent concept almost identical to segregation rather than the nebulous, complicated, and all-encompassing ideology it became in the 1960s, although high-ranking Afrikaner intellectuals already conceived of it as such. Nevertheless, the Welfare Officer's statement provides insight

²¹³ D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid*. I. Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race*.

²¹⁴ Administrator van Rhijn was, according to Dunbar Moodie, "a solid broer," *The Rise of Afrikanerdom*, p. 188. CNCs HJ Allen and Blignaut also clearly supported apartheid policies.

²¹⁵ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Report by Welfare Officer Shipman, "The Herero and Mbanderu," 2 November 1951.

into popular understandings of the word as “separate but equal.” In this sense, “apartheid” could be easily achieved by simply dividing Epukiro and appointing a Herero headman. Apartheid was therefore precisely what Epukiro Hereros desired – control over their own affairs relative to Mbanderu interference, their own area, and their own headman.²¹⁶ After all, the Welfare Officer concluded, “The Hereros state they have had a very dirty deal right through.”²¹⁷

CNC Allen travelled to Epukiro in November 1951 to examine the possibility of dividing the reserve. Altogether opposed to the plan, Headman Stephanus told Allen, “You have no right to divide the land. Don’t do such a thing that you do not have the right to do. To do so will cause uproar in the land.”²¹⁸ Stephanus Hoveka refused to acknowledge Mbanderus and Hereros as separate groups. To do so would be to concede that his authority in Epukiro was not wholly legitimate and admit there might be some validity to the Herero demand for their own headman. Instead, he again proposed the “troublemakers” be tossed out:

This is a living place for natives; if they understand each other well they can live together, but those who are not satisfied to live with the other must find another place. The land cannot be divided. If a man makes trouble, he must be tossed out. I don’t say all Hereros must be evicted. Those who are satisfied can stay here [but] those who are dissatisfied should go.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Welfare Officer Shipman to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Hereros and Ovambanderu in the Epukiro Reserve,” 3 Nov. 1951. Shipman writes, “The Hereros have expressed their loyalty and confidence in the Administration and the Administration’s officials and are prepared to carry out all instructions conveyed to them by ‘white’ officials, but they do not want to be ‘bossed’ by the Mbanderu.”

²¹⁷ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Report by Welfare Officer Shipman, “The Herero and Mbanderu,” 2 November 1951.

²¹⁸ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, HJ Allen to CNC Naser, “Verskille tussen Hereros and Ovambanderu in Epukiro Reserwe,” 4 Nov. 1951.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

This solution would theoretically rid the reserve of opponents like Edward Maherero while leaving a docile majority to shop at his son's store. Headman Stephanus's insistence that the land remain intact and that the Hereros, rather than the Mbanderu minority, vacate Epukiro also reveals something of his sense of Mbanderu sovereignty and inalienable right to Epukiro.

Stephanus also refused to countenance a separate Herero headman as a solution to Epukiro's woes. Traugott Maherero had been the Herero headman in Epukiro but he was evicted from the reserve following disagreements with Nikanor Hoveka.²²⁰ Headman Stephanus argued the Hereros refused to recognize him because "the Hereros think nothing of people who aren't Mahereros," and contended that they were committed to discord, prophesying "even if they get a second headman, they will not live in peace here."²²¹ Falling back on expulsion, Stephanus Hoveka proposed to send the Epukiro Hereros to neighboring Eastern Reserve, noting, "It would be good...It is a place that is far away."²²² Equivalent to Siberian exile, Eastern Reserve was a barren wasteland deep in the Kalahari and totally lacking in open water, *omurambas* (flash flood courses), and boreholes. As demonstrated in the next chapter, Eastern Reserve would become the heart of Hereroland on the apartheid government's maps and statistics, demonstrating their generosity in increasing homeland size. Eastern Reserve remains largely uninhabited; however, the idea to move would surprisingly capture the enthusiasm of a few Hereros.

After his visit to Epukiro, CNC Allen concluded that dividing the reserve was the only solution. He reported to his superiors, "it is altogether apparent that the

²²⁰ Ibid. Although other sources confirm Traugott's residence and leadership in Epukiro in the late 1920s, the precise nature of his dispute and the date of his eviction are unclear. Traugott and Nikanor worked together to promote the UNIA in SWA and were, at least at one point, collaborators. Traugott was Samuel Maherero's son and Edward Maherero's father.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

Hereros have a powerful hate against the Mbanderus and that they mistrust the latter. They will never live harmoniously with the Mbanderu and work under the leadership of Stephanus Hoveka.”²²³ Allen noted that, though Stephanus was a satisfactory Mbanderu headman, he incited Herero discontent by being “impatient, hasty, tactless, and prone to reckless and irresponsible statements.”²²⁴

Allen and the Welfare Officer agreed that simply appointing a Herero headman in Epukiro would not solve the problems. Allen argued, “There must be a division and separate Headmen and Boardmen in each section.”²²⁵ He contended the division was historically sound because the Otjinene area had not originally been part of Epukiro Reserve, but only incorporated in 1934. He injected urgency for the division by commenting, “it was clear there was bad blood” and grimly forecasting that if circumstances remained unchanged, “there will always be a danger of the kind [the Welfare Officer] fears, namely a bloodletting,”²²⁶

Allen’s plan to divide Epukiro into wards would not sever it into two reserves. Rather, it would remain as one with free movement for residents. The main difference would be administrative with each ward having its own Welfare Officer, headman, advisory board, and budget. A second Welfare Officer based at Otjinene would be essential because, as the current Welfare Officer stressed, “Proper control cannot be exercised due to the distances involved.” He feared ensuing “chaos” as he had become entangled in the ethnic struggle. He reported, “The Hereros regard [me] as their friend and protector against their oppressors, the Mbanderu. The Mbanderu on the other hand hate [me] for various reasons, for not tolerating their laziness, excuses,

²²³ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, HJ Allen to CNC Naser, “Verskille tussen Hereros and Ovambanderu in Epukiro Reserwe,” 4 Nov. 1951.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

rackets, and usual manner of running down the administration.”²²⁷ He cheerfully concluded this was not “causing [me] any sleepless nights as [I am] fully aware that nobody who does his duty will ever be popular with the Mbanderu.”²²⁸

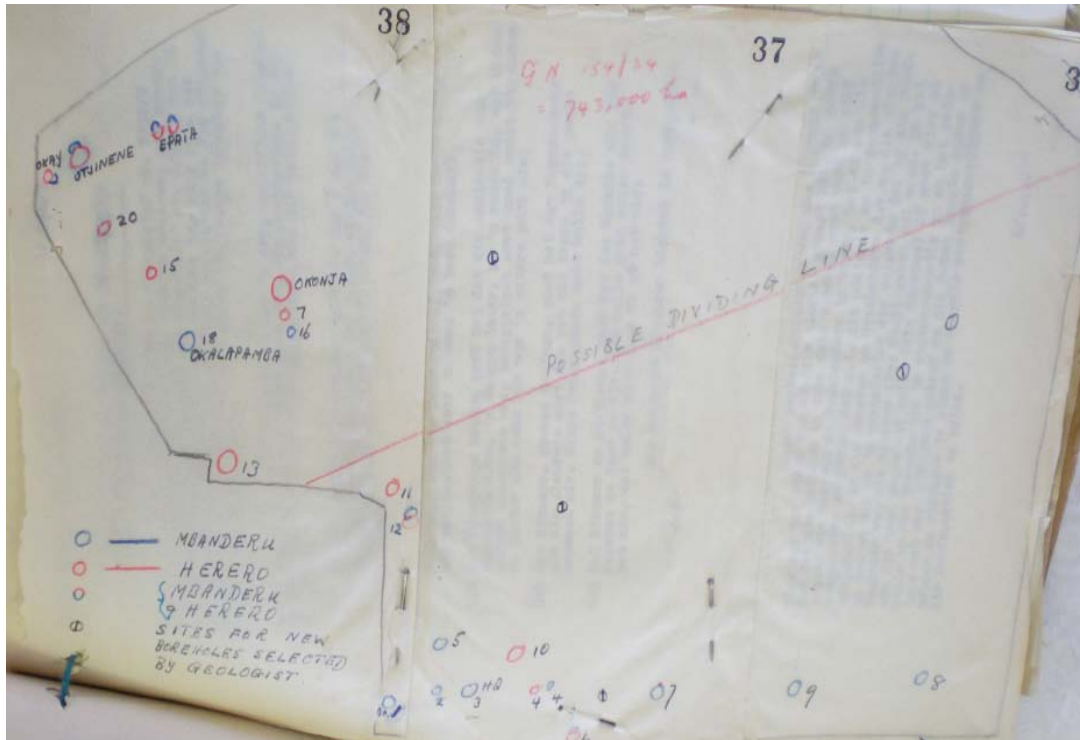


Figure 5: Allen's Plan to Divide the Reserve²²⁹

The Secretary for SWA agreed with Allen’s proposal to divide Epukiro into administratively distinct wards and laid the plan before the ExCom. He concurred with Allen that just appointing a headman would be insufficient because, “Edward Maherero, who would be chosen, would be too weak against Stephanus and no improvements would be possible in the attitudes between the two tribes.”²³⁰ The ExCom approved the plan on the grounds “that the Ovambanderu living on the Herero

²²⁷ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Welfare Officer Epukiro to Magistrate/NC Gobabis, “Report for the Month of December 1951,” 5 Jan. 1952.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ NAN SWAA 1126/A158/7 v.6, ANC Allen to CNC Nesor, Schematic division of Reserve. ca. Nov. 1951. Note the preponderance of blue circles for Mbanderu settlements/boreholes and the lack of any water or settlement in reserve’s interior.

²³⁰ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Secty for SWA/CNC Nesor to Administrator in Executive Committee, “Verskille tussen Hereros en Mbanderus in Epukiro Resewe,” 30 Nov. 1951.

side may stay there or move to the Ovambanderu's side and vice versa."²³¹ The Hereros pronounced themselves appreciative "for the very kind action and assistance rendered to them" and were "in full agreement that no pressure should be exercised to shift the Mbanderus who wish to stay with them; the Mbanderus have expressed the same opinion."²³²

However, the initial division did little to alleviate tensions between Hereros and Mbanderus because a severe drought and competition for water resources and grazing exacerbated ethnic hostilities. Although Allen's plan would grant each group its own omuramba, potential boring sites in three tributaries bisecting the demarcation line became a serious bone of contention. The Welfare Officer, believing the area in question to be "heavy sand dune," proposed it be declared a no man's land.²³³ Native Affairs proposed to equalize the situation by drilling three additional boreholes in the Herero ward, but by May 1952 all of Epukiro was hopelessly overstocked and tempers flared again. The Welfare Officer reported, "there is no hope of ever accommodating [all] those cattle...even with an additional three more boreholes."²³⁴ He grimly concluded, "Assault is becoming very common in this reserve."²³⁵

To improve their material conditions and ease escalating differences with Mbanderus, Herero leaders in Epukiro asked the SWAA Division of Native Affairs to sink boreholes in Eastern Reserve so that they might relocate there. The Welfare

²³¹ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Allen to Magte/NC Gobabis, "Differences between the Mbanderus and Hereros in the Epukiro Reserve," 18 Feb. 1952.

²³² NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Epukiro Welfare Officer to Magte/NC Gobabis, "Differences between the Mbanderus and Hereros in the Epukiro Reserve," 28 Feb. 1952.

²³³ Ibid. The sand cover between the two omurambas and their three tributaries was so thick that the area had never been fully explored or mapped. State efforts to explore the area up to this point ended in failure due to insufficient water and difficult terrain. Native Affairs administrators, agricultural officers, and water division experts were divided over the course of the Eiseb and the Epukiro Omurambas. The precise location and course of the three tributaries was disputed and mainly speculative.

²³⁴ NAN SWAA 1124 158/7 v.6, Epukiro Welfare Officer to Magte/NC Gobabis, "Report for the Month of April 1952." 5 May 1952.

²³⁵ Ibid.

Officer supported this request because it would “break up the terrible concentration of cattle.”²³⁶ He predicted, “Once sufficient water is found in [Eastern Reserve], there will be a marked exodus of Hereros from Epukiro, this leaving greater scope for the Mbanderu cattle.”²³⁷ The practical problems of drilling and equipping enough successful boreholes in Eastern Reserve to sustain a substantial Herero population and their livestock, however, made this suggestion a long term solution unable to address immediate problems. The Welfare Officer’s recommended severely punishing assault perpetrators short-run.

When One Goat gets Scab, Sooner or Later it will be all Over the Country

Although Allen hoped his dividing line would make Epukiro a model of apartheid success, the closure of Herero and Mbanderu ranks in anticipation of a new threat looming on the horizon sidelined the division question. In late 1953, the DNA announced its plans to take over the SWAA’s Division of Native Affairs in April 1955. Supporting Kutako’s petitioning campaign against annexation, Herero leaders in Epukiro opposed the DNA takeover as a step towards incorporation. A member of Kutako’s Chief’s Council summed up the Herero leaders’ position in a 1954 meeting with the CNC:

We don’t want to be under the Union...The Union has different tribes with different customs; some are communists, some are Mau Mau, some want to have white women, and others are vandals and arsonists. When one goat gets scab, sooner or later it will be all over the country. ...It is why we brought our matter to the UN...We want a [UN] committee to come here to confer on the matter. If it cannot be done,

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

we ask that Hosea and three others be given passports to go to the UN and find out what is happening. If passports are refused, we ask the Native Affairs takeover be delayed. We are not prepared to be placed under the Union.²³⁸

While this statement reveals an interesting glimpse into traditional Herero leaders' opinions of African politics in South Africa and the Chief's Council's general conservatism, it also demonstrates an astute appreciation for apartheid political strategies. State officials usually responded to these incisive statements, which revealed political machinery intended to be invisible, with sarcasm. As if on cue, the Secretary for SWA retorted, "Who [do you] think is [the] government? You have been under the Union government all these years."

State officers' next strategy for dealing with Herero leaders' discomfiting political statements was to bring up Herero land claims and the UN and then insist that they did not care about these issues and were not prepared to discuss them. Instead of convincing anyone of their indifference to the UN or obscuring the connection between the DNA takeover and annexation, this strategy only confirmed the state's vulnerability and its intentions in SWA. Accordingly, the Secretary proceeded to declare Herero land claims as fatuous and assured them that the UN was a dead end. After a lengthy diatribe to this effect, the Secretary brushed the matter aside, saying "If you want to entertain yourselves by petitioning the UN, do so, but let us [now] discuss things of benefit. It is only another department taking over and it has nothing to do with your [land] claims."²³⁹

The DNA takeover had serious implications for water supplies and water

²³⁸ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, CNC J. Nesor, "Uittreksel uit Notule van Vergadering van Hererostamleiers op 22,23, en 24 November 1954, Aminuis Reservaat."

²³⁹ Ibid.

development in SWA's reserves. First, the DNA proposed to assume all technical functions in the reserves, including water development and resource management, which had hitherto been under the SWAA's Water Affairs Division. Secondly, the South African government pushed to increase water development in peripheral areas of the territory in order to clear out black spots from the proposed "European" areas. Finally, the DNA demanded that water provisioning in the reserves take the form of earthen catchment dams built by "free labor" or "self-help" schemes.

Dr. Otto Wipplinger, the director of SWA's Water Affairs, emphatically opposed the DNA's plan to take control of water development in the reserves although he was a Stellenbosch graduate and not opposed to apartheid. Wipplinger was unquestionably the best expert on water and hydrology in SWA and a highly capable civil engineer. His opposition to the DNA takeover of water development was based on his intimate knowledge of water systems in SWA and appreciation of the territory's fragile water situation. His scientific and professional opinion could not square with technocratic and bureaucratic plans emanating from Pretoria, no matter how much he agreed with the NP's politics.

DNA planners in Pretoria had no frame of reference for the difficulties, expenses, and uncertainties particular to water development in SWA, nor did they recognize the interdependence of SWA's water systems and ecology. Wipplinger pushed for a single water division in SWA and argued in a letter to the CNC in 1954, "In my opinion, water development in SWA will be best served if one central water division exists that offers technical services to all divisions. Experience in Native Reserves would be applied on farms and elsewhere and water provisioning could

become better coordinated.”²⁴⁰ But this was only the beginning of a fight with the DNA to control water development in SWA’s reserves. Nebulous apartheid ideologies and increasing white settlement in SWA required the smaller native reserves’ liquidation. Acting on DNA orders, Water Affairs began to survey areas of Eastern and Epukiro for possible boring a settlement sites, although they met with little success. DNA officers nevertheless remained hopeful. One local DNA officer described himself as “favorably impressed” by water and settlement possibilities in Eastern reserve, noting, “I am of the opinion that by working from successful boreholes and nibbling into the Eastern Reserve, it will eventually be found that a fair area of this reserve can be used to good advantage.”²⁴¹ He cautioned however that “it will be disastrous to embark on a drilling program.”²⁴²

These surveying forays were long-term, capital intensive plans that were, at any rate, too insubstantial to really alleviate existing land and water pressure in Herero reserves, especially in the short term. On-going drought provided the DNA an opportunity to push their new dam-building strategy, achieve longstanding destocking objectives, and force “idle” and “troublesome” Hereros into the migrant labor system. The free-labor dam building program had been fairly successful in South Africa and the DNA planned to export the model SWA as a remedy against expensive boreholes.²⁴³ However, Hereroland’s topography militated against this strategy. There were few suitable dam sites in Epukiro Reserve and none in Eastern. At the few places where a catchment dam might be possible, free labor was impracticable

²⁴⁰ NAN SWAA 492 A50/254, Wipplinger to CNC, “Damme in Naturelleservate in Gebiede in SWA,” 5 Jul. 1954.

²⁴¹ NAN AHE HN1/15/2/4, Sr. Welfare Officer WBENR to Magte/NC Otjiwarongo, “Inspection: Portion of the Eastern Reserve adjoining the Otjituuo and Waterberg East Reserve,” 8 Aug. 1955.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ NAN SWAA 492 A50/254, Sr. Agricultural Officer to CNC, “Damme in Naturelleservate en Gebiede in SWA,” 12 May 1954.

because there was no open water for trek animals. Building dams in these areas required a bulldozer, which was not only expensive but required an experienced operator and not unskilled labor.²⁴⁴ In any case, these few dams would have a minimal impact on opening up Epukiro's vast grazing lands.

Dams & Destocking

By 1955, the three boreholes Native Affairs promised for the Herero ward in Epukiro had not materialized and prolonged drought made the situation in the reserve critical. The Welfare Officer's request for emergency water supplies fell on deaf ears. The DNA and Division of Waterways were not opposed to boreholes or their expense; they were opposed to providing these expensive works to Africans. Of the 235 boreholes Waterways drilled in 1954, only 31 were in reserves with the remainder on private white-owned farms.²⁴⁵ Whereas Africans were required to pay for all their boreholes and could retain control over the successful ones, whites only paid the state for successful holes and assumed ownership of them. Although, Kössler argues that the state supported water development in reserves during the interwar era to make stock farming less labor intensive and free up African workers for white enterprises, the situation in 1950s Herero reserves was not this clear.²⁴⁶

Water development in Herero reserves was tricky. While improving water supplies in reserves could theoretically make African labor more readily available, it also encouraged pastoralist expansion, which could protect Herero men from the labor market. By limiting water supplies, the DNA could force Hereros to destock and enter the migrant labor force, which was particularly short on farms. Moreover, strict DNA

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ NAN BAC 100 HN5/1/2/v.1, Wiplinger, "Memorandum on the Water Conservation Service in South West Africa," 5 Jun. 1955.

²⁴⁶ R. Kössler, "From Reserve to Homeland," 450.

control over water supplies and development would allow state officials to map reserves and control Herero movement, stock populations, and vaccinations, etc. By granting or withholding water access, DNA officers could manipulate African politics and cripple resistance in the reserves. This power over African lives, bodies, and livelihoods was the crux of frictions between the DNA and the ecologically minded and politically disinterested Water Affairs branch. While Dr. Verwoerd wished to micromanage African life, Dr. Wipplinger desired to keep water supplied throughout the territory. The tension between conflicting pressures to strategically supply and withhold water in reserves, combined with centralized demands to minimize costs, made earthen dams a seemingly sensible solution.

Therefore, CNC Allen responded callously to requests for emergency boreholes in Epukiro. He wrote, “No provision was made in the budget of the trust funds for this year for the boring of more holes and no money can be expected from another source for this aim. Under the circumstances, I can just suggest that cattle owners be pressed to pay their grazing fees so that, of the estimated amount of £6,890, £5,000 will be available for the provision of desired services at the end of this year.”²⁴⁷ Grazing fees, which residents loathed, could only be paid by remittances from wage labor or stock auctions. The DNA viewed wage labor and destocking as complementary and mutually desirable. They particularly encouraged destocking in order to introduce more “efficient” and “scientific” farming methods. Allen continued, “It is altogether necessary that the cattle in the reserve be reduced until no more posts are overloaded.”²⁴⁸ While destocking on that scale was a fantasy, auction proceeds could be used to “[build] earthen dams under the free labor system to make

²⁴⁷ NAN BAC 42 HN1/14/4/6 v.1, CNC Allen to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Vergadering gehou 5 Mei 1955: Epukiro Naturellesreservaat,” 21 Jun. 1955.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

more water available.”²⁴⁹ Allen clearly concluded, “Drilling boreholes will not take place this year.”²⁵⁰

Although the DNA and Water Affairs had at least arrived at a working agreement by late 1955, no assistance for water provisioning was forthcoming. The Welfare Officer at Otjinene reported, “With one developed borehole out of use and two boreholes still undeveloped (lacking a pump and/or catchment reservoir), water position critical.”²⁵¹ The Welfare Officer at Post 3, likewise complained. Under the section of his monthly report titled “Water Supplies,” he wrote “I really don’t know what to write here anymore. Every summer is worse than the last and most of the [pumps] are in poor condition. The winter which was such a nightmare is almost over; how will it be now that it is getting warm again?”²⁵²

The DNA takeover led to a financial reshuffling that deflected the burden of financing reserve development onto each individual reserve. The South African government provided a one-time grant of £150,000 for Native Affairs development in SWA and Allen told Hereros that the government would help them if they would accept development funds, but would not assist them if they refused to cooperate.²⁵³ When Hereros proved reluctant to accept funds, Allen sharply reminded them of the government’s generosity to “improve” African lives:

It would be unjust to expect the government to give you more from the taxes the whites pay, especially if nothing further is contributed from your side....Is there another country in the world where the majority of

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ NAN BAC 59 HN1/15/6/5 v.1, WO Otjinene to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Report of the Supt. of the Epukiro/Otjinene Reserve: August 1955,” 24 Aug. 1955.

²⁵² NAN BAC 59 HN1/15/6/5 v.1, WO Epukiro to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Maandelikse Berigtes van die Welsynbeampte Epukiro Reserwe vir die Maand van Augustus 1955,” 25 Aug. 1955.

²⁵³ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, “Notule van die 8ste Vergadering van Herero Stamleiers gehou op 21, 22, en 23 Februarie 1956, te Okakarara, Waterberg-Oos Naturelleservaat,” 23 Feb. 1956.

the population does not pay direct taxes to the government? I doubt if there is one. ...The grazing fees that are paid into the reserve funds are used exclusively for reserve aims. You ought to keep these facts in your minds the next time you want to criticize the government. You ought rather to be thankful.²⁵⁴

Although Verwoerd and DNA officers attempted to make apartheid palatable by framing it as development and a panacea for longstanding African woes, Herero and Mbanderu communities approached development funds cautiously and discussed them extensively.

On one hand, the desperation of the drought made funds for water development extremely attractive. On the other, Kutako was also concerned that the DNA takeover sounded the death knell for Herero claims for land restitution which formed the backbone of their anti-South African petitions to the UN and hopes for independence. Accepting funds would also compromise Herero petitions to the UN – denouncing the government while simultaneously accepting its handouts.

Kutako voiced his concerns about the DNA takeover with Allen in 1955, linking it directly to land restitution and UN petitions. “The reason we are here,” he explained, “is because the people have been taken over and we want to know if our claims have been taken up and what has been decided. The people are unwilling to live under Union laws because the laws are bad. The Minister (Verwoerd) has said the path is now open for the Union laws to be passed here and I am afraid to work with the Union.”²⁵⁵ Allen immediately sought to disconnect these fundamentally interconnected issues; he snapped, “[The takeover] is an accomplished fact and it will not help to rehash it here...The Union has always had the right to rule and pass laws

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ NAN BAC 46 HN1/15/5/1 v.1, “Vergadering van Hereroleiers gehou te Windhoek Lokasie op 17/8/1955.”

here; thus, I don't understand why you are so concerned."²⁵⁶ Kutako worried about the removal of the locus Native Affairs power to Pretoria and articulated this fear, complaining, "everything is in Pretoria...The people don't want Union laws. They just want to have Mr. Allen and cooperation."²⁵⁷ Allen dismissively claimed that nothing would change and contended that apartheid was locally responsive and subject to democratic processes. He assured Kutako, "Pretoria will [only] be consulted on policy matters and for advice...nothing will be passed here if you don't want it."²⁵⁸ He nevertheless cajoled, "there are Union laws that will be good for Southwest" and extolled the Abolition of Passes Law.²⁵⁹ The extent to which Allen consciously fabricated these assurances or whether he really believed sunny apartheid propaganda is unclear. It was, after all, still the honeymoon phase.

The effects of these early DNA incursions on Herero/Mbanderu politics in SWA are murky. Headman Stephanus Hoveka attended a territory-wide meeting of Herero leaders and opened it by saying, "We are here to discuss a few matters that weigh on the Hereros' heart," suggesting that the external threat of apartheid may have trumped, at least temporarily, intra-ethnic divisions and encouraged some cohesion.²⁶⁰ However, as Headman Stephanus continued, "Some of the people understood what [CNC Allen] said (referring to development funds) and others didn't understand."²⁶¹ Rather than confusion, this statement indicates disagreement among Hereros and Mbanderus over the potential benefits of apartheid and whether development funds should be accepted. Although the precise fault-lines of this disagreement are unspecified, the open hostilities that emerged in the sixties suggest

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

that most Mbanderus favored accepting government funds and resented Herero control over national Herero/Mbanderu politics. However, Headman Stephanus's presence at the meeting indicated the beginnings of a truce between the Hovekas and Herero leaders. This cooperative spirit generally did not permeate down to Mbanderu communities.

Self-Help

Herero/Mbanderu cooperation was immediately tested in Epukiro by a five-year development plan instituted by the DNA. Because the reserve remained an administrative whole despite its two wards, development plans would have to be established for the whole reserve and Headman Stephanus would have to work together with the new Herero headman, Edward Maherero.²⁶² The additional fees needed to meet the shortfall of state development funds would have to be provided by both wards. Epukiro residents resented the new financial arrangements because the reserve already struggled to meet its expenditures. Headman Stephanus complained, "We don't have any money left over for water troubles."²⁶³

The CNC and Welfare Officers insisted that stock auctions and reductions were the only way to meet new water costs and maintain existing programs. Epukiro residents not only resisted destocking, but felt betrayed. One man griped, "The reserve is not all worked; if the reserve as a whole was worked, the animals would not have to be reduced." Water Supplies in Epukiro's interior and Eastern Reserve were supposed to have been opened to make previously inaccessible pasturage available.

²⁶² NAN BAC 42 HN1/14/4/6 v.1, Welfare Officer Nel to Magte/NC Gobabis, "Raadsvergadering gehou te Pos No. 3: Epukiro Reserwe," 15 Oct. 1955.

²⁶³ Ibid.

He continued,

In 1952, [the Secretary for SWA] said that boreholes would be sunk in Eastern Reserve and there are three boreholes that get water. At the meeting at Okakarara (1954), Mr. Allen said the holes would be given to Epukiro. Now I hear they are going to be used as spare land in times of drought. These boreholes belong to us and they must now be developed. If those holes are developed, then we do not have to reduce the cattle.²⁶⁴

This was not necessarily a debate over three boreholes, but an argument about sovereignty, which was tied to their historical conceptions of land tenure and land restitution claims. Herero and Mbanderu communities held that reserve lands belonged to them based on precolonial settlements that superseded contemporary reserve boundaries and understood the reserves as a partial restitution of those lands lost to colonial invasion. While they were not free within reserves, in Herero and Mbanderu reasoning, the land and its resources unquestionably belonged to them. Because the state assumed powers of water development, Herero and Mbanderu communities held them to that responsibility and considered promises for boreholes binding. In contrast, Native Affairs/DNA officers viewed Africans as tolerated squatters on government land and regarded water development plans as plans - not promises. It was their prerogative to change the plans as they wished without consulting reserve residents. Moreover, DNA officers had superiors to please and their own careers to consider. Getting the job done was more important than pandering to the wishes of “backward” Africans.

However, securing Herero cooperation was essential to implement apartheid

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

and incorporate SWA – both to silence their international protests and secure the free labor necessary to carry out development. When free labor and cooperation with the five year development plan was not forthcoming in Epukiro, the CNC hoped a little bribery would go a long way. Allen offered Epukiro’s advisory board a £1 raise (although he was sure to inform the board men, “You don’t earn the first £1 you get now”) and promised to *consider* adding the three boreholes in Eastern Reserve to Epukiro.²⁶⁵ When the DNA and Water Affairs planned to put two dams in the Epukiro Omuramba and one in the Eiseb a year later, Allen was quick to remind Headman Stephanus, “Free labor must be provided for the building of dams,” and noted he was “disappointed to hear that [the self-help scheme] is still not working here.”²⁶⁶ This speech made little impact on Headman Stephanus because he refused to send free-labor to build an auction kraal two weeks later.²⁶⁷

Despite considerable foot dragging by Epukiro residents, the dams were completed but they were ineffective at opening additional grazing. Epukiro residents viewed the dams as just another state tool to enforce destocking and control movement and accumulation like internal fencing and auction kraals. DNA officers seemed baffled by Epukiro residents refusal to “help themselves” by providing free labor for public works projects in the reserve. Although DNA officers *knew* reserve residents to be hopeless malingerers, they nevertheless expected, in colonial logic, residents to volunteer to work in the spirit of civic duty. Yet, years of state policies preventing residents from developing their own water supplies or making any other improvements lest they feel a right to the land and water had squelched any

²⁶⁵ NAN BAC 42 HN1/14/4/6 v.1, Welfare Officer to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Notule van die Jaarlikse Vergadering gehou deur Mnr. Allen Hoofnaturellekommissaris,” 27 Oct. 1955 and NAN BAC 59 HN1/15/6/5 v.1, Allen to Secty for SWA, “Vergroot van Epukiro Reservaat,” 23 Nov. 1955.

²⁶⁶ NAN BAC 42 HN1/14/4/6 v.1, Welfare Officer Post 3 to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Notule van Vergadering gehou te Epukiro deur die H.N. Kommissaris,” 23 Jul. 1956.

²⁶⁷ NAN BAC 9 HN1/15/6/5 v.1, Welfare Officer Post 3 to Magte/NC Gobabis, “Maandelikse Berigtes van die Welsynbeampte Epukiro Reserwe,” 30 Sept. 1956.

enthusiasm for these new development projects. These projects also took much needed labor out of the field and residents demanded compensation for time lost completing tasks that they no longer saw as their responsibility.

Water became an important cite of struggle between Epukiro residents and DNA leaders over “self help” and accepting development funds. C.B. Young, the Secretary for Native Affairs in Pretoria, instructed that DNA field officers should not recommend any boreholes “in areas where natives are not cooperative.”²⁶⁸ Resistance to free labor became endemic in Herero reserves between 1957 and 1959. This opposition was undoubtedly strengthened by Namibian representatives testifying against the South African state at the UN for the first time in 1957. During this first decade of apartheid, Hereros and Mbanderus appeared to have begun to set historical differences aside and ally in the face of increasing oppression. Apparent growing UN and international responsiveness to the state of affairs in SWA and the presence of Hereros at the UN seemed to have encouraged Herero/Mbanderu unification by politicizing land and water shortages through land restitution claims.

By 1959, the two main topics Herero reserve boards submitted to discuss at the annual tribal meeting were land restitution demands and complaints about free labor. Welfare Officers were unanimously irritated by the pervasiveness of these two issues and Hereros’ refusal to see obvious logic. They variously complained, “For the last eight months, all attempts [have been made] to get the natives to accept and understand this [free labor] scheme, but they just consider the matter in a negative light, namely as a means of oppression,” and “[I] have pointed out to the reserve board that free labor without pay is only in their best interests because they are just

²⁶⁸ NAN BAC 100 HN5/1/2 v.2, Secty of Native Affairs, “Native Affairs Circular 64/337: Proposed Increased Boring Programme,” 13 Dec. 1957.

working for themselves, but they apparently don't want to understand it clearly."²⁶⁹

Welfare Officers blamed headmen and boardmen as being "stumbling blocks" to progress, serving "only as mouthpieces of the people," and "claiming the whites took their land away."²⁷⁰

Conclusion: Divergent Paths

Despite increasing cohesion between Mbanderus and Hereros in Epukiro towards the end of the 1950s, deep rifts were beginning to develop across Otjiherero speaking society. Although Stephanus Hoveka increasingly fell into line with dominant Herero leadership under Hosea Kutako and consistently referred to himself as a Herero during the late fifties, broader Herero and Mbanderu communities did not follow suit. Although dividing the reserve and the threats of drought and apartheid may have temporarily overwhelmed ethnic politics in Epukiro, Stephanus's death in 1957, major changes in DNA structure, and intervening external events provided an opportunity for the Mbanderu majority to reassert themselves against perceived Herero oppression and Hoveka treachery.

Dr. Verwoerd became Prime Minister in 1958 following the death of J.G. Strijdom, bringing apartheid into a new and more terrifying phase. CNC Allen retired shortly thereafter, leaving his assistant, South African Afrikaner and ardent apartheid supporter Bruwer Blignaut, as successor. Blignaut became the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner or HBSK as the DNA morphed into the Department of Bantu Affairs and Development (BAD). Blignaut inaugurated this new era with a lengthy speech at the Herero tribal meeting in 1959. He made his position and that of the state very

²⁶⁹ NAN BAC 47 HN1/15/5/1 v.4, Welfare Officer Waterberg East to Magte/NC Otjiwarongo, "Vergadering van Herero Stamleiers," 2 Feb. 1959. NAN BAC HN1/15/5/1 v.4, Welfare Officer Otjituuo to Magte/NC Grootfontein, "Vergadering van Herero Stamleiers," 6 Feb. 1959.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

clear. Hereros and Mbanderus had to make a choice. They could either hope in the UN for unlikely independence or they could cooperate with the state and receive immediate benefits in the way of development with promises of autonomy and a bright future. He told them,

I want to sail along with you, but if you go behind my back, you cannot expect me to remain friendly and helpful. ...In the past year I told you that the road to the Department and government in the Union will always be open to you, but you know yourselves that an unused road eventually becomes totally unserviceable. ...The door was open for you to come air your grievances. But did you simply do that? You elders went with your complaints to other people such as Michael Scott and Getzen (Mburumba Kerina)... You don't make use of your chances to voice your complaints but hurry to the UN or return to your leaders who tell things that aren't true at the UN, but they (the UN) cannot challenge you and they don't know any better.²⁷¹

Blignaut went on to complain about the “untruths” Hereros told the UN with regard to water supplies, particularly picking on a supposed claim the DNA did not want the Hereros to have access to irrigation. He sneered, “Now tell me, in what reserve is there so much water that you can irrigate the land and besides, none of you are prepared, even if there was water, to work a piece of land under irrigation.”²⁷² Instead, he asked them why Herero representatives did not tell the UN all the good things the DNA had done - how many boreholes the administration drilled in the reserves; how many dams, troughs, and reservoirs had been built, and the thousands of pounds from white taxpayers that went to develop the reserves. “On these points

²⁷¹ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, “Openingsrede by die Elfde Jaarvergadering van die Leiers van die Herero Stam: 17-19 Maart 1959.”

²⁷² Ibid.

you remain silent,” he noted, “and I ask you why.”²⁷³

Before offering anyone in the audience, which was surely seething in rage by this point, a chance to answer, Blignaut concluded his speech with an insult and an ultimatum. “From what I have said, it is clear that the proverb, ‘It is a foul bird that soils its own nest’ applies here. You have gone out of your way to bring the UN and the world outside our country under the impression that you are trapped here in SWA and oppressed in such a way that is even worse than slavery.”²⁷⁴ Blignaut then relied on the administration’s favourite tactic of reminding the Hereros of how South Africa rescued them from the hands of murderous Germans and therefore they had no right to be disgruntled, only a duty to be eternally grateful for any crumbs their white benefactors might deign to throw their way. He finished:

Now, let us clearly and correctly understand one another that we have now come to two roads. You have chosen the other road for yourselves the past few years which runs across the sea, but the open road to the Department and the government you have not taken and it is becoming overgrown. I want to assure you that, if you want to turn around to the other road, you will get to where you should have been from the beginning. If however you choose the other road, then you must expect that things will now go as you have depicted them to the UN.²⁷⁵

Lines had been drawn and threats to retaliate for continuing to cooperate with the UN were not idle. That would sadly become apparent in just eight short months. Nevertheless, there was a choice for Herero and Mbanderu individuals, communities, and leaders to make. They did not, contrary to a dominant historiography jubilantly written in the afterglow of independence, all make the same choice. Blignaut’s

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

proverbial “open road” spelled opportunity for some and they did not hesitate to take it. As will be seen, those choices had major consequences on Herero/Mbanderu society over the next decade, with particularly serious implications in Epukiro. Taking “the open road” or the road “across the sea” became inextricably linked to one’s ethnic identity and led to a major reshuffling of intra-ethnic alliances among and between Hereros and Mbanderus. Either way, from the perspective of Herero leaders and the state, there was no middle ground.

PART II – THE 1960s

In the late fifties, liberation politics began to sweep SWA, cutting across a variety of differences and aligning black SW Africans against the apartheid state. However, ethnic, ideological, and generational differences soon factionalized this resistance. SWAPO (formerly Ovambo People's Organization or OPO), an Ovambo dominated liberation party, emerged under Sam Nujoma in 1959 and was initially closely allied with Kutako's Chief's Council. In 1959, SWAPO, SWA Progressive Association, SWA Student Body, and Kutako's Chief's Council, attempted to merge under an umbrella organization, the SWA National Union (SWANU), but interpersonal differences at the elections led SWAPO to leave SWANU before it got off the ground.

Educated Herero youths influenced by Marxist and socialist rhetoric, primarily Gerson Veii, Zed Ngavirue, and Jariretundu Kozonguizi, became frustrated with the UN's crawling pace and ineffectual resolutions.²⁷⁶ They also considered Kutako to be an old-fashioned tribalist and took over SWANU, splitting with Kutako's Chief's Council, which was increasingly controlled by Kutako's secretary, Clemens Kapuuo. Kozonguizi contended that fear of the state after the 1959 Windhoek Massacre, in which police shot and killed eleven Africans in a riot that broke out after mass refusal to move to the new apartheid township of Katutura, led many members of the Chief's Council to distance themselves from such a "radical" organization.²⁷⁷ As Kapuuo had been instrumental in founding SWANU and then led the Hereros to move away from

²⁷⁶ BAB Manuscript Archives, Tony Emmett Papers, "Interview with Jariretundu Kozonguizi," 1978. See also BAB Manuscript Archives, Tony Emmett Papers, J. Kozonguizi, "Problems at the International Level," ca. 1965. See also BAB Manuscript Archives, Tony Emmett Papers, J. Kozonguizi, *A Brief History of the Liberatory Movement in SWA*, 1961.

²⁷⁷ For the Windhoek Massacre, see NAN AP 4/1/12, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Occurrences in the Windhoek Location on the Night of the 10th to the 11th December, 1959, and into the Direct Causes which Led to those Occurrences* (Pretoria: South Africa Government Printer, 1960).

the organization after the Massacre, leaders of both SWANU and SWAPO viewed his actions as traitorous.²⁷⁸ The majority of Hereros continued to support Kutako and Kapuuu and did not join either SWAPO or SWANU as Kutako reportedly told the Hereros in SWA to remain neutral and refrain from joining political parties.²⁷⁹ By 1963, SWAPO, SWANU, and the Chief's Council had formally split.²⁸⁰

However, during the 1960s, factionalism within Herero society manifested itself early. Lines became drawn between and among Hereros and Mbanderus based largely on their stance towards the apartheid state and the UN. The majority of Hereros followed Kutako and Kapuuu in opposing South Africa and trusting the UN to bring independence and restore Herero lands. This so-called "Big Group" considered themselves to be "true" Hereros as opposed to the minority of Hereros, the "Small Group," which opposed Kutako and cooperated with the apartheid state in exchange for development and official recognition. Furthermore, the Herero Big Group contended that Mbanderus belonged to the Herero nation while many Mbanderus sought to gain autonomy from what they considered to be Herero oppression. The apartheid state attempted to manipulate these intra-ethnic politics by bringing in an Mbanderu Paramount Chief from Bechuanaland, Munjuku Nguvauva II, to serve as a foil to Kutako. Nguvauva's arrival precipitated a split within Mbanderu society. The majority of Mbanderus supported Nguvauva while a minority sided with Gerson Hoveka and allied with the Herero Big Group.

²⁷⁸ BAB Manuscript Archives, Tony Emmett Papers, J. Kozonguizi, *A Brief History of the Liberatory Movement in SWA*, 1961.

²⁷⁹ BAB Manuscript Archives, Tony Emmett Papers, J. Kozonguizi, "On the Difference between SWAPO and SWANU," 1963.

²⁸⁰ BAB Manuscript Archives, Tony Emmett Papers, "Interview with Jariretundu Kozonguizi," 1978.

<p>Herero Big Group Leaders: Hosea Kutako & Clemens Kapuuo Stance: anti South Africa, pro UN</p>	<p>Mbanderu Small Group Leader: Gerson Hoveka Stance: Allied with Kapuuo & Herero Big Group, opposed to South African government & Munjuku Nguvauva</p>
<p>Herero Small Group Leaders: David Tjatjitua & Rev. B. Karuaera Stance: pro South Africa, anti-Kapuuo AKA: The Society for the Preservation of the Royal House of Tjamuaha/Maherero</p>	<p>Mbanderu Big Group Leader: Munjuku Nguvauva II Stance: opposed to Kapuuo & Hoveka, loose ally of Herero Small Group, sometimes cooperative with South African government</p>

Figure 6: Intra -Herero Political Breakdown

The apartheid state brought Nguvauva to SWA in an effort to further apartheid in SWA by transitioning from direct to indirect rule by implementing the Bantu Self-Government Act in 1959 to create “independent homelands” or Bantustans ruled by “Traditional Authorities” in SWA. The Bantu Self-Government Act was an attempt to impose an idealized tribal structure on politically decentralized societies like the Herero by appointing tractable “Chiefs” to support and execute central state policies. Creating Traditional Authorities in SWA was essential for South Africa to combat growing international criticism of its presence in SWA by cloaking apartheid in the language of development and decolonization. As such, Traditional Authorities were accompanied by and rolled into a comprehensive development plan for SWA drawn up in the early 1960s, known as the Odendaal Plan.

Masking apartheid in modern progressive terms became critical for the apartheid state circa 1960. First, Liberia and Ethiopia, the delegations to the Second Conference of Independent African States that were also members of the League of Nations, demanded the ICJ issue a binding judgment against South Africa for violating its mandate by attempting to annex SWA and failing to work towards the progress of its African inhabitants. South Africa countered that the ICJ and the UN

had no jurisdiction in the matter, hampering the process of international action. The ICJ would rule in 1965 that Liberia and Ethiopia did not have the proper standing to bring suit; the UN accordingly filed a new suit with the international court. Secondly, the UN created a Special Committee on SWA and began to press for the territory's independence in 1961. However, the tensions of the Cold War and Western and Communist efforts to control and influence African nationalist politics in the competition for spheres of influence meant that the West grudgingly tolerated the apartheid government as a hedge against communism.

Throughout the 1960s, the West both supported the apartheid government and demanded it relinquish control over SWA. South Africa, for its part attempted to appease international critics. By framing apartheid as responsible development and decolonization while simultaneously using development to create Bantustans and annex SWA, the state laid the groundwork for its expansion in the region. As one of the most internationally vocal and locally intractable groups, the South African government tried to weaken Herero resistance by encouraging intra-ethnic splintering and in-fighting by manipulating water development and access. This process of international appeasement, annexation, and political manipulation in the 1960s began with the creation of a committee of "experts" to analyze the path of development in SWA known as the Odendaal Commission.

CHAPTER 3: THE ODENDAAL COMMISSION, 1962-63

The 1960s dawned amid considerable insecurity, instability, and uncertainty. The Windhoek Massacre and continuing ICJ deliberations forced South Africa to take decisive, if ostensibly conciliatory, action in SWA. Instead of responding to these potential crises in a reactionary fashion, Prime Minister Verwoerd's government masterfully manipulated them as a stage for promoting a positivist development approach to SWA and expand apartheid policies in the territory. Employing the rhetoric of trusteeship, or "Sacred Trust," the government cited its obligation to promote the physical and moral development of SWA's indigenous peoples as outlined in the mandate to validate its policies and presence in the territory. The heightened tensions surrounding the Windhoek Massacre and ICJ deliberations focused global attention on SWA and provided South Africa a stage on which to perform its commitment to the Sacred Trust.

The opportunity for this performance presented itself in May 1962 when the Chairman of the UN Committee on SWA, Vittorio Carpino, visited SWA and South Africa. Carpino's controversial visit provided the necessary impetus for Verwoerd to launch a "Commission of Enquiry into the Affairs of South West Africa," better known as the Odendaal Commission. This commission consisted of a team of "experts" tasked with thoroughly surveying SWA and designing a series of five-year plans for its development. Over the sixties and seventies, the Odendaal Plan became the gospel of apartheid policy development and implementation in SWA.

These various ideological justifications and international political imperatives demanded that apartheid in SWA at least appear in the guise of actual and visible development. By examining the Odendaal Commission's inner-workings, this chapter

explores both the state's internal logic for apartheid in SWA and the ways in which environmental resource management transformed development into the vehicle of South African intervention in the territory. Considering the importance of large-scale water provisioning for hydroelectric power, irrigation, and the mining industry demonstrates the apartheid state's plans to expedite separate development in SWA, consolidate its power over the territory, and launch indirect influence in southern Africa. These far-reaching plans got underway through a seemingly cooperative and innocuous invitation from Verwoerd to the UN in 1962.

The Carpio Caper

Victorio D. Carpio, the Philippine delegate to the UN, served as Chairman of the Special Committee for SWA and was a vocal detractor of South Africa's continued presence in the territory. He spent most of 1961 denouncing South African rule and demanding SWA's independence. The UN repeatedly demanded a visit to SWA; South Africa consistently refused.²⁸¹ Then a strange thing occurred in April 1962. Prime Minister Verwoerd suddenly invited Chairman Carpio and Vice-Chairman Salvador Martinez de Alva of Mexico to visit SWA. This was a significant turnabout. The year before, in 1961, the Committee planned to gate-crash SWA. The South African UN delegate had responded that his government would be forced to "prevent such an attempt [which would] involve the United Nations in an act of aggression."²⁸²

²⁸¹ There is an extensive literature on SWA at the international level, the UN, and the ICJ. See I. Dore, *The International Mandate System and Namibia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985). I. Goldblatt, *The History of South West Africa*. A. Du Pisani, *SWA/Namibia*.

²⁸² NAN A642 vol. 1. "Action Taken by the Government of the Republic of South Africa," in Committee on South West Africa *Petitions and Communications Relating to South West Africa Dealt with by the Committee on South West Africa in its Report on Conditions in the Territory Submitted to the General Assembly at its Sixteenth Session*. 31 October 1961.

Though unexpected, this invitation was not spontaneously or thoughtlessly issued. Verwoerd was known to be calculating and this invitation was no exception. The invitation was linked to government discussions in early 1962 regarding SWA's long term development. Verwoerd was a masterful orchestrator and he carefully planned the visit to set the stage for announcing the Odendaal Commission. The invitation's element of surprise and its appearance of reconciliation critically underpinned Verwoerd's assiduously designed agenda. Seizing this rare opportunity, the UN committee eagerly accepted the invitation and immediately sent Carpio and de Alva to southern Africa.

Carpio and de Alva intended to visit SWA and return to New York bearing irrefutable evidence of human rights abuses and an impending colonial war. Verwoerd had other plans. Before embarking, Carpio heroically described his visit as "necessary to prevent an explosive situation from degenerating into a racial war." However, the visit transformed Carpio's opinion of apartheid. Their very carefully guided tour of SWA concluded with being wined and dined by a superbly charming Verwoerd. While this display of affability stands in contrast to usual characterizations of the Prime Minister as inflexible, inhuman, and generally terrifying, it demonstrates that Verwoerd could be quite charismatic when necessary. Amid this new-found amicability, Carpio and Verwoerd issued a joint communiqué announcing the Prime Minister's commitment to accelerated development in SWA. Conversely, the communiqué conveniently omitted any mention of apartheid or threats to regional peace – a far cry from the "race war" Carpio set out to diffuse.

Unsurprisingly, the UN Committee on SWA was furious when Carpio and Martinez de Alva returned to New York. Carpio devised a feeble excuse that completely exonerated him of all culpability. He first claimed that he had bizarrely

fallen ill after a cup of coffee with Verwoerd and had nothing whatsoever to do with the statement. Needing a scapegoat, he blamed de Alva who was by all other accounts uninvolved with the communiqué. Trying to further cover his tracks, he issued his own statement describing apartheid as contravening “the enlightened conscience of mankind.”²⁸³ Preempting further embarrassment, the Philippine government transferred Carpio from the UN to the post of Ambassador to Egypt.

Carpio’s visit was just the beginning for SWA. The *Rand Daily Mail* bemoaned the fiasco as destroying “perhaps entirely the healthier relationship that was hesitatingly and gropingly established between the U.N. and South Africa.”²⁸⁴ For Verwoerd, the whole affair went off without a hitch. The joint communiqué stated that Verwoerd already had a five-year development plan underway in SWA – hence previous discussions of “long term development” - and announced his promise to “speed up plans for the advancement of the non-whites in South-West Africa.”²⁸⁵ After the dust settled a few months later, Verwoerd proclaimed his intention to make good on that promise. On September 9, 1962, he appointed a Commission to devise a roadmap for accelerated development in SWA. The conservative *Sunday Express* applauded the move as “obviously necessary for South Africa to demonstrate to the United Nations that it is earnest about its intentions towards the territory.”²⁸⁶ The *Sunday Times* likewise described the commission as evidence “of the government’s desire to carry out its duties in a responsible manner.” It further stated its “hope that the nations at the UN will take note of these proposals.”²⁸⁷

²⁸³ “United Nations: Carpio’s Caper,” in *Time*, 10 August 1962.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁸⁶ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2, *Sunday Express*, “First Step,” 9 September 1962.

²⁸⁷ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2, *Sunday Times*, “The Plan for SWA,” 9 September 1962.

Engineering a Commission of Enquiry

Commissions of Enquiry are a well-worn tool in South Africa's administrative arsenal. The Odendaal Commission fit neatly into what Adam Ashforth called the "Grand Tradition" of South African Commissions and should be examined as such. The government generally convened these commissions at moments of crisis in which they tasked a panel of "impartial experts" with finding a conclusive and comprehensive solution to the problem at hand.²⁸⁸ Organized and legitimated by local, regional, and global uncertainties, the Odendaal Commission clearly fits these parameters. Prime Minister Verwoerd meticulously crafted the Commission so that the expertise of its members was indisputable. Their impartiality was another matter. He charged the Odendaal Commission to

Enquire thoroughly into further promoting the material and moral welfare and the social progress of the inhabitants of SWA, and more particularly its non-White inhabitants and to submit a report with recommendations on a comprehensive five year plan for the accelerated development of the various non-White groups of South West Africa²⁸⁹

By framing the Commission's objectives within the very modern development discourse characteristic of decolonizing powers and laced with altruism, Verwoerd sought to cast a web of objective and scientific expert knowledge over every facet of African life in SWA. After completing their investigation, the Odendaal Commission would compile, analyze, and explicate this knowledge and its practical application in a comprehensive development plan for SWA's non-white residents. The ostensibly

²⁸⁸ A. Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990): pp. 2-4.

²⁸⁹ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1 "Terms of Reference of the Commission of Enquiry into the Affairs of South West Africa." 11 September 1962.

objective and depoliticized medium of “science” was intended to legitimate controversial apartheid policies. Experts gave these commissions and their findings an air of detached impartiality and scientific accuracy – they discovered the “truth” about a problem and found its answer. These commissions reflect a growing faith in a positivist scientific approach during the first half of the twentieth century. Dubow argues that the scientific method became “an autonomous force providing objectively valid solutions to social and political problems” that simultaneously rationalized prevailing political attitudes and “[worked] to entrench them legislatively and ideologically.”²⁹⁰ Assuming a dispassionate attitude towards investigation had been crucial to the development of South African racial discourses since the late nineteenth century and it infused the way in which the Odendaal Commission carried out its enquiry in the 1960s.

Verwoerd hoped the Odendaal Commission’s expertise and proclaimed scientific objectivity would “prove” apartheid policies were the correct and best remedy to SWA’s problems. He bragged that his “impartial, non-political, and very eminent” Commission would produce a “five year plan to be submitted to the Government [that] will satisfy the highest demands of reasonableness and effectiveness.”²⁹¹ The Commission’s professional scientific expertise was intended to offset its rather dubious claims to impartiality. All of the Commission’s members were of a conspicuously nationalist persuasion and the NP’s political objectives and ideological biases permeated the Commission’s Terms of Reference. The investigation, “while fully taking into consideration the background, traditions and habits of the native inhabitants,” was intended to find out “how further provision

²⁹⁰ Dubow, S. *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995): p. 14.

²⁹¹ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2. “Press Statement Issued by the Department of the Prime Minister” 7 September 1962.

should be made for their social and economic advancement, effective health services, suitable education and training,[and] proper agricultural, industrial, and mining development.”²⁹² By objectifying Africans, this language empowered the Commissioners to make moral decisions effecting very intimate dimensions of African’s lives. The white supremacist rhetoric injected into the Odendaal Commission’s charter circumscribed how its members approached and employed scientific methods and discourses and precluded any possibility of objectivity.

Beyond the “Grand Tradition” of South African Commissions, the Odendaal Commission must be considered in terms of its immediate predecessor – the Tomlinson Commission. The government commissioned this particular inquiring body in 1950 to investigate the best way to carry out apartheid in South Africa. Although Tomlinson is one of the best known South African Commissions and perhaps the most discursively powerful, the Commission failed to achieve its stated objectives. Finding a comprehensive solution to the problem of manufacturing South Africa’s extremely complex and diverse society into the idealized and discretely stratified hierarchy envisioned by apartheid planners was an impossible task. After five years of gathering data, the Tomlinson Commission’s seventeen-volume report was never read but condensed into a two-hundred page summary. The government never considered most of its recommendations and put even fewer into practice. However, as Ashforth argues, the Tomlinson Commission should be seen as “an ideological experiment of the state.”²⁹³ When viewed in this light, Tomlinson’s incredible success becomes apparent. The Commission filled the apartheid state’s requirement for an external and scientific body to demonstrate that creating Bantu

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ashforth, p. 152

homelands was both possible and highly desirable. Once this was done, administrators made their own plans.

Verwoerd applied the lessons he learned from Tomlinson to Odendaal. He limited the Odendaal Commission's time to investigate and produce a report to one year. Additionally, two secretaries managed collected data and ensured the Commission's report appeared in a more easily digestible size. Consequently, the South African government would seriously consider and implement a number of the Commission's recommendations. Most importantly, the Odendaal Commission took many of the theoretical questions the Tomlinson Commission faced - such as accounting for and systematizing plural African cultures and "nations" within official state discourse – as given investigative parameters.²⁹⁴ Rather than questioning how to divide South Africa's complex society into discrete ethnic groups, Odendaal began with the assumption that Africans simply *were* divided into discrete ethnic groups. The only question was how to make these groups commensurable with a map of geographically distinct homelands.

Verwoerd designed Odendaal to demonstrate that rapid infrastructural development in SWA was realistic, prudent, and justifiably within South Africa's ambit. The Odendaal Commission thus served dual purposes – courting public opinion and obscuring oppression. In the first instance, Odendaal was a public relations stunt to convey South Africa's commitment to good governance in SWA akin to domestic and neo-colonial development projects proliferating in the West. Development rhetoric glossed over South Africa's circular argument justifying its claims to unimpeded and unsupervised control over SWA. While South Africa claimed the UN did not have the right to assume power over a League of Nations'

²⁹⁴Ibid., p. 154.

mandate, South Africa did not see the League's dissolution as dissolving the mandate itself, merely any international oversight. Rather, they claimed the mandate as an unceasing duty to rule the territory indefinitely "in the spirit of the mandate." Through this reasoning, the government emphasized SWA's mandatory status as an integral part of South Africa and claimed an inalienable charge to ensure the advancement of SWA's peoples through development. The Commission publically affirmed South Africa's commitment to its Sacred Trust.

Although the apartheid government used this argument to feign unconcern with international or UN opinion about its presence in SWA, internal government correspondence reveals a preoccupation with creating a favorable international impression. When the *Rand Daily Mail* contended that the state's sudden interest in development in SWA was simply intended to positively influence the ICJ, the Secretary of the Foreign Affairs stressed in a confidential minute to Verwoerd's secretary, "it should be naturally desirable to avoid distorted reports over any of the Prime Minister's explanations that may create space for false impressions of the matter abroad."²⁹⁵ The government's propaganda machine emphasized that the Odendaal Commission only accelerated development work already in progress. Verwoerd considered good publicity abroad to be crucial in light of the on-going trial at the ICJ despite the government's official stance of indifference to the trial.

Secondly, framing the Odendaal Commission with benevolent development obfuscated its purposes of determining how best to implement apartheid policies in SWA. SWA's contentious and uncertain position between South Africa and the UN required subtle maneuvering but the language in the Commission's charter betrays this objective. "Suitable" and "proper" development in SWA would occur within

²⁹⁵ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1. Untitled confidential minute from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary of the Prime Minister, 18 September 1962.

“native territories” and the Commission would determine “the best form of participation by natives in the administration and management of their own interests...in respect of their territories.”²⁹⁶ Homelands were a foregone conclusion in the Commission’s enquiry. Consequently, development would unfold along carefully predetermined lines. Verwoerd did not task the Odendaal Commission with discerning the most appropriate form of governance for SWA, but how to most expediently make Bantustans a reality. The *Rand Daily Mail* snidely remarked, “There is no hint that the commission is to consider political advancement for the Africans in any sense that would impress the United Nations.”²⁹⁷

Assembling the Experts

The Odendaal Commission consisted of five experts, two secretaries, and a special advisor. Verwoerd boasted of his hand-selected members, “There is no doubt that the most outstanding talent available in the Republic...has been united in the Commission.”²⁹⁸ In contrast to the Tomlinson Commission’s relatively progressive members, Odendaal members were guaranteed to tow party lines. Verwoerd enthusiastically announced the Commission in a press-release giving detailed vignettes of its members and the impression that the Committee and its objectives were wholesome and constructive. The Commission’s members ranged from administrators, health specialists, ethnologists, and agronomists; all were vetted members of the National Party and the Broederbond.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, “Missing the Point” 10 September 1962.

²⁹⁸ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2. “Press Statement Issued by the Department of the Prime Minister” 7 September 1962.

²⁹⁹ Wilkins and Strydom (1979) confirm that Snyman and Bruwer were Broederbond members. Although this list is both incomplete and does not include members deceased before its publication in 1979, it is inconceivable that Odendaal and van Eck, holding such important positions as Administrator of the Transvaal and Director of ISCOR, respectively, would not also be members. Dr.

The Commission's Chairman, Mr. F.H. Odendaal, better known as "Fox", was a lawyer who had risen in NP ranks to become the Administrator of the Transvaal. Verwoerd selected him not only because of his "ripe experience of administration" but also his "humane and religious attitude of mind and his interest in the fate and development of all races." Not to mention, Verwoerd's press release continued, "His sense of justice and balanced judgment is common knowledge."³⁰⁰ Fox Odendaal's job was to ensure the achievement of "self-government" in SWA in accordance with apartheid ideology. Odendaal was officially in charge of "ethnic delimitation" and directly responsible to Verwoerd regarding the commission.³⁰¹

Verwoerd selected the second member of the Committee, Dr. H.J. van Eck, for his expertise in economic affairs and industrial undertakings. A chemical engineer, van Eck managed the parastatal steel giant, ISCOR, and served as the director of the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa. Van Eck would evaluate SWA's industrial potential and recommend concrete plans for its development. Verwoerd assured the South African public that, "on the achievement and standing of Dr. van Eck, no doubt will exist." His impressive résumé was rounded off by his "humane approach and devotion to the interests of all population groups in South Africa."³⁰²

On the healthcare front, Verwoerd appointed Dr. H.W. Snyman, Professor of Medicine at the University of Pretoria and Vice-President of the South African Medical and Dental Council. Snyman had received a bursary from the World Health Organization which enabled him to study health and hospital services in a variety of

Quin's status is unclear, but it is likely he was also a member given the size and importance of Zebediela as well as the composition of the rest of the Commission.

³⁰⁰SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2. "Press Statement Issued by the Department of the Prime Minister" 7 September 1962.

³⁰¹*The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs.* (Pretoria: South African Government Printer, 1964). Hereafter cited as "Odendaal Report."

³⁰²SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2. "Press Statement Issued by the Department of the Prime Minister" 7 September 1962.

African states, the United States, and Europe. He also served on the “Advisory Council on Scientific Policy of the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie.” The Prime Minister further anticipated that “his broad outlook...will be of inestimable value in the evaluation of conditions in these spheres in South West Africa.”³⁰³

The fourth member of the party, Prof. Dr. J.P. van S. Bruwer, was “well-known inside as well as outside of South Africa as ethnologist and educationist,” and would become highly involved in SWA in the future. Dr. Bruwer was a renowned professor of ethnology at the University of Stellenbosch and an expert in Bantu Education. The Carnegie Corporation sponsored his tour of American universities, during which time he served as a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins in the School of Advanced International Studies in 1960. Upon his return to southern Africa, Dr. Bruwer pursued ethnographic research amongst Herero and Ovambo speaking peoples in SWA. This research made “his membership to the Commission specially valuable” as his primary task was to adapt and implement Bantu Education in SWA.³⁰⁴ He would later become the Administrator of SWA.

The fifth and final member of the committee was an agriculturist and food scientist turned ethnologist, Dr. P.J. Quin. He held advanced degrees in food technology and agricultural science as well as a doctorate in ethnology from the University of the Witwatersrand. After a world tour of citrus farming operations, Dr. Quin was the Resident Director of Zebediela Estates, the largest citrus operation in southern Africa, and served on a variety of national food science and agricultural committees. Verwoerd applauded Dr. Quin’s expertise in dealing with “the care, including health and housing, of great numbers of Bantu in the agriculture industry.” The Prime Minister considered that his “unique experience can be utilized for the

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

solution of the agricultural and nutritional problems of the natives of South West Africa.”³⁰⁵

Finally, a support team rounded off the Odendaal Commission. Dr. C.J. Claassen served as the Commission’s secretary, but his official position as BAD’s Chief Expert Officer belied this rather humble title. Claassen’s own secretary and a troupe of stenographers handled the Commission’s administrative needs. Moreover, H.J. Allen, SWA’s former CNC, served as an adjunct member of the Commission. Verwoerd selected him “to render special assistance because of his exceptional knowledge of SWA and its inhabitants.” Allen possessed a further advantage in that he was generally on good terms with African leaders in SWA.

Public opinion about the Odendaal Commission was mixed. The conservative English *Sunday Times* commented, “Dr. Verwoerd has shown shrewd judgment and a keen appreciation of South Africa’s obligations” and went on to boast “nor is there the slightest doubt that South Africa can effectively implement the recommendations the Commission is likely to put forward.”³⁰⁶ However, this paper’s editors objected to Verwoerd’s specious claim that the Commission was “non-political.” The *Sunday Times* scoffed that such an assertion was “perhaps a little unkind to one of its members, Mr. F.H. Odendaal, who has given the best years of his life to the Nationalist party. So devoted a partisan to the cause may find it a trifle distressing to be written off now as non-political.”³⁰⁷ The paper’s main objection however was the Commission’s Afrikaans composition to which they declared “the English-Speaking section should have been given some share and played some part.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1 *Sunday Times* 9 September 1962, “The Plan for SWA.”

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

If English-speaking conservatives felt overlooked, their grievances paled in comparison to those of SWA's white constituency. Percy Niehaus, the leader of the United National Party of SWA claimed that while his party welcomed the Commission, they were offended that Verwoerd had not consulted SWA's whites as to the Committee's make-up or its terms of reference. Niehaus complained that the Commission was really more of the same: "South Africa makes the plans and the people of South West Africa have to pay for them. It is the old principle of no taxation without representation."³⁰⁹ These references to American anti-colonialism and democracy are quite ironic considering no one consulted the hundreds of thousands of Africans whose lives were to be utterly turned upside-down. African views on the Odendaal Commission's appointment went unremarked upon in local and regional newspapers.

Verwoerd granted the Commission one year to carry out their research and produce a report outlining a comprehensive five-year plan for accelerated apartheid development. To meet these aims, Verwoerd conferred "full power and authority to interrogate at your discretion all persons who in your opinion are able to furnish information on the subjects mentioned" on committee members.³¹⁰ These "interrogations," according to the Prime Minister, would "inter alia afford it (the Committee) the opportunity of taking cognizance of the *reasonable* wishes and needs of the non-white inhabitants of South West Africa."³¹¹ The Commission would evaluate the "reasonableness" of these wishes and needs during their visits to SWA over the next year.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2. "Press Statement Issued by the Department of the Prime Minister" 7 September 1962.

Armchairs Above: Reconnoitring SWA

The committee quickly set about their appointed task, meeting for the first time September 17, 1962. Prime Minister Verwoerd and Mr. J.G. van der Wath, the Adjunct Minister of South West African Affairs, also attended.³¹² Verwoerd allotted the Commission R12, 300 to undertake their work. In addition to fully furnished office space in Pretoria, personal stenographers, and complete tea service for twelve, the Prime Minister's office also arranged a jet and pilot from the Department of Defense for the Commission's exclusive use, as well as a sedan, a 4x4, and a four-ton truck from the Department of Bantu Affairs in SWA.³¹³

Through a combination of planes, trains, automobiles, and boats, the Odendaal Commission undertook six trips to SWA that generally lasted two weeks and kept up a grueling pace. The Commission very quickly traversed huge distances and rarely stayed anywhere more than a few days - often just a few hours - crisscrossing SWA dispassionately gathering evidence. They calculated that they "covered 14,246 sea-miles in a total flying time of 102.35 hours and also 3,510 statute miles by motor vehicle."³¹⁴ Due to their speed and modes of travel, the Commission's knowledge of SWA's people, their needs, and their feelings was superficial at best. But then, the government was not overly concerned with Africans as individuals and the Commission duly familiarized itself with those aspects of importance - primarily determining the most promising avenues of economic growth, the necessary

³¹² SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 "Press Release from the Department of Information" 17 September 1962.

³¹³ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1 "Kommissie van Ondersoek na Aangeleenthede van Suidwes-Afrika," Secretary of the Prime Minister to Secretary of the Treasury, 22 September 1962. SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1. "I/S: Vervoer" Dr. Claassen to the Secretary for the Prime Minister, 25 September 1962.

³¹⁴ *Odendaal Report*, p. 531.

infrastructure to facilitate said growth, and finally deciding on where to stash surplus Bantus.

The Commission embarked on its first trip to SWA on the morning of 1 October 1962, flying from Pretoria to Windhoek's J.G. Strijdom airport. Picking up HBSK Blignaut, they drove to Sesfontein in the Damara Reserve, enjoyed a light lunch, and then flew to Ohopoho in the Kaokoveld and drove to the Ruacana Falls on the Angolan border. Following a flight over the falls and northwestern Ovamboland, the team camped for the night. The company spent the next three days driving through Ovamboland visiting mission hospitals, BAD officials, and Ovambo Chiefs before flying to the Caprivi Strip. In their tour of the Caprivi, they paid particular attention to the possibilities of the Okavango River and Popa Falls. Finally, they spent a few hours in the Bushmen reserve before returning to South Africa.

The Commission considered northern SWA, particularly Ovamboland, to be the most vital development area and consequently visited that region first and spent a relatively large amount of time there. Ovamboland, SWA's most heavily and densely populated area, served as the territory's main labor reservoir and its chiefs generally supported government policies. As well, Ovamboland and the Caprivi were the only arable regions due to higher rainfall, better soil, and access to the Kunene and Okavango Rivers. As any development in SWA, from schools to factories to homelands, required adequate supplies of water and electricity, the Commission intended to examine hydroelectric potential along the Kunene and Okavango. Harnessing water for irrigation, household use, and electricity was critical to all the schemes the apartheid state envisioned in SWA.

However, exploiting the water from these rivers was not simply an infrastructural challenge. Although South Africa shared portions of the Kunene and

Okavango with Portugal, the Portuguese controlled the headwaters of both rivers and possessed significant vested interests in maximizing their control. For South Africa, effectively utilizing these riparian resources required coordinating with existing Portuguese structures upriver in Angola. Consequently, the Commission requested Mr. Claassen to arrange a trip to Angola between November 5th and 8th to visit the Portuguese hydro-electric and irrigation schemes at Matala. Mr. Claassen duly activated diplomatic channels and the Commission embarked on their second visit to SWA while awaiting a response from the Portuguese.³¹⁵

The Commission's second visit to SWA focused on the southern region or "Police Zone" (the extent of white settlements and therefore police stations). Given the Commission's preoccupation with rivers, irrigation, and hydropower in the north, it is significant that the party did not visit the Orange River nor consider its possible uses in SWA beyond a small experimental coloured irrigation settlement. South Africa claimed the entire river and refused to countenance its use in SWA, reflecting both its ambivalent relationship with SWA as South African but not South Africa and its attitude towards SWA as a site of resource extraction, not re-distribution. Instead of water, this visit concentrated on SWA's mining sector, which, though smaller than that of South Africa, was hardly inconsiderable.

SWA's mining areas are all within the Police Zone and are incredibly rich in gem-quality diamonds, uranium, cobalt, copper, and zinc of other minerals. The Tsumeb mine, for example, is one of the most diverse mines on earth and home to over 243 different minerals, some of which are only found in this mine. While Tsumeb sits on the border between Hereroland and Ovamboland, the primary diamond and uranium mines are located in the far south within the Namib Desert. The

³¹⁵ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1, "Immediate Cypher O.T.P. Telegram No. 42 Secret," Telex from Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria to South African Embassy, Lisbon 17 October 1962.

apartheid government planned for mining to serve as the mainstay of SWA's industrial economy. Heavy taxes on this sector would significantly defray development costs. The Commission's modes of transport and the time they allotted to visiting mines versus African reserves during this trip attest to their priorities in this region.

Setting out on October 17, 1962, the party flew directly from Pretoria to Karasburg, driving through the miniscule Bondelswarts Reserve before flying to Consolidated Diamond Mines at Oranjemund.³¹⁶ They spent the following day visiting the mines and touring the labor compounds. The next morning the team flew north to the fishing enclave of Lüderitz for lunch with the local magistrate and a tour of a lobster factory. An aerial tour of the Berseba, Tses, and Krantzplatz native reserves en route to Windhoek took up the afternoon. The Commission spent the rest of the trip visiting the mines near Tsumeb and Otavi.

The Commission spent one afternoon in Tsumeb touring the nearby Herero reserves from the air. In contrast to the industrially and economically significant mines, fisheries, and northern areas at which the Commission actually spent time, these Kalahari reserves possessed little in the way of natural resources or labor. They were economically marginal and relatively unimportant but home to a number of Hereros, most of whom were hostile towards the government and Odendaal Commission. Aerial tours and survey techniques reflect the state's attitude towards its African subjects in SWA – reinforcing the disconnect between white decision-makers and black subjects. The Commission literally gathered data from above and took it back to Pretoria for analysis. Conducting research from the relative comfort of their armchairs high above reproduced both the presumptions of turn of the century

³¹⁶ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1 "Kommissie vir Suidwes-Afrika: Voorgestelde Reisplan: Woensdag 17 Oktober 1962 tot Vrydag 26 Oktober 1962," produced by Dr. Claassen October 1962.

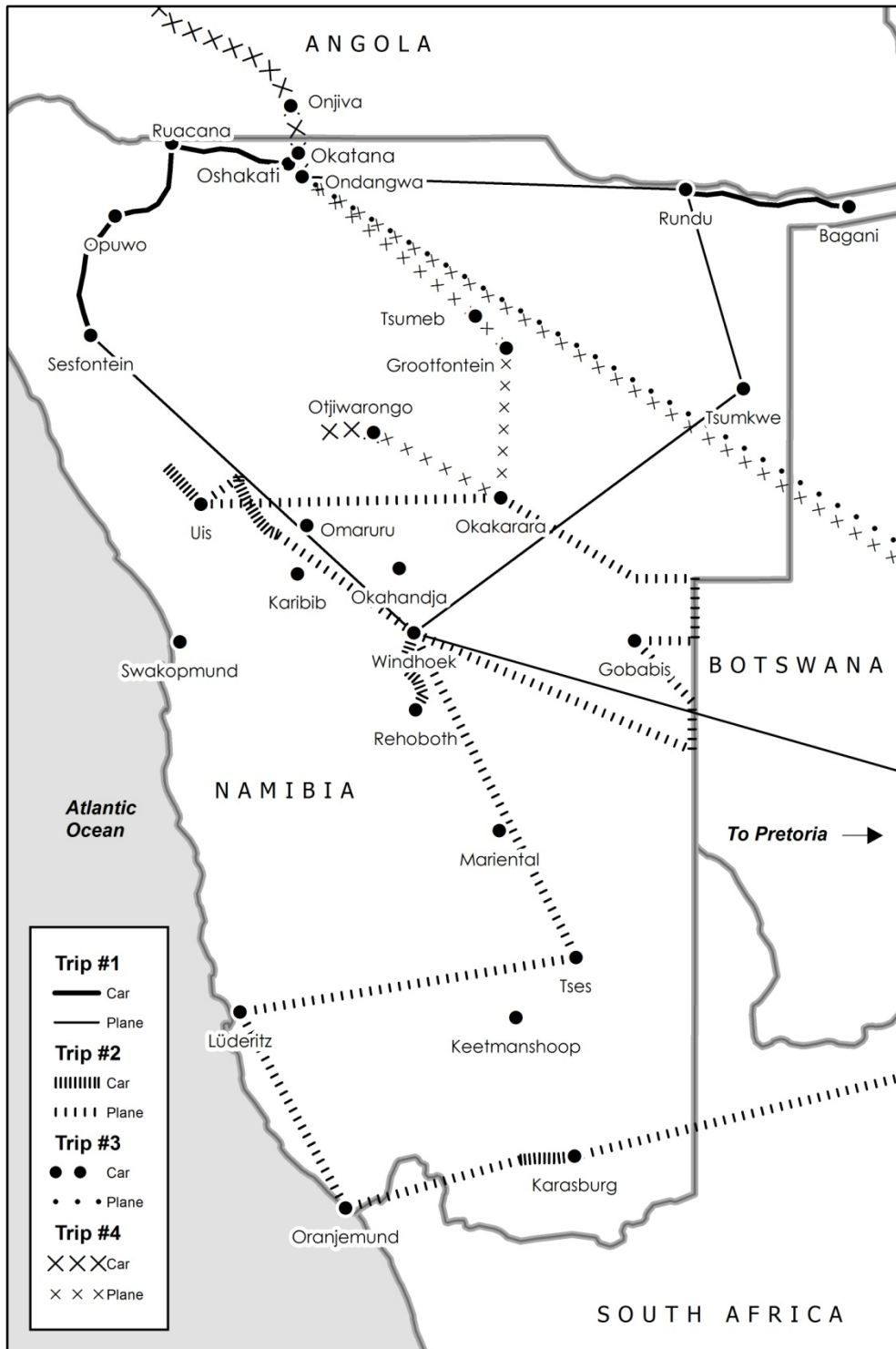
ethnographic experts on the Bantu, the Bushman, and the Hottentot and the cold abstracted calculation of “empirical” and “objective” science. The Commission spent little time at people’s physical or mental altitude. The result was an overwhelmingly top-down plan for the lives of people whom the Commission saw merely as interchangeable units, specks from the air as they flew back to Pretoria to await a response as to whether they would be able to visit Angola in early November as hoped.

The Matala Scheme

Arranging the visit of a South African Commission of Enquiry to a major hydroelectric operation within Angola on a shared river required careful political maneuvering. Anxious to win Portuguese cooperation, the South African diplomats requested the Portuguese government allow the Commission to drive to the Matala Dam and irrigation projects, roughly 450 miles into Angola. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs desired the “Portuguese Government to be completely satisfied that there is no ulterior motive behind the projected visit” and asked for Portuguese liaisons to act as guides for the company.³¹⁷

Unfortunately for the South Africans, things did not work out quite as easily as they wished. The South African Consul-General in Luanda had discussed the proposal with the Governor-General of Angola, who “welcome[d] the visit in principle,” but

³¹⁷ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1 , “Immediate Cypher O.T.P. Telegram No. 42 Secret,” Telex from Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria to South African Embassy, Lisbon 17 October 1962.



Map 4: Odendaal Commission Trips to SWA & Modes of Transport

foresaw several problems.³¹⁸ First, a new Governor-General would be arriving during the intended dates and the Portuguese asked the Commission to delay one week. Secondly, Angolan road conditions were such that four days were insufficient to accomplish the stated goals, even in 4x4s. Finally, the Portuguese wished the party to first visit Luanda, provide pictures of all members, and give the government extra time to notify and arrange local authorities. “After careful deliberation,” Commissioner Odendaal instructed the Secretary of Foreign Affairs “That the Portuguese Authorities should be thanked for their invitation, but that the Commission, due to circumstances beyond their control, cannot postpone their trip for one week” and added that they might visit in early 1963.³¹⁹

Disappointed but not deterred, the Committee set out for their third trip to SWA on Monday November 5th intending to take evidence from Europeans and Africans (separately of course) in Ovamboland. When the Commission arrived, the Bantu Commissioner at Oshikango informed them that the local Portuguese Administrator and his officers were waiting for them across the border. The Portuguese continued waiting for four days. Much to the Committee’s chagrin, these officials “would not accept that a change in travel plans had been made. They (the Angolans) explained that they operated on instructions from Luanda.” This Portuguese contingent finally accepted the Administrator for SWA’s explanation that the necessary photographs and passports had not been arranged for the intended visit. Dr. Claassen lamented to the Prime Minister’s office that the instance “placed the

³¹⁸ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1, “Immediate Code Telegram No. 19,” Telex from S.A. Consul-General, Luanda to Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 31st October, 1962.

³¹⁹ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1, “Besoek aan Angola: 5-8 November 1962,” confidential minute from Dr. Claassen to the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister, 22 November 1962.

Commission in an embarrassing situation.”³²⁰ The Secretary for Foreign Affairs later confirmed that, “in the confusion resulting from the arrival of the new Governor General...the authorities in Luanda omitted to inform the officials in the district concerned of the change in plan.”³²¹

The visit to Angola was finalized for December 3rd through December 9th. Prior to this visit to Angola, the Director of Waterways for SWA, Dr. Otto Wipplinger, sent the Commission an up-to-date outline of Angolan activities and plans for hydroelectric and irrigation schemes on the Kunene.³²² When Wipplinger visited the area in 1958, the hydroelectric dam at Matala had been completed and the authorities planned to run power to the coast, but this had not been finished. The Portuguese also intended to extend a power line south and to settle white farmers on an irrigation scheme along the river bank. The power line would then be strung to a proposed hydroelectric scheme at the Ruacana Falls to power a nearby iron mine and to expand white irrigation settlements. Wipplinger pointed out that these hydroelctrical schemes required greater regulation of the river than the Matala dam could provide and an additional dam had been proposed but delayed. He suggested the Committee visit the irrigation scheme and the hydroelectric dam at Matala. The Commission would then make a five-day follow-up tour to the industrial areas of Tsumeb and Grootfontein to take evidence from mine managers, SWANLA, the superintendent of a Herero reserve, and other local whites.

The Odendaal Commission invited additional experts on their trip to Angola including HBSK Bruwer Blignaut, three other BAD representatives, a member of the

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1 , “South West Africa Commission: Proposed Visit to Angola,” Secretary of Foreign Affairs to Secretary to the Prime Minister, 29 November 1962.

³²² SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2, “Die Benutting van die Kunene deur Angola,” Memo from Wipplinger to the SWA Commission, 28 November 1962.

South African Air Force, and Otto Wipplinger and his assistant, Dr. Henno Martin.³²³ Three Portuguese officials, also experts in hydropower and irrigation, received and accompanied the group. Following a grueling drive over 300 miles of sandy, corrugated roads at a top speed of thirty mph, they finally arrived at the oasis of Sa da Bandeira (modern Lubango). Odendaal described it as “relatively cool... a pretty city with a population of 10,000 whites and 5,000 nonwhites. It is the town with the highest percentage of whites in Angola.”³²⁴ They left this Caucasian Eden via train to visit the conspicuously named Salazar Dam at Matala, which the Commission considered poorly designed, under-powered, under-productive, and ineffective.³²⁵ Angola’s low level of industrial development created a minimal demand for power, which meant that electricity revenues barely exceeded operating costs, excluding debt servicing, by R10,000.

The Matala Dam was a losing venture for the Portuguese but a golden opportunity for the South Africans. In his official report on the visit, Fox Odendaal pointed out, “there were no signs that the Portuguese will use much power in this relatively undeveloped area in the foreseeable future.”³²⁶ Instead, he argued, “economic development in the southern part of Angola will chiefly have to be stimulated as a consequence of development in the bordering Bantu areas of SWA and within SWA itself.”³²⁷ Odendaal believed electricity was this region’s only viable export and insisted that “SWA must be considered as the most important potential

³²³ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 1, “Immediate Cypher O.T.P. Telegram No. 42 Secret,” Telex from Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria to South African Embassy, Lisbon 17 October 1962.

³²⁴ SAB TES F33/841, “Reis van Suidwes-Afrika-Kommissie na Angola,” 12 Jan 1963. Henno Martin was the author of *The Sheltering Desert*.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* The dam did not have a large enough storage reservoir, so that power could not be generated all year resulting high production costs and low power yields. The committee estimated that the electrical installation was only operating at 2.5% of its full capacity and that if the reservoir was expanded and a third generator added, power could easily be produced all the time at a lower cost.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*

customer of power.”³²⁸ The status of “potential” customer afforded South Africa considerable leverage in dealing with the Portuguese. Odendaal sincerely hoped “this fact can be used to encourage friendly relations” and secure Portuguese agreement to South Africa’s water development plans for SWA.³²⁹

In early January 1963, Fox Odendaal wrote a lengthy memo to Verwoerd detailing his impressions of the situation in SWA, its prospects for development, and his opinions on the best way to manipulate hydroelectric schemes in Angola.³³⁰ His letter reveals the government’s substantial preplanning and the extent to which development in SWA hinged on hydroelectric potential. Odendaal began by “confirming that the SWA Commission came under the very strong impression of the urgent necessity of ensuring a permanent water supply for Ovamboland...the water shortage was clearly alarming.”³³¹ Although the apartheid state built a sixty-mile catchment canal from Ombalantu to Oshakati in 1959, by 1962 an extended drought reduced it to a state of disrepair. The Odendaal Commission read this as “a further distressing warning to urgent action.”³³²

To this end, Verwoerd’s government envisioned a plan including a dam at Erickson’s Drift (Calueque) just north of the Ovamboland border, from which water would be diverted from the Kunene and carried to this existing canal. A new canal, the Etaka, would be tied in at Oshakati to carry water south towards the Etosha Pan. Dr. Wipplinger had long advocated such a plan and, although South Africa initiated negotiations in March 1962, by September there was no sign of Portuguese

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2, Untitled Memo from F. Odendaal to Prime Minister Verwoerd, 12 January 1963.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

agreement.³³³ South Africa's Ambassador in Lisbon reported in October 1962 that "the delay in the aforementioned case is owing to the Portuguese authorities currently making a study of how they can profit from the scheme."³³⁴ Odendaal read this delay as a good sign for South African interests "because they want to know the advantage for them and aren't looking for the disadvantages."³³⁵ He encouraged Verwoerd to make them a favorable offer to force their hand.

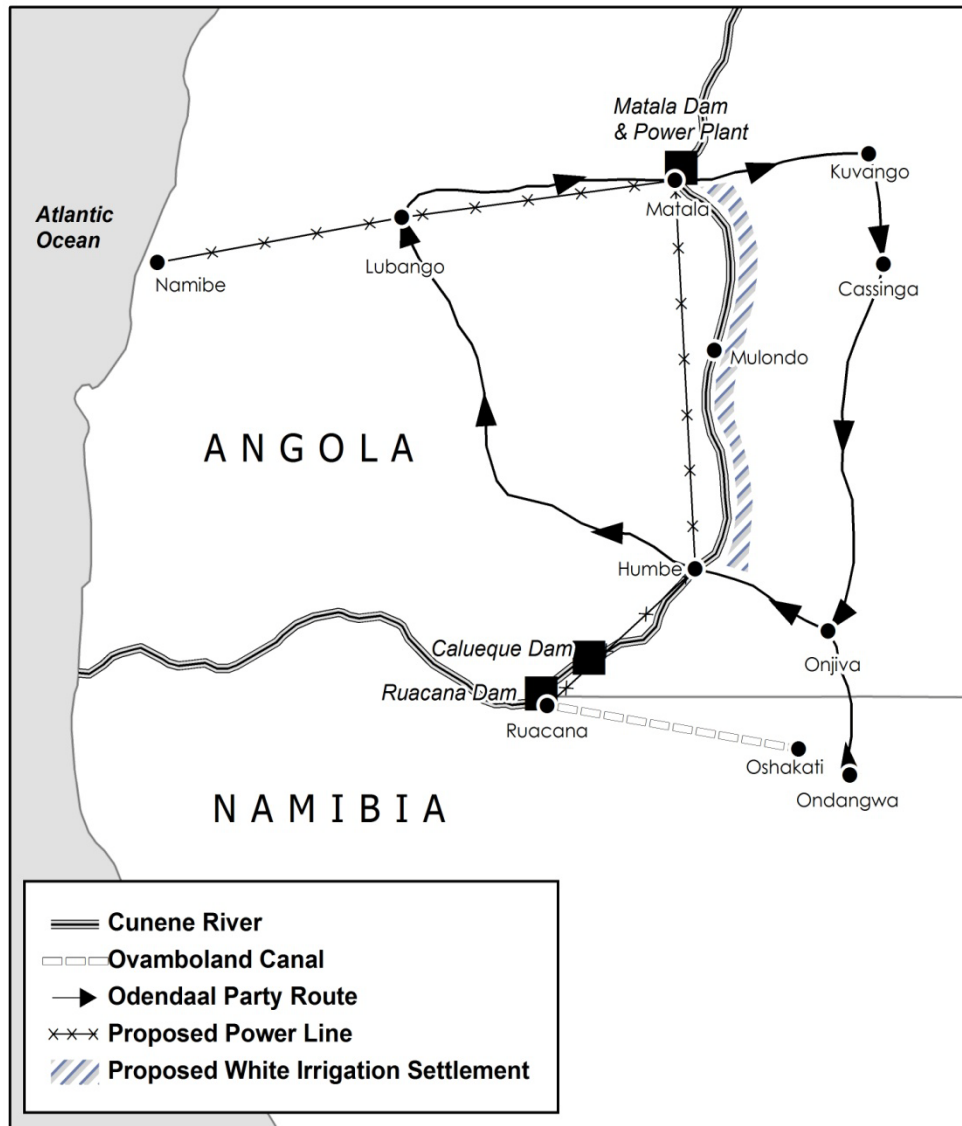
Odendaal proposed Verwoerd's inducement involve large-scale power generation. He suggested South Africa buy power generated at Matala from the Portuguese and then run lines to power the mines at Grootfontein and Tsumeb. South Africa could negotiate low rates because the Portuguese desperately needed to increase revenues to make principal payments on the dam and eventually turn a profit. In exchange for buying electricity, South Africa would push the Portuguese to allow them to build a hydroelectric dam at Erikson's Drift (Calueque) as well as a power plant and intake dam at Ruacana to store and divert water into the proposed canal system and support an irrigation scheme. Proposing to buy power from the Portuguese would hasten South Africa's ability to build its own hydroelectric complex, generate its own power, and accelerate development in SWA.

Odendaal cited a variety of incentives for this plan in his letter to the Prime Minister. For South Africa to exercise its rights to half of the Kunene's water as outlined in the 1926 treaty with Portugal, they required access to the Angolan shore and could justify their claim for an easement. However, South Africa's preoccupation

³³³ Ibid. Odendaal cites a letter from the Secretary for SWA to the Secretary of the Prime Minister urging negotiations to be undertaken dated 23 March 1962 and a letter from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to the Proxy Ambassador in Lisbon dated 7 September 1962 urging increased pressure on the Portuguese.

³³⁴ Ibid. Odendaal references a letter from the Ambassador in Lisbon to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs dated 4 October 1962.

³³⁵ Ibid.



Map 5: Proposed Matala Scheme & Odendaal Commission Route

with foreign opinion proved to be a more important imperative to securing Portuguese cooperation. Odendaal argued, “nothing makes as big an impression on world mentality as power generation in development planning because without electricity there can be no urbanization and no important economic development.”³³⁶ Of course, there could be no electricity without access to water.

Odendaal estimated a power line from Matala to Grootfontein would cost approximately R1.75 million and require an additional R5 million to extend the line to Tsumeb and build a power generation station there. He surmised that these projects could be completed with eighteen months and that the government could ask Tsumeb Corporation to defray the costs. Power generated from Erikson’s Drift could supply electricity to all the major urban centers from Windhoek and Walvis Bay north. Odendaal hoped that by doing the Portuguese a good turn on the Kunene, they would return the favor by complying with an envisioned dam and canal scheme on the Okavango River. In order to ensure that the “Matala Scheme” began with all possible haste, Odendaal emphasized its exigency. He insisted the proposal was “indispensible for white and non-white development.”³³⁷ Changing tactics, he put the finishing touches on his argument by glossing bald plans for securing power in SWA with the thin veneer of the “Sacred Trust”:

It is clear that the Republic cannot effectively carry out this great duty in the interests of furthering education, enlightenment, health, and general welfare of the fast-growing non-white and white populations of SWA unless it can make use of institutions such as the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM), Bantu Investment Corporation ...and other

³³⁶ SAB PM 72/EM 2/70/2 vol. 2, Untitled Memo from F. Odendaal to Prime Minister Verwoerd, 12 January 1963.

³³⁷ Ibid.

organizations that are accustomed to function under the laws of the Republic.

Odendaal's reference to South African parastatals clearly outlines how development schemes in SWA would ideally permit the south African government to deeply entrench itself in the territory. Even if the UN ever took action in SWA, prying the territory from South African clutches would be virtually impossible. Odendaal's letter foreshadowed the ways in which the various entities of the SWA Administration would be absorbed by South African parent divisions beginning in the mid-fifties. Parliament granted South African parastatals the right to operate in SWA and eventually dissolve the SWAA. South Africa's Department of Bantu Administration and Development had already taken over the SWAA's Division of Native Affairs in 1955.

Nevertheless, Odendaal stressed the international urgency of these hydroelectric plans. The matter of SWA had been before the ICJ continuously since the late 1940s and the international political future remained uncertain. South Africa needed to make its move in SWA as soon as possible. Odendaal further demanded that Verwoerd announce the Matala Scheme and the activity of South African parastatals in SWA simultaneously. He recognized that "the favorable economic and cultural benefits of such a project will be highly criticized and refuted within and without the Republic." Nevertheless, he urged the Prime Minister "It is highly unrealistic that a favorable opportunity will arise or that a more drastic economic plan will be developed for SWA in the near future and the opportunity must thus be used in full."³³⁸

³³⁸ Ibid.

Fox Odendaal outlined a twelve-step program for “immediate consideration” to implement the Matala Scheme, which included diplomacy, building dams, power lines, and canals, bringing South African parastatals into SWA and purchasing 53,000 acres of land in Angola. The Chairman estimated that the whole scheme would cost R75million and proposed financing it through World Bank development loans at 5.57% interest amortized over twenty years.³³⁹ Based on an estimated annual cost of R5.6 million, Odendaal surmised that ESCOM could sell electricity in SWA for 1.5 cents per unit to cover debt servicing and operational costs.

Data Collection & Analysis

In the New Year, the Odendaal Commission continued with its research through two further trips to SWA focused on taking oral evidence. The Commission put out public notices in English and Afrikaans inviting people to give evidence on a variety of administrative topics from education and health to water to game protection. “Witnesses” generally represented the government, white businesses and organizations, and African interests (“African” witnesses were mainly missionaries and state-recognized chiefs). All told, 1,820 witnesses produced over 2,082 pages of evidence to the Commission.³⁴⁰ Due to mutual hostilities, the Commission only took evidence from Hereros well-disposed towards the government – the Kaokovelders and Munjuku Nguvauva’s section of Mbanderus. The Commission generally did not consult anyone opposed to apartheid policies.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ *Odendaal Report*, p. 539. The total time taken up by the oral testimonies was only 185 hours – this works out to less than ten minutes per person on average. In practice, Africans were virtually always interviewed en masse in groups ranging anywhere from 4 to 265. On the other hand, the Commission met with whites individually or in small groups no greater than 5. This discrepancy reflects predominant views about African tribal structure, communalism, and the relative weight of white and black testimony long enshrined in the law.

Even before they finished collecting evidence, the Commission wasted no time making recommendations to the government before compiling and presenting their official report to parliament. Responding to “the government’s desire not to allow the whole matter to stand over until the Commission’s final report is submitted” the Commission published its interim report in May 1963. It included five recommendations for “immediate attention,” which consisted of a planned Bantu township in Okambahe for the Uis tin mine, planned community centers for each of the eight Ovambo ethnic groups in Ovamboland, a hospital and postal services in Ovamboland, and finally the southern, or Etaka, extension of the Ovamboland canal.³⁴¹

That four of the five recommendations involved development projects in Ovamboland (although the majority of Uis Mine workers were Ovambos) not only reflects Ovamboland’s high population and higher industrial potential, but also the government’s policy of rewarding cooperative ethnic groups with development. Ovambo chiefs were highly amenable to government policies and even went on a sightseeing tour of the Transkei in June 1962 to witness the wonders of apartheid.³⁴² They were duly compensated with development. The negligible and/or intractable ethnic groups in the south tended to receive such development improvements only when politically expedient to the government.

The Odendaal Report

The Odendaal Committee’s final report appeared in January 1964 and its publication dramatically altered politics surrounding SWA. In contrast to the overwhelming Tomlinson Commission Report, this concise 552-page tome was

³⁴¹ *Odendaal Report*, p. 521.

³⁴² SAB BAC 6 HN 1/5/2 v. 3, “Amptelike Besoek aan Republiek deur Bantoes van Suidwes-Afrika,” HBSK Windhoek to Secretary for Bantu Affairs and Development, 16 June 1962.

published in side-by-side Afrikaans and English and filled to the brim with maps, charts, and statistical tables. The Report highlighted the relationship between apartheid policies and development, with particular reference to water development and the establishment of ethnic homelands in marginal desert areas. Like South Africa, BAD would administer these homelands organized on a pre-packaged, ethnically-delineated tribal structure designed to control African labor.³⁴³

The Commission's logic for homeland development was based on the same flawed argument South Africa used to legitimate its administration of SWA as a "Sacred Trust." The apartheid government reinterpreted the original mandate to simultaneously promote two incompatible and mutually exclusive positions. First, the state insisted that the mandate's stipulation that SWA be ruled "as an integral part of South Africa" was a permanent covenant. The Odendaal Report seconded this sentiment, recommending closer coordination with South Africa and intensification of apartheid in SWA. While "self-governing" homelands might seem incompatible with being "an integral part of South Africa," the Commission argued that the homelands were "also envisaged in the Mandate."³⁴⁴ They contending that the mandate intended "underdeveloped communities must eventually be given self-determination and that therefore greater governing powers must be given to the local non-white groups."³⁴⁵ While the mandate did speak in terms of SWA's eventual self-government, it is unlikely that even Smuts envisioned Bantustans.

Nevertheless, the position of closer cooperation based on a never-ending "Trust," while simultaneously fragmenting SWA into eleven supposedly independent homelands, appears paradoxical. In the segregation era, South Africa promoted an

³⁴³ The Nama Homeland and the Rehoboth Gebiet would come under the Administration of Colored Affairs.

³⁴⁴ Odendaal Report, p. 55.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

infinitesimally slow pace of African development to sustain its permanent hold over SWA. The SWA Commission of 1932 argued that a few centuries would be necessary for Africans to develop sufficiently for self-determination. However, thirty years later, the Odendaal Commission drew on a similar timeline of African development but insisted “independence” be granted as soon as possible. Historian Andre DuPisani understands this reversal as a strategy of controlling change.³⁴⁶ By using South African resources and expertise to control the process of “decolonization” through development, SWA would eventually become part of South Africa. It was incorporation in a new guise. Independent homelands and annexation were not as irreconcilable as they might appear after all.

The Commission further cited the wishes of SWA’s people and their considerable ethnic diversity to support separate development. Homelands, their report argued, reflect “the wish expressed by the said groups to rule themselves in their own areas.”³⁴⁷ This is not totally historically inaccurate. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Herero leaders had pleaded for “a place where all of the Hereros can live together.”³⁴⁸ Indeed, Hereros largely based their petitions to the UN on exclusive land claims and demands to Herero sovereignty. Apartheid and homeland policies would seem then to grant their wishes, but Herero leaders were not to be fooled by prettily packaged oppression.

Nevertheless, the Commission insisted strict ethnic segregation was the only way to ensure harmony among SWA’s twelve ethnic groups. They pointed out, “the population of SWA is by no means homogenous and is in fact extremely

³⁴⁶ A. Du Pisani, “Namibia: Incorporation to Controlled Change,” in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1982): 281-305.

³⁴⁷ Odendaal Report, p. 55.

³⁴⁸ NAN SWAA 1209/A158/176 v.1, Officer-In-Charge Ohopoho to CNC, “Visit to the Kaokoveld: Police Zone Herero Headmen,” 13 Dec. 1945.

heterogeneous” and, were “a system of one man one vote ...to be introduced for the Territory, with one central authority, the result would be that one group, the Ovambo, representing almost half of the population, would completely dominate the other groups.”³⁴⁹ This concern was not unjustified and indeed plagues contemporary Namibian politics. However, Bantustans were hardly the logical and automatic solution to Ovambo preponderance. Still, the Commission concluded the “various population groups harbor strong feelings against other groups and would prefer to have their own homelands... in which they will have and retain residential rights, political say, and their own language, to the exclusion of other groups.”³⁵⁰ Assuming and propagating ethnic hostilities while conveniently omitting white factionalism allowed the state to clarify and legitimate apartheid policies.³⁵¹

To substantiate its recommendations, the Odendaal Commission portrayed democracy as detrimental to SWA and a danger to its economy. They cited Africans’ “limited experience of the alien and, to them, highly complicated economic and political systems operating in the white area” as destined to result in “a lowering of standards of administration and government.”³⁵² Integrated democracy would “also hamper the whites, to whom the territory mainly owes its economic progress, to such an extent that the development and progress of the territory would be seriously retarded.”³⁵³ The Odendaal Commission carefully avoided linking any sort of African disadvantage to inherent racial inferiority and likewise protected white privilege on the basis of economic contribution. The Odendaal Report depicted this arrangement in

³⁴⁹ *Odendaal Report*, p. 55.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ A. Vilakazi, “The Odendaal Report: Social and Economic Aspects,” in *South West Africa: A Travesty of Trust*, eds. Segal & First (New York: Deutsch, 1967), 222-241. Ashforth, 153-156.

³⁵² *Odendaal Report*, p. 55.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

static terms in order to ensure the continued maintenance of that relationship through apartheid policies.³⁵⁴

Carrying out the Odendaal Commission's recommendations for homelands would require substantial movements of people and mobilization of resources. Approximately 24,000 people, nearly seventy-five percent of all Herero people, would have to be relocated into Hereroland, which already struggled to accommodate its population of 11,000.³⁵⁵ The question of land allocation in Hereroland was mainly one of quality. In contrast to Ovamboland or the white areas, the Odendaal Plan's major water schemes bypassed the southern homelands. In these areas, the state would continue to pursue water provisioning via inefficient and irregular boring programs and sand-storage dams, which would never be able to support such a dramatic increase in human and animal population.

Nevertheless, apartheid state officials simply insisted on a patently false picture of prosperity, opportunity, freedom of movement, and ethnic cohesion in the southern homelands. For example, the 1965 White Paper accepting the many of the Odendaal Commission's recommendations attests:

From these data (the Odendaal Report) it is clear than any of the inhabitants who have left the reserves to seek employment outside have done so for no other reason than for the fact that they personally preferred to do so...In the southern sector far more people have left than was necessary to relieve the [land] pressure ...In other words, even if all the people belonging to the ethnic groups of the southern sector were to return to their respective ethnic groups, 70% of them

³⁵⁴ G. Lawrie, "Separate Development and South West Africa: Some Aspects of the Odendaal Report," in *Race* 5, no. 4 (1964): 83-97.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Similar percentages of Nama, Damara, and San populations would be relocated in contrast to the Ovambo of whom only 250 of their total population of 240,000 would be moved.

would find a living in agriculture and other primary, secondary and tertiary enterprises would only have to accommodate 30%. It is evident therefore that the existing reserves, as they stand are economically viable entities in which a perfectly balanced economy can be developed to accommodate all the people with the same ethnic affinity in their respective reserves if they so desire.³⁵⁶

This statement that the existing reserves were viable economic entities capable of accommodating the entirety of their respective ethnic groups is simply ludicrous. A master water survey completed by an extra-governmental engineering firm in 1970, for example, estimated that only seventy percent of all Hereros could *live* in Hereroland.³⁵⁷ Even fewer could practice agriculture. The thirty percent the White Paper describes as being absorbed into other industries were not leaving by choice – they had no other choice. Nor did the southern reserves possess any other “primary, secondary, or tertiary enterprises” – those only existed on white-owned farms, mines, industries and businesses. The government’s objective in failing to develop adequate water supplies in places like Hereroland was to severely curtail stock accumulation and drive able-bodied adults into the migrant labor force. Unskilled Herero workers would be particularly vulnerable to the depredations of farm labor. Controlling water was a critical dimension of Separate Development policies in SWA and became one of the state’s most versatile and powerful tools.

³⁵⁶ NAN ELFI, “South West Africa: A Five Year Plan for the Development of the Native Areas” (White Paper), 1965.

³⁵⁷ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, “Hereroland: Master Water Plan,” 1970.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out to demonstrate how the South African government manipulated a potential international crisis to systematically extend apartheid in SWA by manipulating its arid environment and embarking on water supply projects. Verwoerd cunningly extended an invitation to UN representatives to visit SWA in response to what appeared to be an impending colonial “race war.” Although the international community and South African liberals saw the Carpio Visit as an abject failure, they overlooked its implications for the administration who interpreted it as an unqualified success. Examined in a larger historical light, the visit cannot but be considered otherwise. It was designed to fail and in failing, it succeeded spectacularly. The Carpio Visit opened the door for intensive apartheid development in SWA. It cast doubt on the UN’s moral superiority and competence. Carpio carried that off beautifully.

The visit also provided Verwoerd a forum to proclaim South Africa’s “pre-existing” development plan for SWA and his promise to accelerate these plans. Development helped to frame apartheid in positive terms similar to contemporary Western decolonization initiatives and the state intended to favorably impress the ICJ. Finally, the Carpio Visit provided a platform for establishing the Odendaal Commission as a fulfilment of Verwoerd’s promise.

Like its predecessors, the Odendaal Commission employed “impartial experts” using scientific methods and approaches to find an all-encompassing solution to various iterations of the ubiquitous “Native Question.” The government used the evidence produced by these external bodies to justify and promulgate its desired policies. Despite claims to the Commission’s impartiality, Verwoerd selected a team whose political ideologies matched his own and laid out their task in terms which

made its outcome a foregone conclusion. Where Odendaal, like the Tomlinson Commission, differed from the “Grand Tradition” of Commissions of Enquiry was its task of figuring out how to carry out a pre-determined answer to the overall “Native Question” rather than discovering a solution to a particular iteration of it. As such, the Commission conducted its research based on a “science” deeply inflected by apartheid ideology. By basing their data on major industrial sites, aerial or driving tours of African areas, and interviews with other white experts, the Commission demonstrated its confidence in its own expertise and disregard for African input in prescribing the future direction of African life.

Instead, infrastructural development in the form of hydropower and mining formed the focus of Odendaal’s enquiry. The Matala Scheme provided the entrée to full South African control over SWA. Mining revenues would foot the bill. Through the Matala Scheme and subsequent development planning, the Commission engineered a full-scale but subtle invasion of SWA. Protecting these hydroelectric developments would, however, justify South Africa’s military invasion of the territory in the 1970s. Control over water was critical to South Africa’s plans for power in the region and divvying SWA up into homelands. South Africa could use a combination of the “Sacred Trust” and water scarcity to tighten its grip on the territory by controlling development and using that development to influence other countries in the region.

Development, as envisioned by the government and outlined by the Odendaal Plan, first and foremost depended on securing water. This reality opened the door for South Africa to begin to exert irrevocable control over the disputed territory. The state framed the Odendaal Plan in seemingly positive terms; diffusing an impenetrable web of bureaucracy in apparent beneficence and civil development. While South

Africa made no secret of its development intentions in SWA the inevitable noise surrounding development ideally masked the government's stealthy infiltration into every aspect of SW African life. However, implementing these plans required further mobilization of state machinery and heightened already intense local politics surrounding apartheid in Hereroland. This complicated process of implementing apartheid and negotiating local identity politics in the creation of this "homeland" is the subject of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4: THE WATERBERG EAST SUCCESSION DISPUTE

In 1960, the Herero headman of Waterberg East Native Reserve (WBENR) died unexpectedly. Between the Windhoek Massacre and the ICJ case, Headman Josafat Kambazembi's death occurred at a moment in which the forces of decolonization and apartheid seemed evenly matched. SWA's future was uncertain. African liberation politics were beginning to sweep the continent and emerge in SWA. Paramount Chief Hosea Kutako continued to petition the UN for independence, making every local grievance an international affair, while South Africa had begun its piecemeal annexation of SWA. Disputes over apartheid development schemes had already started to emerge in Hereroland by the time of Headman Kambazembi's passing, well before the Odendaal Commission's establishment.

Amid this electrified atmosphere, debates over Herero identity, apartheid development, and sovereignty became enmeshed in Waterberg East through the succession dispute following Kambazembi's death. This chapter explores the ways in which rural Hereros interpolated the machinations of the apartheid state and the international politics surrounding SWA at the UN and ICJ in terms of local identity politics, lived experience, and the enduring cultural schema of genocide-era land claims. These tensions became encapsulated within the succession dispute in Waterberg East. The chapter explores the serious fissures that emerged in Otjiherero-speaking society in the 1960s as rural Herero communities linked debates at the UN with parochial politics to challenge the apartheid state. The politics surrounding the Waterberg East succession dispute demonstrates how SWA's contested international status forced the apartheid state to refashion its policies as development to modulate between the UN and Herero resistance. These tightening links between local and

international politics armed rural African communities with new avenues of resistance and transformed local politics into a formidable stumbling block to the state.

The Waterberg succession dispute illuminates the ways in which the tensions between apartheid realities and Herero expectations of decolonization manifested in development discourse and intra-ethnic identity politics. Through the Odendaal Commission, South Africa used the pending ICJ case to prove apartheid's benefits to the world and simultaneously annex SWA. Both infrastructural and political developments were key to achieving this dual objective. This chapter considers how BAD attempted to move towards indirect rule in SWA by transforming tractable headmen into "chiefs" and reserves into "independent" homelands or Bantustans by promising power and physical development to the cooperative. The question of the Waterberg Headmanship therefore became highly politically charged. The Traditional Authorities Act promised headman unprecedented (if illusory) power and much needed infrastructural development. However, it simultaneously portended irreversible colonial oppression and the loss of popular legitimacy.

While the realities of transitioning to indirect rule and implementing development would prove difficult for the state, these issues polarized Herero communities across SWA, starting with Waterberg East, the most densely populated and climactically favourable reserve. Intra-Herero political differences translated into an all-or-nothing language of ethnic loyalty. Most Herero headmen and their constituencies followed Kutako's conviction that development merely promised continued misery and liberation lay with the UN. Reflecting their numerical majority, the self-styled Big Group construed loyalty to Kutako and the UN as "true" Herero identity. In contrast, apartheid promised ambitious individuals and headmen opposed to Kutako with an opportunity to enhance their power and status. The Big Group

stripped these Hereros who cooperated with the state, the so-called Small Group, of their Herero identity and branded them as traitors. Ethnic identity disputes, international politics, and apartheid policy implementation became tightly entwined through the debate over who should succeed Headman Josafat Kambazembi as Headman of Waterberg East.

Death of a Headman

Headman Kambazembi died in May 1960 at age 43. Kambazembi had followed Chief Kutako's decision to resist state development efforts, understanding accepting funds as tacit support for apartheid policies and annexation.³⁵⁸ The apartheid government lost no time in manipulating the post-mortem power vacuum in Waterberg East. Just two months after his death, Bruwer Blignaut, Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (HBSK), offered Waterberg East and Otjituuo reserve advisory boards £7500 for badly needed water development. Maintaining Kambazembi's non-cooperation policy, the Waterberg East board argued, "If [the money] came from Dr. Verwoerd, we don't want it... by doing this, we would agree to become a fifth province of the Union and we don't want the money if it comes from the Union."³⁵⁹ Incensed, Blignaut spluttered, "the matter has nothing to do with a fifth province!"³⁶⁰ Despite the board's refusal, the HBSK included £7500 for excavation dams Waterberg East's 1961/62 budget.³⁶¹

In contrast, Headman Reinhard Maekopo of neighbouring Otjituuo Reserve was more amenable. Allegedly once Kutako's chosen successor, Maekopo fell out with the Chief when Clemens Kapuuu was proclaimed heir apparent in the late 1950s.

³⁵⁸ NAN BAC 45 HN1/15/4/18, Assistant Welfare Officer WBENR to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 5 Nov. 1958.

³⁵⁹ NAN BAC 45 HN1/15/4/18, HBSK Blignaut to Secretary of Bantu Affairs, 4 Aug. 1960.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ NAN Water Affairs (hereafter WAT) 131 WW81 v.1, Director of Waterways to HBSK, ca. Jan. 1960.

Maekopo may have also distanced himself from Kutako after a white settler reportedly held him at gunpoint for supporting the Chief.³⁶² A combination of fear and retribution likely encouraged Maekopo's more favourable response to state overtures. He was an ideal candidate for becoming a "chief" under the Traditional Authorities Act and Blignaut planned to promise him money and power in order to carry out development "in spite of Herero anti-government agitation."³⁶³

The ICJ suit made political and infrastructural development imperative for the BAD: South Africa must show the world apartheid's benefits for Africans. Shortly after the suit was filed, BAD officers welcomed the new Minister of Bantu Affairs, de Wet Nel, to SWA with a press conference. Blignaut thanked him for "bringing along the world press... [to] spread our plans to the world."³⁶⁴ Although the extent to which this particular event furthered the government's cause is unclear, it illustrates the positive press strategy South Africa pursued over the next decade.

In Waterberg East, during 1961 friction began to develop between Kambazembi's two competing successors. Reviving an old rivalry, Kambazembi's uncle, Fritz Tjeritje, vied with Kambazembi's nephew, David Tjatjitua, for the headmanship. Angry about losing the position to his nephew, Fritz Tjeritje refused to serve as Kambazembi's advisor and generally made trouble. As Clemens Kapuuu explained, "When Josafat Kambazembi died, the general impression among the people was that Fritz...killed him."³⁶⁵ Kambazembi's death renewed Fritz Tjeritje's ambitions. However, prior to his death, Kambazembi appointed his nephew, David Tjatjitua, as regent for his son, Julius Kambazembi. The Waterberg East advisory board feared hostility between the two men and worried that David Tjatjitua would

³⁶² Kerina, *Namibia*, p. 141-2.

³⁶³ NAN BAC 100 HN5/1/2 v.2, HBSK to Secretary for BAD, 16 June 1960.

³⁶⁴ NAN BAC 37 HN1/15/2 v.6, Notes of SWA BAD Officers' Conference in Windhoek, 24 Aug. 1960.

³⁶⁵ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Chief Kutako to HBSK, 19 May 1961.

not relinquish power when his charge came of age. Although the Waterberg Superintendent complained that “agitators” ruled the reserve after Kambazembi’s death, BAD officials encouraged infighting by claiming the dispute was “a purely Herero matter.”³⁶⁶

In lieu of administrative intervention, in May 1961 Chief Kutako called Herero leaders from the different reserves to Windhoek. He sought to “settle the differences between Messrs. Fritz Tjeritje and David Tjatjitua of Waterberg East Native Reserve.”³⁶⁷ To circumvent hostilities, Herero leaders voted to appoint Kambazembi’s nineteen-year-old son, Julius, as Waterberg headman.³⁶⁸ Anticipating friction between Julius Kambazembi and his uncles, they also voted to depose both men as Waterberg East board members. While Fritz Tjeritje agreed, David Tjatjitua insisted that Kutako simply wished to consolidate his power over Waterberg East by manipulating Julius. He refused to concede the headmanship to Julius or resign from the advisory board.

Despite refusing to intervene, BAD officers closely monitored the Kambazembi succession dispute and disapproved of Kutako’s presumption to call a meeting and fire government servants. The Waterberg Superintendent contended, “the matter is a domestic one wherein headmen and representatives of other reserves should not have become involved, with the sole exception of Hosea Kutako.”³⁶⁹ He accused one “agitator,” Ewald, of encouraging the dispute: “Ewald is presumably under the impression that he will probably be chosen as a board member if one of the

³⁶⁶ NAN BAC 37 HN1/15/2 v.6, Notes of SWA BAD Officer’s Conference in Windhoek, 24 Aug. 1960.

³⁶⁷ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Chief Kutako to HBSK, 19 May 1961.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Superintendent WBENR to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 29 June 1961.

others is dismissed.”³⁷⁰ The Superintendent reported that Ewald evicted Herero government sympathizers from meetings because “they belong to the whites.”³⁷¹ These statements reflect the first stirrings of division between Kutako supporters and detractors in Waterberg East. To combat this growing dissension, the Superintendent considered David Tjatjitua as the administration’s best hope for a compliant headman. He encouraged HBSK Blignaut to support Tjatjitua’s claim and investigate Kutako’s actions.³⁷²

Blignaut planned to handle the matter at the 1961 Herero tribal meeting, but a series of contentious events derailed that effort and ratcheted the dispute up to a new level. Unbeknownst to Blignaut, Kutako cancelled the tribal meeting over the HBSK’s controversial appointment of Munjuku Nguvauva II as Mbanderu headman (see Chapter 5).³⁷³ Kutako supporters secretly left the meeting the night before it commenced, leaving only a rump group of “well-disposed” Hereros, including David Tjatjitua, and Nguvauva’s Mbanderus to meet with Blignaut. This sealed Tjatjitua’s fate as a government sympathiser. No one informed him the meeting was cancelled because “he was friendly with the Mbanderus and they slept at the same place.”³⁷⁴ Waterberg East Big Group leaders informed the superintendent that Tjatjitua “must clearly be cut off as a board member” because he was “friendly with the Mbanderus, who are well-disposed to the government.”³⁷⁵ When Ewald contended that Kutako had already deposed Tjatjitua, the Superintendent coolly replied “[Headmen] could not be deposed by Hosea Kutako, but only [by] the Administrator.”³⁷⁶ He

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Munjuku Nguvauva II.

³⁷⁴ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v. 1, Superintendent WBENR to Magistrate/NC Otjiwarongo, 5 Sept. 1961.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

nevertheless requested Blignaut visit Waterberg before Kutako took the matter to the UN.

While Blignaut blithely ignored this request, the Waterberg East Big Group embarked on a campaign against the Superintendent. They attacked him as “a divider of the people” for retaining David Tjatjitua as Acting Headman.³⁷⁷ By failing to support Kutako’s decision to depose both Fritz Tjeritje and David Tjatjitua, they claimed the Superintendent “belittled the leaders of the people because Headman Hosea Kutako and the whole people of Waterberg have taken away the positions of David and Fritz and placed Julius Kambazembi on the stool of his father.”³⁷⁸

Following this barrage, the Superintendent took a two month vacation.

Returning from his holiday in January 1962, the Superintendent toured Waterberg East to compose a five-year development plan with the advisory board. Five-year plans were a peremptory step to introducing Bantustans in SWA and tying the territory to South Africa under the guise of development. Not privy to Prime Minister Verwoerd’s intellectual machinations, the superintendent merely sought to carry out his task. During his tour, he perceived “a hostile feeling,” and noted, “It was already clear that one well disposed boardman must have yielded to the agitator[s].”³⁷⁹

With the exception of David Tjatjitua’s Small Group, the Superintendent’s meeting with Waterberg leaders reinforced this perception. The Big Group now controlled the advisory board, which was actively “hostile to the government, the Superintendent, and the translator.”³⁸⁰ They reportedly incited “Herero women to hate David and his followers as they are fiends and murderers because they work with the

³⁷⁷ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Waterberg Residents” to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 27 Oct.1961.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Superintendent WBENR to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 17 Jan. 1962.

³⁸⁰ NAN BAC 78 HN2/11/2 v.2, Superintendent WBENR to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 16 Jan. 1962.

whites.”³⁸¹ The Superintendent requested a transfer because he was “not prepared to allow himself to be hanged on a cross at a public meeting by agitators who are not open to the truth.”³⁸² At the advisory board meeting, the members read a letter addressed to HBSK Blignaut announcing their refusal to cooperate with the government. Instead, they vowed to “wait for the UN together with our chief, Hosea Kutako...We must wait for the UN. We will not do anything before we get another [Superintendent].”³⁸³ The Superintendent conceded, “Under the circumstances, it was thus impossible to propose a five year plan.”³⁸⁴ He and Blignaut later devised a five-year plan, forcing R40, 000 of unwanted development on Waterberg residents.³⁸⁵

This letter reflects rural Hereros’ growing opposition to the state and mounting hostility towards the Small Group. While such language as “waiting on the UN” recalls historical and cultural patterns of seeking outside intervention, it also indicates confidence in Kutako’s leadership and UN action. This language cloaked criticism in historical legitimacy and allowed the Big Group to bind local grievances against David Tjatjitua and the Superintendent directly to global anti-apartheid and decolonization efforts. The Superintendent became an effigy of the state while Tjatjitua embodied mounting social tensions in which questions of Herero identity intermingled with issues of loyalty and legitimacy.

Despite the Superintendent’s pleas for Blignaut personally to settle the matter, the HBSK dispatched Hosea Kutako instead. He “instructed” Kutako to “go solve the difficulties that are there between the Herero Tribe.”³⁸⁶ Disregarding the fact that

³⁸¹ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Superintendent WBENR to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 17 Jan. 1962.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. This plan included a new house and office for the Superintendent, a Bantu Education school, five boreholes, and internal fencing.

³⁸⁶ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, HBSK Blignaut to Chief Kutako, 5 Feb. 1962.

Kutako had already devised a solution two years earlier, Blignaut warned him to “listen to the matter altogether impartially and not say beforehand that part of the people are guilty because they stand together with the whites and don’t support you and the UN.”³⁸⁷ Blignaut also threatened to undercut Kutako’s authority by giving David Tjatjitua his own ward in Waterberg East if the dispute was not resolved. Finally, in response to the Big Group’s aforementioned letter, Blignaut instructed Kutako to tell the residents, “I am not going to concern myself about the contents of the letter because I don’t wait on the UN.”³⁸⁸

Blignaut’s “instructions” earned a cold reply. Affronted, Kutako reminded Blignaut of his Windhoek decision and reported that he intended to visit Waterberg with the Native Areas Commissioner to monitor the situation. He therefore resolved “to go back to [Waterberg] as a result of the decision that [the Native Areas Commissioner] and I took, and not according to the instructions in your letter.”³⁸⁹ He repudiated Blignaut’s bald insinuation of bias as “altogether wrong and unfounded” and dismissed the threat to divide Waterberg as “the typical characteristic of imperialism and colonialism to divide and conquer.”³⁹⁰ Kutako concluded with his own threat, warning “the days of imperialism and colonialism are numbered.”³⁹¹

Rather than creating peace, Kutako’s meeting at Waterberg in February 1962 precipitated a significant rupture between the Big and Small Groups. David Tjatjitua would not concede that other members of the Kambazembi royal house requested his dismissal. Instead, he reiterated his belief that Kutako planned to use Julius to displace the Kambazembis and consolidate his personal control over Waterberg East. Kutako retorted, “Is [Julius] born of a dog or animal or donkey or is it the blood of

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Chief Kutako to HBSK, 6 Feb. 1962. Underline in original.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

Kambazembi? If I sit him on the stool, have I chased away the [Kambazembis]?”³⁹² Nevertheless, Tjatjitua’s allegations struck deeply at Kutako’s legitimacy. Though Kutako’s authority was perhaps more genuine for being earned, the fact that he was technically the regent of the Maherero royal house and not a royal heir laid him open to charges of usurpation.³⁹³ Tjatjitua boldly attacked Kutako on these grounds:

You are on the stool of Maherero today; are you not a murder [of the Maherero royal house]? You are the thief, plunderer, and murderer of our *werft*. You wanted [Kambazembi] to die so that you could spring in and cause dissent. You are now on Maherero’s stool and, though it can be said you kill Maherero’s children, it is not. Why do you advise me to die? Why? Why must I die while you do not?³⁹⁴

David Tjatjitua and the Small Group supported their “murder” allegations by accusing Kutako of witchcraft. Tjatjitua claimed Kutako bewitched him “because I stand together with the Mbanderu people.” One of Tjatjitua’s supporters insisted that Kutako spent the night in the Kambazembi kraal with powerful talismans; he asked the venerable Chief, “Does it torment you? You are on Maherero’s stool; you don’t die but stay alive to kill us here.”³⁹⁵

Designed to denigrate Kutako’s authority, these allegations reveal the importance the Small Group placed on heredity as a prerequisite of legitimate power and authority. The Small Group re-appropriated ethnic identity as a weapon to ensure status and power in Herero society. In their view, ethnicity was biologically immutable and more closely linked to family and clan than overarching cultural

³⁹² NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Chief Kutako to HBSK, 17 Feb. 1962.

³⁹³ Chief Samuel Maherero informally appointed Kutako as his regent before fleeing to Bechuanaland in 1904. He reaffirmed this appointment in 1919. Kutako belonged to the Muguunda lineage rather than the Maherero.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

commonality. This sentiment mirrored BAD policies linking genealogical descent to political office under the Traditional Authorities Act. Genuine status and authority could only be inherited, not merited. Harkening back to an idealized and imagined past, this formulation overlooked certain historical realities. Precolonial Herero chiefs could be born or made and the founders of the Maherero and Kambazembi “royal houses” were self-made men.³⁹⁶ Heredity could give one a leg up, but guaranteed nothing. Accordingly, Waterberg East residents voted 558 to sixteen to depose David Tjatjitua as Acting Headman and boardman.³⁹⁷ Busy preparing for a visit by the UN Committee on SWA, HBSK Blignaut ignored the results.³⁹⁸

Kutako’s meeting created problems in neighbouring Otjituuo reserve, whose residents were also involved in the Waterberg succession dispute. The Otjituuo Big Group, which controlled the reserve’s advisory board, voted to fire headman Reinhardt Maekopo for openly supporting David Tjatjitua and “not [being] obedient to senior Headman Hosea.”³⁹⁹ When Blignaut visited Otjituuo in July 1962, residents said they sacked Maekopo because “He is the Republic’s man. He works together with David and we are against the Republic. The residents are all against the headman and the Republic.”⁴⁰⁰ Maekopo objected, “I don’t know the Republic. I don’t know who the president is; I don’t know him. The people who are with me may not speak because then they would also be accused of being republicans.”⁴⁰¹ The boardmen reasoned Maekopo was a republican “because he has different views... he works with

³⁹⁶ NAN BAO 8/315/x54/1996/2, Ethnologist Budack to HBSK, 21 Mar. 1962. Budack notes, drawing on earlier ethnographic work by Rhenish missionaries and Isaac Schapera, that Herero chiefship was a very unstable and constantly changing institution. A handful of chiefs consolidated power in the late nineteenth century and, with the innovation of making Samuel Maherero Paramount Chief, German colonial rule artificially froze this constellation in time.

³⁹⁷ BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.1, Chief Kutako to HBSK Blignaut, 2 Mar. 1962.

³⁹⁸ The ill-fated Carpio Visit.

³⁹⁹ NAN BAC 60 HN1/15/6/14, Superintendent Otjituuo to Magistrate Grootfontein, 2 April 1962.

⁴⁰⁰ NAN BAC 42 HN1/15/4/5, Superintendent Otjituuo to HBSK, 18 July 1962.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

David and David is a republican.”⁴⁰² Blignaut defended Maekopo and praised his cooperation with the government as “carrying the interests of this reserve on [his] heart.”⁴⁰³

Within two years of Kambazembi’s death, local politics had redefined ethnic identities and polarized rural Herero society. True Hereros supported Kutako and the UN; those who did not were no longer Hereros but traitorous republicans aligned with the apartheid state. These tensions deepened at the 1962 Herero tribal meeting, which disintegrated into a brawl over Herero land restitution petitions to the UN. Ever contemptuous of Herero land claims, Blignaut told Herero leaders, “The white men that are here are not prepared to get out and leave everything behind. You yourselves are not so dumb as to think the white people will simply go away.”⁴⁰⁴ He refused to discuss the matter further on the grounds that it was *sub judice* at the ICJ and because his “government [did] not recognize the UN’s authority over SWA.”⁴⁰⁵ Clemens Kapuuo, Kutako’s spokesman, pounced on Blignaut’s contradictory denial of UN authority while accepting that of its courts.⁴⁰⁶ Conflating a UN resolution with a binding ICJ decision, Kapuuo asked, “what do you expect further of the World Court because the World Court says that this land belongs to the UN?”⁴⁰⁷ However, the ICJ only determined that South Africa was not obligated to place SWA under UN trusteeship. South Africa remained SWA’s legal custodian.

Once this debate subsided, hostilities erupted between the Big and Small Group representatives. A member of the Windhoek Advisory Board and known

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, “Minutes of Herero Tribal Meeting,” 7 Sept. 1962.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ While South Africa argued that the ICJ did not have jurisdiction over its mandate for SWA, they were nevertheless sufficiently respectful of the court’s authority to adhere to common rules regarding its pending case.

⁴⁰⁷ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, “Minutes of Herero Tribal Meeting,” 7 Sept. 1962.

government informer asked for a definition of the term “whitefoot.”⁴⁰⁸ He said, “This thing started in 1958 and this name is now very widespread. Today we want to know who these people are and what they do.”⁴⁰⁹ Diffusing a shouting match between the HBSK and the Big Group over whether Blignaut planted the question, two representatives answered the boardman as if he were an imbecile. One replied,

There are political parties all over the world and if you belong to one party, you don’t have the right to go over and talk to another party. So, as the Nationalists are called the Nattes, the United Party the Sappe ... that is the name for you. Just as [the boardman] is still the hand of the republic, so shall the name always stay with him. This is the name of that political party and if he can’t understand it, then he must let the politics stand.⁴¹⁰

Another explained, “Where a white follows the policies of a non-white, he is called a Kaffir-brother, and when a non-white follows the policies of a white, he is called a whitefoot.”⁴¹¹ The Boardman objected to these divisions, claiming, “I work for my tribe and I just want to have the right answer.”⁴¹² These tripartite tensions among the Big Group, Small Group, and government saturated the rest of the meeting.

The answers reveal the thorough entanglement of race, ethnicity, and politics in early 1960s Herero society. There was no room for fence-riders. A true Herero supported Kutako and the UN. Acting otherwise cost one Herero identity and revealed him to be a traitor to his race and blacks’ global struggle for freedom by colluding with the bastion of white supremacy. HBSK Blignaut confirmed this sharp division and demanded people choose sides. He told the meeting, “It is already a long time that

⁴⁰⁸ J. Kamaripa

⁴⁰⁹ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, “Minutes of Herero Tribal Meeting,” 7 Sept. 1962.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid.

Hosea and I have not been on the same road; his road is to the UN and mine is not. I know that not all Hereros walk the same road with him.”⁴¹³

These two paths diverged sharply just after this meeting. Although South Africa outwardly denied any UN or ICJ authority over SWA, the state feared the ICJ, which was deciding if it had jurisdiction to try the suit against South Africa. Hedging his bets, in September 1962 Prime Minister Verwoerd announced the establishment of the Odendaal Commission and its task of devising a comprehensive development scheme for SWA. As the objective of creating Bantustans in SWA could hardly be explicated given the uncertain situation at the ICJ, development became a physical and rhetorical proxy for apartheid and annexation. It masked oppression as good-governance and economic progress. Verwoerd intended the Odendaal Commission to impress the ICJ and the world of South African responsiveness and beneficence in the hopes that the court would find in South Africa’s favour or see no need to try the case.

The Odendaal Commission alarmed Kutako and other Big Group leaders. State administrators intentionally framed apartheid development and Bantustans under Odendaal as a panacea to Herero grievances. BAD officers insisted that Hereros could have their own lands and rule themselves if they would only cooperate with the government, which just wanted to help. Big Group leaders recognized that apartheid development and homeland policies would restrict them to the Kalahari fringe and irrevocably finalize the transfer of Herero lands to whites. Verwoerd’s launching of the Odendaal Commission catalyzed the transformation of Herero land claims from demands for certain pastures to insistence on SWA’s independence. However, because the state planned to rule homelands through “traditional authorities” whose powers would exceed those of current headmen, apartheid development and homeland

⁴¹³ Ibid.

policies attracted Small Group leaders by offering them greater power and prestige.

BAD circles heralded the Odendaal Commission as a world important event alongside the Space Race and atom bomb. In a public speech, Blignaut explained Odendaal's central objective as "develop[ing] the Bantu areas so the Bantus will trek back there."⁴¹⁴ He rationalized this mousetrap-like "development" as essential to prevent "[chasing] the nonwhites into the arms of the UN and the communists."⁴¹⁵ Envisioning Odendaal as a hearts and minds campaign, Blignaut fantasized, "the UN will come and see how happy and contented people are. Such guests can be sent home and we can go ahead with our policy of separate development."⁴¹⁶ Nevertheless, he cautioned, "If we lose the cooperation of well-disposed [Africans], we create luxuriant earth for unrest that is incited and infiltrated by the yeast of the communists ... [and] blood will flow."⁴¹⁷ Securing the cooperation of headmen like David Tjatjitia and Reinhardt Maekopo and using the Traditional Authorities Act to prop them up as viable adversaries against leaders like Kutako was critical to achieve state objectives and guard against Cold War influences.

"SWA Belongs to the Hereros"

Just two months after Verwoerd proclaimed the Odendaal Commission, the ICJ determined that it had jurisdiction over South Africa's mandate and would try Ethiopia and Liberia's case. This blow to the state emboldened the Big Group and redoubled its recalcitrance, but apartheid's daily realities and the Odendaal Commission clouded this victory. The Otjituuo advisory board ostracized Reinhardt Maekopo because he was "reasonably loyal to the state and wants to cooperate with the whites against the other board members who want to drive the whites and other

⁴¹⁴ NAN BAC 46 HN1/15/5, *Die Suidwes Afrikaner*, 7 Sept. 1962.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, "Minutes of Herero Tribal Meeting," 7 Sept. 1962.

rages out.”⁴¹⁸ In Waterberg, the ICJ’s decision spurred the Big Group to “cut off” Blignaut and the Superintendent, denying their authority over the reserve.⁴¹⁹

Tensions in Waterberg East reached a fever pitch in mid-1963 when international politics regarding the ICJ trial collided with two local facts. David Tjatjitua was still the state-recognized headman and, after two years of foot-and-mouth quarantines, Waterberg East Reserve owed the state nearly R50, 000. Although Veterinary Services lifted the quarantine, the Big Group “refused to sell their cattle as long as David was still a leader.”⁴²⁰ This served as a refusal to pay their debt until the state met their demands regarding the succession dispute. The Administrator of SWA attempted to break this resistance by ordering Bantu Affairs to “encamp and close water holes to prevent cattle from drinking...it was put to [the Hereros] that they broke the law if they did not make their cattle available for inspections (in preparation for auction), and that they could prosecuted for it.”⁴²¹

Blignaut dispatched his new liaison officer, Mr. Gerber, to handle the debt and unrest in the reserve. Gerber was shocked at the

terrible open hostility against [David Tjatjitua]. No notice was taken of [him] or [his] instructions. [Tjatjitua and his followers] were not to be greeted and no one would talk to them. Even water was refused to them despite that natives are more forthcoming among themselves than many whites were water is concerned.⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ NAN BAC 42 HN1/15/4/5, Superintendent Otjituuo to Magistrate Grootfontein, 17 Oct. 1962.

⁴¹⁹ NAN BAC HN10/1/2/11, Superintendent WBENR to Magistrate Otjiwarongo, 2 May 1963.

⁴²⁰ NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.2, Gerber to HBSK, 28 May 1963.

⁴²¹ NAN AHE 66 N1/5/2a, Administrator as Member of Bantu Affairs Committee, “Persverklaring van die Hoofbantoesakekommissaris van Suidwes Afrika,” 7 Dec. 1964.

⁴²² NAN BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11 v.2, Gerber to HBSK, 28 May 1963.

Big Group leaders assured Gerber that David Tjatjitua's continuance as headman would "lead to a bloodbath one day."⁴²³

Despite Gerber's threats to terminate access to water supplies, the Big Group resolutely refused to hold an auction and pay their arrears. They did not believe their funds were overdrawn. They insisted, "If they could not be advanced any more money, which is what they want, then the UN will come and give them independence and self-rule. After that, they will print a lot of money and everyone will have enough to live."⁴²⁴ Residents informed Gerber, "Clemens Kapuuo ... went to the UN to free them from the white people. He is their hero and came to tell them what he heard at the UN... that all of SWA belongs to the Hereros."⁴²⁵

These responses illuminate how rural Hereros integrated perceptions of the UN with everyday grievances through a land restitution discourse. While the UN's precise powers remained unclear in the early 1960s, these statements reflected hope and confidence that this body could and would bring about independence, which Hereros expressed in terms of land restoration. Rural communities' information about the UN most likely emanated from *radio trottoir* circulated through migrant labour networks and reinterpreted by leaders such as Kutako and Kapuuo. As Emmett argues, these leaders had a vested interest in maintaining an ethnic basis of authority, which they reinforced by connecting world events and local politics through the cultural paradigm of land claims.⁴²⁶ Though Kapuuo had not been to the UN, residents' statements linking him with the UN, independence, and land restitution are a case in point.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Emmett, *Popular Resistance*, p. 292

These statements also provide insight into both existing power relations and hopes for the future. Reflecting the political and economic differentials of race in SWA, residents drew attention to their own poverty and powerlessness. Their vision of a future characterized by plenty of money and self-rule entailed financial equilibrium and civil liberty. However, their claim that SWA was Herero property moved beyond equal rights with whites. Instead, it was a declaration of communal sovereignty that placed national independence within a culturally specific framework. Claiming the UN affirmed this right not only provided their demands additional clout, but conveyed a right to a global citizenship in a world where others resisted oppression and condemned apartheid injustice in SWA. By placing themselves squarely within these global anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements, the Big Group justified open resistance against the state and retaliation against the Small Group.

Gerber, the liaison officer, left Waterberg completely rattled. He described the experience as, “in a word, awful.”⁴²⁷ He complained that Ewald, the Big Group ringleader in Waterberg, continually agitated against the government. Gerber described him as “a dreaded man among the residents. He is dreadfully large with a flat head, two sharp filed teeth above and the bottom four middle teeth were knocked out with a nail and a rock,” noting “Herero customs are now fashionable among the agitators.”⁴²⁸ Gerber recommended Blignaut fire David Tjatjitua to achieve the peace necessary to hold auctions and proceed with apartheid development. Adding, “As the Prime Minister...said, to accelerate the tempo of development, as far as the natives are concerned, we must make allowances here and there.”⁴²⁹ Blignaut disregarded

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid. A similar resurgence of teeth filing occurred in the aftermath of the Herero Genocide as a way of demarcating and asserting Herero identity in an uncertain moment.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

Gerber's recommendations and retired from government service to become the manager of African labor for Tsumeb Corporation.⁴³⁰

Strife in Waterberg East reached its zenith early in 1964. Liaison Officer Gerber returned to Waterberg in February 1964 "as a consequence of a report [he] received from a well-disposed Herero that the shopkeepers, baker, and butcher would not sell goods to a certain group of residents."⁴³¹ The situation was worse than he expected. The boycott against the Small Group was total. Gerber reported to the new HBSK, "the Small Group told me of the boycott against them – no one would let their cattle drink at the water points. Two of them...went with me to the Okakarara shop. There they tried to buy some tea and sugar, each with a 20 rand note in their hand. Although they literally begged for the wares, the clerks...refused to serve them."⁴³²

The clerks informed Gerber that "the tribe" decreed they could not sell to "whitefeet" and directed him to a sign on the door. The sign read: "the Nation has so decided. The shop owners may not sell goods to the Small Group. If you wilfully sell your goods, your shop will be closed. This goes for all the people of Waterberg."⁴³³ Gerber promptly contacted a known "agitator" who explained that the Small Group had been evicted from the Herero nation. He told Gerber, "Our nation no longer wants them. Our nation has decided to kill them through starvation within two months."⁴³⁴

This disturbing statement reveals the entanglement of different political realms with ethnic identity in rural Herero society. Framed in direct opposition to Herero, slurs such as "whitefeet" and "republican" surpassed political differences of opinion and reflect totalizing and mutually exclusive ethnic identities. The use of the term

⁴³⁰ NAN A557/3, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, "'Wir waren immer gute Freunde': der Eingeborenenbeirat von Katutura verabschiedete sich von dem Haupteingeborenenkommissar für Südwestafrika," 23 Aug. 1963.

⁴³¹ NAN BAC 62 HN1/15/6/27, Gerber to HBSK, 5 Feb. 1964.

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*

“nation” instead of “tribe” is a small but striking alteration that conveys the extension of urban elite politics to rural affairs. Nation absorbed and elevated the notion of tribe in the world of Namibian liberation politics. In 1964 Big Group leaders, formally organized into the Herero Chiefs’ Council, split with young, educated Herero elites. These elites, organized as the SWA National Union (SWANU), considered themselves as the vanguard committed to expunging tribalism to ensure an independent Marxist-socialist future. To combat SWANU propaganda, the Chiefs’ Council reinvented itself as the National Unity Democratic Organization (NUDO).⁴³⁵ That NUDO has always been an exclusively Herero party chaired by the Herero Paramount Chief belies the useful ambiguity of the term and concept of nation. In this conscientious discursive transition, the tribe became the nation. “National Unity” became another way of expressing Big Group ideology.

Roused by his chilling interview, Gerber marched over to speak to Big Group leaders, but a gruesome sight interrupted him. He recalled,

The Small Group brought to me a blood covered, half-conscious supporter of theirs. His name is Gerhardt, fifty-four years. He wanted to give his cattle water. Two members of the Big Group beat him with *kerries* literally trying to kill him. His head was split open in a few places; his nose, mouth, and ear were broken, and blood was running down his pants and trousers.⁴³⁶

Gerber confronted the Big Group with renewed vigour. Unfazed by his “strong words,” Big Group leaders blamed the state: “the Small Group of the Hereros wandered off and the government protected them.”⁴³⁷ Gerber threatened “all of the shopkeepers’ licenses [would] be immediately cancelled.” Thus, the next day the Big

⁴³⁵Ngavirue, *Political Parties*, p. 253

⁴³⁶NAN BAC 62 HN1/15/6/27, Gerber to HBSK, 5 Feb. 1964.

⁴³⁷Ibid.

Group “decided the Small Group could go to the shops but the Big Group would now boycott the shops.”⁴³⁸ However, two days later, they reverted to the original terms. Beyond revoking trade licenses, the administration could do little in light of the pending ICJ trial because Kutako would immediately inform the UN of any overt force.

The Odendaal Plan

Amid the Waterberg tumult, in late January 1964 the Odendaal Commission published its development recommendations for SWA. Neither Herero leaders nor the international community received the Odendaal Report favourably. Kutako declined to discuss the Report with the Minister of Bantu Affairs “on the grounds that we are opposed to the making of Bantustans in South West Africa. We made it clear to the commission [...] our aim was that SWA should be placed under the trusteeship of the UN.”⁴³⁹ The UN likewise rejected the Report because it explicitly precluded SWA’s decolonization. The South African government, in contrast, accepted it. However, the white paper on the Report noted that implementing Odendaal recommendations would be “affected by considerations pertaining to the pending case ...in the International Court at The Hague.”⁴⁴⁰ While the suit delayed Bantustans, South Africa undertook major infrastructural development costing R150, 000,000 to facilitate this ultimate aim.

When Liberia and Ethiopia amended their claim to include the Report, South Africa responded by inviting the ICJ to visit SWA and see apartheid first- hand. Anticipating a visit, Verwoerd appointed a Liaison Committee to implement selected Odendaal recommendations. He urged,

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ NAN BAC 62 HN1/15/6/27, Chief Kutako to HBSK Eaton, 12 Feb. 1964.

⁴⁴⁰ NAN AP4/3/1d, White Paper, April 1964.

Everything that can be done within the next nine months to prepare for the Court's visit must be handled with the utmost speed. The preparations involve two aspects: clean up what is dirty and filthy with a little paint and a little repair work, etc. and improve the circumstances where places are falling over, such as schools and hostels. In the process, Bantu Administration must also refuse from the beginning to help the Hereros unless they want to accept our help.⁴⁴¹

Verwoerd clearly conceived of development as a means to fool the ICJ and discipline insubordinate Herero communities. He also hoped to pressure Hereros into submission by lavishing resources on cooperative leaders like David Tjatjitia and Reinhardt Maekopo.

While the Big Group wove the Odendaal Report into the fabric of local realities such as unwanted whitefoot headmen and detested BAD officers, the Small Group receptively welcomed Odendaal recommendations. Severe drought aggravated existing underdevelopment problems and intensified both groups' responses to Odendaal implementation. Overstocking in the reserves completely denuded usable grazing within reasonable distances of water sources. The Otjituuo Superintendent reported cattle "starved from hunger [and] the veld, especially by the water places, lies strewn with carcasses."⁴⁴² Presuming the Big Group continued to deny the Small Group access to water, the latter would have been desperate for relief. Despite stock loss, the Big Group leaders recognized development projects like boreholes and internal fencing as state tools to monitor Herero mobility, limit stock accumulation, and enforce migrant proletarianization. Though not prepared to surrender their pastoralist lifestyle, it depended on state-controlled water supplies, which

⁴⁴¹ SAB BAO 4877/F54/1281, Minutes of Discussion in Prime Minister's Office, 10 July 1964.

⁴⁴² NAN District Administration (hereafter AHE) 20 N1/15/6, Superintendent Otjituuo to Magistrate Grootfontein, 7 Jan. 1965.

consequently became powerful leveraging tools.

In October 1964, the HBSK trekked to Otjituuo Reserve to promote the Odendaal Plan. Reinhardt Maekopo and his followers accepted government development funds but the Big Group referred to the HBSK as “Odendaal’s man.” Refusing to speak with him, they claimed, “the law you bring is Odendaal law ... you support the Odendaal Report and that is something we will not have.”⁴⁴³ The residents insisted development was “just something to butter us up before the World Court decision comes out. Before the decision there can be no friction between us and the government,” adding ominously, “Later there will be trouble between us and our superintendent.”⁴⁴⁴ Events at the ICJ clearly influenced rural communities’ actions, responses to apartheid schemes, and interactions with officials. Knowing the pending case limited the state’s ability to retaliate and expecting a favourable verdict emboldened the Big Group to openly resist apartheid implementation, but only to a point. The verdict’s uncertainty also constrained the form of their resistance lest violence jeopardize their demands for independence. Nevertheless, confidence in the ICJ presaged an imagined future moment of retribution. The HBSK dryly remarked he would “make a note of it.”⁴⁴⁵

A few months later, in February 1965, Verwoerd boldly announced that Ovambo Chiefs in northern SWA requested their territory become a Bantustan. Suspiciously, he only reported this news four months after the chiefs filed their petition but one month before the ICJ resumed its hearing. The *Rand Daily Mail* considered the announcement as “aimed primarily at showing the world that there is significant non-white support in the territory for Nationalist government policy, the

⁴⁴³ SAB BAO 4877/F54/1281, Superintendent Otjituuo to HBSK, 29 Oct. 1964.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

239,000 Ovambos comprising 45% of SWA's total population.”⁴⁴⁶ While this announcement failed to impress the Big Group, Small Group leaders perceived an opportunity.

The government arranged for the Ovambo chiefs to observe apartheid's miracles in the Transkei and invited other tractable leaders along, including Reinhardt Maekopo. At a reception in Pretoria, the Minister of Bantu Affairs sought to vanquish any lingering doubts about apartheid, telling the visitors,

Many people run around among you who are against improving your country. They tell you the government's words are just air and will oppress you. These people are like wolves and jackals that run around at night and catch your cattle. You only hear the bad things that the government does from them. What have they done for you? Can you think of something that they have done for you? It is because they have nothing to show you. They only talk and care for themselves. Not for you. The government is not ashamed of what it has done for the Bantus.⁴⁴⁷

Apparently moved, Maekopo responded to the speech with effusive praise for government policies. He assured the Minister he had “come to see the great seed that was planted and would later plant it in his own land.”⁴⁴⁸

Although Maekopo's South African visit won him no friends in the Big Group, he banked on currying the state's goodwill. Knowing the administration openly opposed Clemens Kapuuo as Kutako's successor, Reinhardt Maekopo spotted an opportunity to regain his position and revenge himself on Kapuuo. Using the unrest

⁴⁴⁶ SAB BAO 4877/F54/1281, *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 Feb. 1965.

⁴⁴⁷ SAB BAO 4877/F54/1281, “Minutes of Meeting with the Minister of Bantu Affairs,” 22 Mar. 1965.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

in Waterberg and Otjituuo, he wrote the HBSK, “the disunity among the people is caused by Hosea and Kapuuo [...they] must be taken from leadership.”⁴⁴⁹ Stressing Kutako’s decrepitude to segue to his true point, Maekopo wheedled,

Our great leader that we have appointed, Hosea, will surely not live much longer and the other great leaders that rule the reserve are already dead and, while we are still waiting in life, I reckon that I am the only headman of our land. Therefore, I don’t want to talk big, but I speak the truth when I testify of our land.⁴⁵⁰

As Bantu Affairs become preoccupied with Kutako’s impending death and seemingly inevitable succession by Kapuuo, Maekopo’s claims to “speak the truth” directly contrasted official images of Kapuuo as liar *par excellence* in his anti-apartheid protests. Implicitly pledging allegiance to the state, Reinhardt Maekopo hoped to win the administration’s nomination as Kutako’s successor. Officials soon intervened in Kutako’s succession but they were not settled on Maekopo. He would have to wait and see if his gamble paid off.

The remainder of the decade, 1966 – 1970, proved mixed for the residents of Waterberg East and Otjituuo as well as the South African government. Although the ICJ declined to visit SWA, making the frantic preparations for naught, the court ruled that Liberia and Ethiopia had no standing to file suit against South Africa. The apartheid government touted this as a major political and legal victory affirming its policies and presence in SWA. Under this illusory green-light, South Africa, now led by Prime Minister Vorster, began to openly expedite apartheid legislation and development in SWA over the next three years. “Hereroland” was officially proclaimed as a Bantustan and officials began planning for forced removals. The UN

⁴⁴⁹ NAN AHE (66) N1/9/2 v.1, Magistrate Grootfontein to HBSK Eaton, 16 Mar. 1966.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

retaliated against the ruling by terminating South Africa's mandate over SWA on 27 October 1966 and taking steps to reopen the ICJ suit.

South Africa ignored this resolution and framed the continuation and intensification of apartheid development in SWA in terms of the global politics of the Cold War, decolonization, and American Civil Rights. At a 1965 meeting of Bantu Commissioners in SWA, HBSK Eaton argued in his introductory remarks, "This political background creates great political pressure to speed up development in Bantu areas in SWA."⁴⁵¹ W.C. DuPlessis, the leader of the NP in SWA and a member of SWA's Executive Committee and the Odendaal Liaison Committee, further noted the importance of local and international links in his keynote speech: "In this quickly shrinking world, small things become big. Things that occur here swiftly find their way into the circles of the highest world powers with immediate repercussions."⁴⁵² He contended that the main threats to an acceptable world order and peace in southern Africa were the anti-colonialism of America and Russia. The recent freeing of African nations has caught hold of this razor-edged weapon with the consequent cry of Africa for the African...A third threat is communism, which everyone here knows something about. Another threat is pan-Africanism, which is also well known."⁴⁵³

Du Plessis argued that apartheid was the only safeguard and solution to this "unfettered freedom that [leads to] unfettered chaos."⁴⁵⁴ After all, he reasoned, "A tree grows best in its own yard. The fruit cannot be forced to become ripe, because then it rots." Waxing eloquent, DuPlessis continued that, unlike the brute racism of the US, "Among ourselves, we have an arrangement of relations between the ethnic groups that is not just based publically on racial differences but an overall regard to

⁴⁵¹ NAN SAP 10/2/11/5, "Derde Konferensie van Bantoesakekommissarisse gehou te Windhoek op 11 en 12 Mei 1965," 9 Jun. 1965.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

general culture, lifestyle, and language; therefore it is indeed a political question.” On the grounds that apartheid was distinctly *not* a racial issue, he concluded, “our overseas critics would be all too glad if our policy of separate development openly rested on physical or color differences.”⁴⁵⁵ Instead, in the government imaginary, the Odendaal Plan was an ethnically sensitive approach to protecting Africans from the strife caused by flashy and extremist ideologies, such as communism and pan-Africanism, to which they were particularly vulnerable.

As the Odendaal Plan became a reality, it became a catchall name for anything related to apartheid in SWA. In late 1967, Otjituuo residents wrote “the Leaders of the Odendaal Plan” complaining about a government surveying crew setting up borehole beacons in the reserve. The residents demanded the state “take these beacons of yours out of our living area. We will never accept the Odendaal Plan here.”⁴⁵⁶ Their letter reveals intense hostility towards Maekopo, the Small Group, and their continued confidence in the UN to address their local concerns:

As you already know, this land was removed from you on October 27th in the year 1966. It now stands under the protection of the UN. But you refuse to leave here. Leaders of the Odendaal Plan, remove this law of yours in our land; it must not continue here. If there is a Herero that will tell you that you must go ahead with the Odendaal Plan, then he is the worst Herero who understands you and stands together with you. And this sort of Herero, when the time is ripe, will be chased away along with you. Because you know, if a person leaves his tribe or people to go and be included with another

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ NAN AHE (66) N1/15/2, Otjituuo residents to ‘the Leaders of the Odendaal Plan,’ 1 Dec. 1967.

tribe or people, then he no longer has the rights of his own people. The Leaders of the Odendaal Plan, we want to say to you, without hiding anything from you, that this country is our own land and is protected by the UN. And the time of the UN in SWA is near. Thus, you spend money that you should have saved to buy something later wherever you go. Forget this land, it is ours; go away; the land is the property of our forefathers.⁴⁵⁷

While reflecting the Big Group's certitude that the UN would eventually bring independence, the letter unequivocally framed Small Group leaders like David Tjatjitua and Reinhardt Maekopo as ethnic traitors with no claim to Herero identity. This letter also illustrates the persistence of land restitution as a freighted paradigm blending international politics with local complaints to lay claim to inalienable Herero sovereignty over land and life. Although the UN's revocation of South Africa's mandate was an impotent gesture, its power lay in inspiring hopeful resistance in Hereros who refashioned it to address their immediate concerns.

Conclusion

Events surrounding the succession dispute in Waterberg East demonstrate how rural Herero communities linked international affairs with local politics to resist the apartheid state. These events reflect a different, and perhaps more powerful, Herero alliance with the UN than dominant scholarship typically portrays. While UN resolutions against South Africa generally failed to achieve their stated aims, Big Group confidence in the UN and ICJ provided them the hope and assurance to confront and repudiate apartheid South Africa. As communities contended with the

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

apartheid state's increasingly frequent incursions into daily life, land restitution claims tied to UN liberation became enmeshed with questions of loyalty and ethnicity in Waterberg. This cultural formulation justified the communal ostracism of "traitors" and thoroughly divided rural society, illuminating the parameters of intra-ethnic community and identity politics obscured in dominant historiography. Examining the Waterberg succession dispute clarifies how culturally modulated interpretations of international affairs shaped rural Hereros' daily realities, their responses to apartheid, and expectations of an independent future.

By the end of the 1960s, the Waterberg succession dispute had polarized Herero society into the Big and Small Groups. The Big Group, which grew to include the vast majority of Hereros in the territory, vehemently supported Kapuuo as Kutako's successor, refused any semblance of cooperation with the apartheid state, and continued to look to the UN for independence. In contrast, the Small Group continued to work with the apartheid government and accept development aid. In the 1970s, David Tjatjitua and his followers trekked to a remote area and were among the first Hereros to formally accept apartheid policies in the form of a "Community Authority." He nevertheless remained the headman of Waterberg East until his death in the 1980s. Working with BAD officials and Mbanderu leaders, Tjatjitua and the Small Group would also form "The Society for the Royal House of Maherero," committed to finding a Herero Paramount Chief as stipulated by the Traditional Authorities Act (See Chapter 6). This division in Herero society persisted through the 1970s and 80s, with the Big Group claiming exclusive and "true" Herero identity and the Small Group relying on heredity, "tradition," and state backing to ensure power. As considered in Chapter Five, these identity politics played out more fully within Mbanderu society, which not only debated the meaning of cooperating with the

government on ethnic identity, but also the precise relationship between Hereros and Mbanderus and whether those identities could or should co-exist.

CHAPTER 5: THE THREE HEADMEN OF EPUKIRO

As tensions ran high between the big and small groups in Waterberg East, a related set of troubles began to brew in Epukiro Reserve. Problems within Epukiro also revolved around questions of identity, loyalty, and approaches to government development. However, they were more complicated than those in Waterberg East. The tensions among the Herero Big and Small Groups were less pronounced but, instead, debates over apartheid development raised new questions about Mbanderu identity, Mbanderu relationships with Hereros, and legitimate Mbanderu authority. The ways in which Mbanderu people in Epukiro responded to apartheid state interventions and the politics of Chief Hosea Kutako and his spokesman, Clemens Kapuuo, led to the creation of Mbanderu Big and Small Groups during the 1960s. However, the Mbanderu Big Group generally supported the apartheid state and opposed Chief Kutako while the Mbanderu Small Group became increasingly absorbed within the Herero Big Group. Like the Herero “whitefeet,” the members of the Mbanderu Small Group found themselves stripped of their Mbanderu identity and derisively called “Hereros.”

These intra-Mbanderu and Herero-Mbanderu tensions played out amid apartheid state administrators’ attempts to implement the Traditional Authorities Act coupled with infrastructural development in the reserve during the sixties. Although hostilities between Hereros under Edward Maherero and Mbanderus under Stephanus Hoveka reached such a pitch in the 1950s that authorities agreed to divide Epukiro into separate Herero and Mbanderu wards (see Chapter 2), by 1960, however, BAD officers had not yet accomplished this division. By 1960, however, South Africa struggled to transform its reserves into homelands in a bid to win international and UN support for apartheid as “decolonization.” Epukiro would become part of

“Hereroland” and a new Mbanderu “chief” brought in from Bechuanaland to pave the way for a Traditional Authority.

To this end in “Hereroland,” the state embarked on a major development plan to facilitate the eventual population influx that would be created by the planned liquidation of smaller, outlying reserves. However, the ideology underpinning the creation of ethnically homogenous homelands ruled by a few “traditional authorities” conflicted with BAD’s primary ruling strategy, which splintered ethnically-based resistance by granting dissenting factions favorable to the government their own wards and headmen. As BAD officers embarked on constructing Hereroland, they simultaneously sought to proceed with dividing Epukiro into wards. However, the arrival of Mbanderu Chief Munjuku Nguvauva II from Bechuanaland infinitely complicated the proposed simple division between Hereros and Mbanderus in Epukiro.

Disagreements over Stephanus Hoveka’s successor, circa 1960, compounded the disputes between Hereros and Mbanderus that had led to the initial plan to divide Epukiro into two wards in the 1950s. This new dilemma over a successor for Stephanus Hoveka provided BAD officers a golden opportunity to transition to Bantu Authorities in Hereroland as an essential component of the larger apartheid plan. Eager to replace recalcitrant Herero headmen with a handful of cooperative and co-opted chiefs, BAD officers noted that supporting Mbanderu requests to establish an Mbanderu Paramount Chief, analogous to Kutako, would further fragment Herero resistance. BAD agreed in the early sixties to bring Munjuku Nguvauva II to SWA from Bechuanaland as an experiment with a Herero Traditional Authority. However, Nguvauva’s arrival to SWA resurrected historical feuds, precipitating new socio-

political fractures and realignments and transforming Epukiro into a seething cauldron of struggles over identity, development, and apartheid policy.

Mbanderu Liberation

As of 1960, Epukiro remained undivided. Although friction between Edward Maherero and Stephanus Hoveka led to the initial plan to divvy the reserve into a Herero section based at Otjinene and an Mbanderu ward at Post 3, certain events surrounding Stephanus's death complicated such a simply ethnic binary. In his last years, Stephanus Hoveka began to side with Kutako against the apartheid state and even referred to himself publically as Herero, subsuming his Mbanderu identity to an overarching Herero society. For many of SWA's Mbanderus, historically dissatisfied with Hoveka headmanship and allied with the Nguvauvas in Bechuanaland (see Chapter 2), this was the final straw. They interpreted Stephanus Hoveka's statements as an acknowledgement of Herero suzerainty which could only lead to more Mbanderu oppression at Herero hands.

When Stephanus died, SWA's Mbanderus, most of whom resided in Epukiro, used the election for his successor to declare their independence from Herero overrule and elect a non-Hoveka Mbanderu headman. Citing Kahimemua's prophecy that his descendant would one day return from Bechuanaland to rule the Mbanderus, many supported bringing Munjuku Nguvauva II to SWA as their new headman. Rather than a government factotum tied to a specific reserve, they envisioned the new headman as a paramount chief equivalent and apart from Hosea Kutako. A series of nasty disputes over ethnic identities, the nature of headmanship, and the relationship between Herero and Mbanderu plagued the election of a successor for Stephanus Hoveka.

Although Epukiro Hereros elected Edward Maherero as their headman in the reserve, they claimed a right to vote for Stephanus's successor even though they were not Mbanderu and/or did not reside in the Mbanderu ward. The presence of Hereros at the election foiled the Epukiro Mbanderus' plans and resulted in the election of Stephanus Hoveka's Herero-friendly nephew and Nikanor Hoveka's son, Gerson Hoveka, as Mbanderu headman. Due to Mbanderu outrage and administrative dithering, Blignaut never formally installed Gerson and the question of an Mbanderu headman lay in limbo for almost two years.

March 1960 brought new hostilities between Hereros and Mbanderus that made securing an Mbanderu headman all the more urgent. The Herero Chiefs' Council elected Clemens Kapuuo as Kutako's successor without consulting Mbanderus, contending that the question of the Maherero stool did not concern them.⁴⁵⁸ Having been told by Herero leaders to mind their own business, Mbanderus from across SWA met in Gobabis in June 1960 and resolved to appoint Munjuku Nguvauva as their Paramount Chief. They told the Gobabis Magistrate, "It is not that we aren't satisfied with Hosea, but it is unreasonable for us not to have our own headman. We are now going to Aminuis to discuss the matter with Hosea and to ask him to agree to come with us so the matter can be put before the Department of Native Affairs."⁴⁵⁹ Kutako was not amenable to this Mbanderu move for autonomy and continued to back Gerson Hoveka as the legitimate Mbanderu leader in SWA.

Once Mbanderu leaders presented their request to bring in Munjuku Nguvauva to BAD officials, the South African government lost no time arranging his relocation to Epukiro and organizing new elections. After protracted negotiations with the

⁴⁵⁸P. van Rooyen & P. Reiner, *Gobabis: A Brief History of the Town and Region* (Gobabis: Municipality of Gobabis, 1995).

⁴⁵⁹NAN BAC HN1/1/4, "Op 12/6/1960 voor Landdros/Bantoesakekommissaris, Gobabis, in die Landdroskantoor," 12 June 1960.

Bechuanaland Protectorate, Munjuku Nguvauva II finally arrived in Epukiro in early September 1960.⁴⁶⁰ The HBSK scheduled new elections guaranteeing Munjuku's victory for December. However, at the 1960 Herero tribal meeting, Epukiro Hereros complained the Mbanderus planned to ban them from voting but would open the election to all Mbanderus, regardless of their residence in the Epukiro reserve. The Epukiro Hereros objected that the election was for the headman of the Post 3 ward, not a general Mbanderu Headman, and should therefore only be open to Epukiro residents.

In the ensuing discussion, HBSK Blignaut revealed his support for the Mbanderu plan and deliberately obfuscated the relationship between Hereros and Mbanderus and the precise nature of the election. Skating over the distinction between paramount chief and reserve headman, Blignaut argued in the Mbanderus' favor: "The Hereros have their own leader (Kutako) and the Mbanderus will now have their own leader. I cannot see why the Hereros of Otjinene should help choose a leader for the Mbanderus."⁴⁶¹ He continued to blur these distinctions by saying, "The new headman of Epukiro will have to work together with Edward Maherero and Hosea is the great chief of everyone."⁴⁶² While his earlier statements position the Mbanderu chief as a counterpart to Kutako with Mbanderus effectively divorced from Hereros, his latter statements reassured the Herero majority of maintaining the status quo. Mbanderus would have their own representation in Epukiro but would subordinate to dominant Herero leadership and officially counted as Herero. However, ensuing events suggest that BAD did not have a clear plan for Nguvauva's precise powers in relation to Kutako.

⁴⁶⁰ P.H. van Rooyen & R. Reiner, "The Mbanderu Reassert their Identity."

⁴⁶¹ NAN BAC 47 HN1/15/5/1 v.6a, "1960 Annual Herero Meeting," 3 Dec. 1960.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

As expected, on 11 December 1960 Mbanderus unanimously elected Munjuku Nguvauva as the new Mbanderu Headman. As he was the only nominee and elected 283 to zero, it is likely that only Epukiro Mbanderus attended the election.⁴⁶³ Clearly none of the attendees were followers of Gerson Hoveka; whether they boycotted or were somehow prevented from voting is unknown. Speeches at the election continued to blur the distinction between Nguvauva's official position as Post 3 headman and leader of all SWA Mbanderus. Eliphaz Tjingaete, paradoxically a SWANU leader and avid Nguvauva supporter, noted, "All the Mbanderus in SWA have asked for him to be our leader. We have asked him to come live in the reserve so he can help the tribe."⁴⁶⁴

This persistent discourse reflects an Mbanderu conception of Nguvauva as a foil to Kutako, which BAD officers at first supported. Like Kutako, Nguvauva was officially just a reserve headman. However, he was clearly elected as Mbanderu paramount, a position state officials initially championed and acknowledged. In contrast, in an almost godlike way, Kutako simply *was* the Paramount Chief, seemingly since time immemorial. Although he had been appointed and sanctioned by Samuel Maherero, Kutako's authority organically stemmed from the force of his personality and outstanding leadership. BAD officers tried to evade this inescapable fact by constantly reminding Hosea that he was only the Aminuis headman. Nevertheless, BAD officers could never effectively manipulate or threaten Kutako. In contrast, Nguvauva owed his election and residence in SWA to the apartheid state, a fact which BAD would not forget.

⁴⁶³SAB NTS 103595/1/439, Blignaut to Secty of BAD and Adjunct Minister of SWA, "Hoofman Munyuku Nguvauva van die Ovambanderus in Epukiro," 15 June 1962. This number is well within the range of Mbanderu men in Epukiro ca. 1960. Munjuku is cited as having approximately 2,000 total followers in Epukiro in 1965. See SAB BAO 6812/N117, Odendaal Liaison Committee, "Epukiro: Pos 3," 6 Feb. 1965.

⁴⁶⁴NAN BAC 2 HN1/1/4, Superintendent Epukiro to Magte Gobabis, "Notule van Kwartaalvergadering gehou te Pos 3 Epukiro op 11 Desember 1960," 5 Jan. 1961.

Factionalism to Nationalism?

Nguvauva's arrival in SWA seems very peculiar in light of the government's refusal to repatriate Frederick Maherero from Bechuanaland and recognize him as Herero Paramount Chief in 1959. Claiming Maherero's request, which also included the repatriation of 15,000 Herero exiles, was "linked up with the political move for land to the Hereros," administrators pounced on contradictions between Herero claims of apartheid oppression and this sudden wish to come to SWA.⁴⁶⁵ They argued:

If the Hereros are so oppressed, badly treated, without any rights, etc as alleged by them in their petitions to the UN, why would those living in Bechuanaland be so anxious as to 'return to the land of their birth' from a country where they presumably enjoy all the rights and benefits, etc; does that not bear out that their compatriots' claims to the UN lack a substantial element of truth?⁴⁶⁶

In addition to intensifying Herero ill-will, Nguvauva's arrival and appointment stand in stark contrast to the government's stance on Frederick Maherero. BAD officials claimed Frederick could not be repatriated or recognized as Herero Paramount because he was a Protectorate subject. Yet, administrators went to great lengths to bring Nguvauva, also a Protectorate subject, to SWA, even attempting to get him out of a mandatory conduct hearing in Bechuanaland.⁴⁶⁷ Why then was the South African government so eager to bring Nguvauva from Bechuanaland and recognize him as Mbanderu headman? Why also were a significant portion of SWA's

⁴⁶⁵ SAB BTS 14/18, Dept. External Affairs, "The Proposed Return to South West Africa of Hereros Now Living in Bechuanaland," ca. January 1960.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, JJ van der Watt for HBSK to Secty for BAD, "Headman Munjuku Nguvauva," 20 Sept. 1961. The state also had reasons for trying to avoid this hearing; namely, Nguvauva was still a Bechuanaland subject but had been appointed as SWA headman. The precise legality of this move is unclear.

Mbanderus and Nguvauva himself willing to cooperate with the apartheid government?

The timing of Mbanderus' request for their own headman reveals how apartheid rhetoric could and did appeal to certain sectors of the African populace and offer attractive opportunities to particular individuals. Impressively versatile in some respects, apartheid rhetoric emphasized ethnic affiliation and an, albeit warped, version of ethnic nationalism that would ideally divide the African mass in to a few discrete tribes linked to homelands. At the same time, it could also encourage intra-ethnic splintering and subgroups. By masquerading as self determination, BAD promises of African development along their own lines, in their own areas, and with their own chiefs resonated with longstanding Mbanderu grievances. When the government threw development and resources into the deal, the strings attached to this bargain became obscured. Mbanderus fed up with Herero oppression saw these terms as an opportunity to achieve their independence from Herero overrule.

Nguvauva's reasons for coming to SWA and cooperating with the apartheid government are unclear. From a practical standpoint, it was anomalous - SW Africans were beginning to flee to Bechuanaland, not the other way around. Nguvauva was almost certainly influenced by two cultural themes prevalent in Mbanderu communities in Bechuanaland. Herero and Mbanderu culture, especially in the Protectorate, stressed exile identity and conceptions of SWA as their true home to which they would eventually return and reunite as a tribe. For Mbanderus, and very particularly Nguvauva, Kahimemua's prophecy added validity to this cultural longing. As Kahimemua's heir, the prophecy may have made it culturally imperative for Nguvauva to go to SWA. Moreover, 1960 was an uncertain time and SWA's future was in limbo. Nguvauva was a good politician and he was willing to cooperate with

the state as long as it benefited him and his people, but he kept his options open with anti-apartheid forces other than the Kutako/Kapuuo faction.

For their part, BAD administrators jumped on the Mbanderu request for their own headman as it meshed well with their philosophies and objectives. By 1960 BAD officers were seriously and practically planning the construction of the Herero homeland by consolidating the bordering Herero reserves, including Epukiro. This required converting all preexisting administrative forms into a system of Bantu Authorities controlled by the white government. Bruce Young, Secretary for Bantu Administration, described the object as creating “a state within a state.”⁴⁶⁸

Successfully achieving this goal required more than just imposing puppet chiefs on Africans. The Minister of Bantu Affairs, de wet Nel, cautioned BAD officers at a convention in Windhoek, “We must be very clear over the ideas of the Bantu Authorities system. It is in no way intended to bring them back to the bush or make them primitives. The central aim of the Bantu Authorities system...is to restore their power over their people.”⁴⁶⁹ In speaking of this and concomitant apartheid development, he argued that the key to making it all work was “absorption by the native.” As he continued, “It takes time, but whenever [Africans] absorb [Bantu Authorities and development], then he goes on; then it is a productive process.” The Minister urged BAD officers to embark on their work from this perspective, “not so that we can, without further ado, begin with great schemes and that sort of thing, but so that these things come from the side of the Bantu themselves.”⁴⁷⁰ He concluded, “The Bantu Authorities law will bring (chiefly) power back in the reserve.”⁴⁷¹

BAD officers interpreted the Mbanderu request for a headman precisely as

⁴⁶⁸ NAN BAC 37 HN1/15/2 v.6, “Konferensie van Amptenare gehou op 22, 23, en 24 Augustus 1960 te Windhoek,” 22 Aug. 1960.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

Africans generating apartheid objectives for themselves. Moreover, BAD officers could effectively use this opportunity to exploit cracks within vocal Herero opposition to quietly lay the groundwork for the Bantu Authorities system. However, while separate development was somewhat elastic in theory, supporting Nguvauva as Mbanderu headman called up the practical contradictions implicit in simultaneously trying to build a national homeland and facilitate intra-ethnic factionalism.

While BAD officers considered factionalist strategies a solution to present problems that would pave the way for a transition to a national homeland, they never explained how that change from fragmentation to ethnic national unity was supposed to occur. Did they plan to court Mbanderu nationalism for the time being and then expect Mbanderus peacefully to become Hereros in a unified Hereroland, or would the state create “Mbanderuland” and how would that relate to Hereroland? The plan’s ambiguities and the fundamental tension between practical factional administration and ideals of ethnic homogenization did not immediately register with BAD officers who embarked on these divergent paths simultaneously. The reality of these contradictions manifested soon enough.

A Reserve Divided

While conflicts over Nguvauva’s appointment did not remain confined to Epukiro, his election resurrected and re-politicized the question of dividing the reserve anew. Nguvauva and his followers aligned with the Herero small group and SWANU to oppose Kapuuo as Kutako’s successor. Consequently, Kutako and Kapuuo were not going passively to accept Nguvauva’s appointment as Mbanderu paramount. They forcefully demanded that Blignaut recognize Gerson Hoveka’s 1958 election, considering his hereditary right to the Hoveka stool at Post 3. Kutako

badgered Blignaut into acquiescence; the HBSK finally agreed to formally recognize both Nguvauva and Hoveka the weekend before the Herero tribal meeting at Otjinene in August 1961. Although Blignaut planned to install Nguvauva at Post 3 and Hoveka at Post 13 to prevent hostilities, Kapuuo went to his office and demanded Hoveka be appointed at Post 3 where he was born and his forefathers were buried.⁴⁷² The HBSK relented and agreed to install both at Post 3 - Hoveka on Friday and Nguvauva on Saturday.⁴⁷³

Kutako predicated his unilateral cancellation of the 1961 Herero tribal meeting (as mentioned in the previous chapter) on Blignaut's treatment of Gerson Hoveka and appointment of Nguvauva as Mbanderu headman. In a letter to Blignaut stating his reasons for cancelling, Kutako accused Blignaut of changing plans at the last minute and moving Hoveka's installation to Otjinene. The enduring struggle for power and authority between the two men surfaced in Kutako's complaint that Blignaut "did this without consulting me and also without my agreement."⁴⁷⁴ Blignaut changed the plan because the Gobabis Magistrate warned there could be trouble. Kutako railed that Blignaut, "instead of trying to prevent the person who was planning to make this said trouble (Nguvauva), drove away an innocent man against whom the trouble was directed."⁴⁷⁵ Incensed, Kutako noted,

It was the most shocking thing to learn from your letter that Gerson Hoveka should be appointed at Otjinene instead of being appointed at his own birthplace. Otjinene is totally different than his place of residence. Surprisingly enough, you left the man who was planning

⁴⁷² NAN BAC 48 HN1/15/5/1 v.6b, "Notule van die Dertiende Hererostamvergadering gehou te Otjinene, Epukiro Reservaat op 8 en 9 Augustus 1961," 9 Aug. 1961.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ NAN BAC 48 HN1/15/5/1 v.6b, Kutako to HBSK Blignaut, "Calling Off the Tribal Meeting at Otjinene," 7 Aug. 1961.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

to create trouble, also a new comer, at that place. This is the sort of justice that suited you.⁴⁷⁶

Given that Blignaut was away in Epukiro, he did not receive Kutako's cancellation notice in time and the Big Group left the night before the meeting began. Furious about the Herero exodus, Blignaut held the meeting with Nguvauva's Mbanderus and members of the Herero small group, such as David Tjatjitua. Explaining the course of events to the rump meeting, the HBSK insisted that the plan was to install Gerson Hoveka among his friends when everyone was at Otjinene, as that was the Hoveka tradition. In retaliation against Kutako, Blignaut insisted that he could not install Hovkea since all his supporters left the meeting at Otjinene.⁴⁷⁷ The HBSK took the opportunity of informing the meeting, mainly composed of Kutako's enemies, that "Hosea has to be handled like a child...he handled [the situation with Hoveka] like a child and achieved nothing, and this is what he gets. He only hurt the Hereros."⁴⁷⁸

Despite threats to the contrary, Blignaut appointed Hoveka as a headman in Epukiro. However, this appointment threw a wrench into the still unsettled plan to divide Epukiro into two ethnically-associated wards. Nguvauva proposed, and Blignaut seconded that the reserve be divided into three wards.⁴⁷⁹ Under this initial plan Edward Maherero would retain his ward at Otjinene but Post 3, Gerson's ancestral home and birthplace would go to Nguvauva. Gerson Hoveka was to be shunted to the undeveloped northwestern sector between Otjinene and Post 3.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ NAN BAC 48 HN1/15/5/1 v.6b, "Notule van die Dertiende Hererostamvergadering gehou te Otjinene, Epukiro Reservaat op 8 en 9 Augustus 1961," 9 Aug. 1961.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, HBSK Blignaut to Administrator in Executive Committee, "Voorgestelde Verdeling van Epukiro Reservaat in Wyke onder die Drie Aangestelde Hoofmanne," 14 Aug. 1961.

Followers of each headman living scattered across the reserve would be “encouraged to gradually move to posts in the districts of their respective headmen considering it is necessary to stop the fighting between the different groups.”⁴⁸⁰

Not everyone was amenable to this new plan to divide the reserve. In response to Nguvauva’s tripartite scheme, Gerson Hoveka’s brother, Simeon, demanded the Administrator, HBSK, and Kutako come sort out the matter. In his opinion, the division of the reserve was symptomatic of “a division among the tribe” and required Kutako, as Paramount, to sort out the matter of the three headmen.⁴⁸¹ Nguvauva, considering himself as Mbanderu paramount, refused Kutako’s interference and flattered apartheid administrators by stating, “I and my people place no importance in Hosea...It is my wish that my people and I can just get a bit of land. There we can live and develop.”⁴⁸²

Eliphaz Tjingaete, one of Nguvauva’s key supporters, dispensed with political niceties and stated his position in no uncertain terms. Complaining that Kutako only cared about the Herero Big Group, Tjingaete refused to countenance dividing Epukiro into three wards. He demanded, “We want to have our section (Post 3)...If we have two sections, Hosea can come and divide [Otjinene] between Gerson and Edward as he wishes, but Hosea doesn’t reckon us as his people and we don’t recognize him as our headman.”⁴⁸³ Although Tjingaete affirmed the Mbanderus as a tribe prepared to stand alone, he firmly clarified that the Mbanderus were only hostile to Kutako and his followers, not all Hereros. Referencing David Tjatjitua and the Herero Small

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, “vergadering gehou te Pos 3 deur BSK Gobabis met Hoofmanne van Epukiro Reservaat op 9/9/61,” 9 Sept. 1961.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

Group, he noted, “In Waterberg East, there is a section of Hereros who stand together with us, as well as in Omajette and Omaruru. We will be friendlier with them.”⁴⁸⁴

In response to Tjingaete, Edward Maherero clearly laid out the Herero position on dividing Epukiro. They did not believe Nguvauva and his people should receive any land at all “because they did not let us know when they chose Munjuku [Nguvauva] as headman. He and his people can work with the BSK (Magistrate). We as Hereros will not have anything to do with him.”⁴⁸⁵ If giving Nguvauva land was absolutely necessary, Edward suggested some barren and uninhabited land outside the reserve on SWA’s eastern border.

Both Big Group Hereros and Hoveka’s Mbanderu followers insisted that Gerson Hoveka had a hereditary right to Post 3 and that the government had no right to evict him. The Magistrate promised that Hoveka would not be forced to leave Post 3, but if he were to stay, “he must stand under Headman Munjuku because [Munjuku] has the majority of the people.”⁴⁸⁶ Nguvauva supporters reinforced this position by claiming the Hovekas stole Kahimemua Nguvauva’s stool and that Kahimemua’s heir had come to reclaim it as prophesied. Angry about Herero interference in Mbanderu matters and accusations that the Mbanderus had no right to demand their own leader and ward, Elifas Tjingaete attacked Edward Maherero as the source of original divisions within the reserve.

“Were you not,” Tjingaete asked Edward Maherero, “the first to teach us that Hereros and Mbanderus must stand apart?”⁴⁸⁷ This bitter ten-hour meeting debating these issues ended in a stalemate.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

A week after the meeting, Nguvauva and his followers met with Blignaut about dividing the reserve. Explaining his right to the Hoveka stool, Nguvauva claimed that Kahimemua temporarily left Kanangatie Hoveka in charge of Mbanderus in SWA.⁴⁸⁸ This altered historical account possesses suspicious similarities to the situation between Hosea Kutako and Samuel Maherero. Although the government and Kutako were hardly friendly, by indirectly likening himself to Kutako, Nguvauva bolstered his legitimacy and claim to the Hoveka stool. Nguvauva considered that Gerson Hoveka's alliance with the Herero Big Group invalidated any claim he may have had to Post 3 and its associated stool. Nevertheless, Nguvauva and his entourage assured Blignaut that they felt "Gerson Hoveka is still an Ovambanderu [and] will be welcome one day if he wants to carry his rug back from the Hereros but as headman under the Paramount Chiefship of Munjuku."⁴⁸⁹

In his report to the Secretary of Bantu Affairs, Blignaut seconded Nguvauva's claim to Post 3. Unless Hoveka was willing to submit to Nguvauva, he would have to share Otjinene ward with Edward Maherero. Blignaut urged the Secretary to confirm dividing Epukiro into two wards, one for Nguvauva and one shared by Edward Maherero and Gerson Hoveka, and to affirm Nguvauva's claim to the Hoveka stool "in light of their prehistoric claim to the land and considering he and his people will recognize the government and cooperate."⁴⁹⁰ In support of this request, Blignaut noted, "The Ovambanderus say that because they already openly don't agree with Hosea and the Hereros, they will look to the government and help and cooperate, even [in the face] of hate and disfavour of the Hereros." Blignaut concluded his petition for Nguvauva's wholesale takeover by "strongly supporting" the Mbanderus "because

⁴⁸⁸ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, HBSK Blignaut to Secty BAD, "Administrasie van Epukiro Reservaat Distrik Gobabis: Verdeling in Wyke onder die Drie Hoofmanne," 18 Sept. 1961.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

they are now openly friendly to the government and Gerson [Hoveka] has strong links to the Hereros...It is clear they (Nguvauva's Mbanderus) will be prepared to work with us in the future. We will take them under our wing and a thorough splitting among [Hereros and Mbanderus] will be accomplished, of which the Hereros have a deadly fear."⁴⁹¹

Blignaut's letter clearly illustrates the state's need and desire for African cooperation in its campaign to convince the world, UN, and ICJ of its policies in SWA. The letter also demonstrates the state's direct manipulation of intra-Herero politics by creating divisions within Otjiherero-speaking society. Finally, the letter clearly outlines the symbiotic relationship between Nguvauva and the state. State efforts to implement the Bantu Authorities system directly benefitted Nguvauva and he was prepared to cooperate with the government in exchange for the Mbanderu Paramount Chiefship.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² SAB NTS 103595/1/439, JJ van der Watt for HBSK to Secty for BAD, "Headman Munjuku Nguvauva," 20 Sept. 1961.



Figure 7: Sketch of Intended Division of Epukiro⁴⁹³

Nguvauva would receive the eastern portion (Post 3 ward) while Edward and Gerson shared the western side (Otjinene ward).

Division and Development

At the same time BAD officers were concerned with dividing Epukiro into wards, they were also beginning to think about the transformation of the eastern Herero reserves into Hereroland. This area of nearly two million hectares could barely support its population of 11,000, which clung to its western and southern borders.⁴⁹⁴ Once the smaller and outlying reserves were liquidated as outlined in the Odendaal Plan, this area would be expected to support a significantly expanded population.

⁴⁹³ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5

⁴⁹⁴ *Odendaal Report*, p. 69-71.

Extensive water development would be necessary, especially in the unknown interior, but state officers planned to start out by increasing and improving supplies in inhabited areas. BAD slated £250,000 for water development in Hereroland's interior in addition to the water development funds provided by the five year plans.⁴⁹⁵

Water development in Epukiro led to a series of acrimonious disputes among the interested parties. Friction first arose between BAD officers and the SWAA's Division of Water Affairs. BAD officers complained that SWAA's geologists would not cooperate with BAD plans and that the places they selected for boreholes were inappropriate.⁴⁹⁶ In turn, Water Affairs complained that BAD officers, with no proper training or understanding of the environment continually attempted to take over and detrimentally interfere with their water development efforts. Looking to cram people onto barren land, the Department of Bantu Affairs felt their own engineers would be able to find water where the SWAA was clearly not trying hard enough.⁴⁹⁷ Water Affairs felt that BAD machinations threatened SWA's precarious water situation as a whole. As the administrative battle ensued, reserve superintendents encouraged residents to build dams, dig wells, and use their meager budgets to drill boreholes.⁴⁹⁸ Such ineffectual stop-gap measures would do little to rectify serious water woes.

Despite administrative disagreements, water development plans in the reserves proceeded. As of 1960, there were 266 successful boreholes and 184 dams in all of SWA's Bantu Areas combined.⁴⁹⁹ The Executive Committee determined that this

⁴⁹⁵ NAN BAC 100 HN5/1/2 v.2, HBSK Bignaut to Eiselen's Private Secty, "Voorgestelde Finansiële Hulp vir Otwikkeling van Bantoegebiede in SWA," 16 June 1960.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Waterways also charged an additional 15% of total cost on all works to cover their professional and technical services. Bignaut complained this was too expensive; Waterways believed it to be too low. See NAN BAC 100 HN5/1/2 v.2, Wipplinger to Deputy Secty, "Professional and Technical Services: Water Development in Bantu Areas," 6 Feb. 1960.

⁴⁹⁸ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, "Notule Stamvergadering Epukiro," 21 Sept. 1960.

⁴⁹⁹ NAN BAC 100 HN5/1/2 v.2, Wipplinger to Deputy Secty, "Professional and Technical Services: Water Development in Bantu Areas," 6 Feb. 1960.

number should be doubled over the next decade.⁵⁰⁰ Within Epukiro, during the 1950s water development had been a substantial source of antagonism between Hereros and Mbanderus. The plan to expand water supplies in Epukiro only aggravated hostilities and jealousies among the three headmen and added another layer of strife to the question of dividing the reserve, which BAD had still not accomplished by 1962.

In the two years since Nguvauva's arrival in Epukiro, reserve politics followed a path similar to Waterberg East. Edward Maherero and Gerson Hoveka's factions belonged to the Herero Big Group and, while Nguvauva's faction allied with the Herero Small Group and could reasonably be counted as such, their commitment to Mbanderu causes trumped any other alliances. Nevertheless, identity and loyalty became the political lingua franca in Epukiro. Nguvauva complained that "Hosea sent people to try [Mbanderu] people" by asking them if they were loyal to the Republic, excluding Mbanderus from meetings, and withholding welfare rations from Mbanderus in Otjinene.⁵⁰¹ Edward Maherero also produced a plaque he claimed the government gave Nguvauva in exchange for loyalty. After telling a crowd, "Here is the plaque that is proof that Headman Munjuku sold out to the Republic," he asked those present to choose between Kutako and Nguvauva "so we can know, because the people who are loyal to the republic will soon be killed ... and chased out together with the whites."⁵⁰²

In 1962 intra-ethnic tension and general dissatisfaction about the undivided reserve came to a head over development issues. In addition to developing water supplies in Hereroland's interior, five year plans in Herero reserves were both a means of convincing the ICJ of apartheid's benefits and laying the groundwork for a

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, "Notule van Vergadering gehou te Otjinene op 27 Desember 1962 (sic)," 27 Dec. 1961.

⁵⁰² Ibid. The plaque turned out to be a standard achievement award the Department of Bantu Education gave to advanced students.

Bantustan. On the one hand, these plans were a tool for BAD to buy loyalties, punish detractors, and generally divide and conquer. On the other, they were a way for African communities to resist apartheid, leverage concessions from the state, and fight local political battles.

The question of five year plans was particularly muddled because the reserve had not been divided. Edward Maherero remained in Otjinene but Gerson Hoveka and Munjuku Nguvauva fought over Post 3. Although Hoveka was theoretically supposed to move to Post 13 and set up his fiefdom there, he refused to leave Post 3. Because the development in the five year plans was implicitly tied to geographically discrete wards, dividing the reserve was pressingly imperative, yet the BAD dug its heels. In keeping with Big Group politics, Edward Maherero and Gerson Hoveka summarily rejected the five year plans. Echoing the quasi-millenarian sentiments prevalent among the Big Group, Hoveka informed the Gobabis Magistrate that, “the Hereros do not want the government’s money because Russia or the UN [will] give [us] the money one of these days.”⁵⁰³ As in Waterberg East, R85,000 in development was planned for the Otjinene Hereros without their consent. In contrast to Edward Maherero and Gerson Hoveka’s clear cut stance, the five year plan sorely tested Nguvauva’s relationship with the state.

As an advertisement for the material benefits of cooperating with the government, BAD’s five year plan for Nguvauva at Post 3 was exceptionally generous. At an estimated total cost of over R150,000, the Post 3 five-year plan included fifteen boreholes, ten dams, a new school, a community hall, new house for Nguvauva (“so that his esteem in the eyes of his tribe will be raised”), and a nursing

⁵⁰³ NAN BAC 78 HN2/11/2 v.2, Magte Gobabis to HBSK, “Vyfjaar Ontwikkelingsplan vir Epukiro Inboorlingreservaat – Suid-Oostelike Deel,” ca. Jan. 1962.

home.⁵⁰⁴ Despite all of this, Nguvauva was not pleased because “he did not want Gerson, who is his enemy, to have his mouth full of food.”⁵⁰⁵ It would be unfair if Gerson Hoveka and his followers shared in all of these benefits simply because they refused to leave the ward. The issue of dividing the reserve was becoming such a problem that the Magistrate reported to Blignaut, “The Hereros are laughing into their sleeves and [the Mbanderus] also begin to say, ‘What does it matter if you work together with government if you cannot first get the reserve divided?’”⁵⁰⁶

BAD’s simultaneous bureaucratic expansion and centralization hampered Blignaut’s ability to get anything done, including dividing the reserve. This long chain of paperwork and command undermined the responsive and efficient image of the state BAD officers wished to present to Africans. It also tested Mbanderu patience. Fed up with the delay in dividing Epukiro, Elifas Tjingaete lashed out at the Epukiro Welfare Officer:

You stay away a long time and when you come back to us you ask, ‘Do you want to divide into wards or not?’ We have agreed to divide the reserve into wards...Even to this day we don’t know where the matter stands. You say the papers are in Pretoria. Is Pretoria so far as Heaven that a person cannot go there as long as he lives? We were told the road to Pretoria is shorter than the road to the UN.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ See NAN BAC 78 HN2/11/2 v.2, Superintendent Otjinene to Magte Gobabis, “Langtermyn Ontwikkeling: Epukiro Pos 3 Wyk,” 10 Jan. 1962; and NAN BAC 78 HN2/11/2 v.2, Magte Gobabis to HBSK, “Vyfjaar Ontwikkelingsplan vir Epukiro Inboorlingreservaat – Suid-Oostelike Deel,” ca. Jan. 1962.

⁵⁰⁵ NAN BAC 78 HN2/11/2 v.2, Magte Gobabis to HBSK, “Vyfjaar Ontwikkelingsplan vir Epukiro Inboorlingreservaat – Suid-Oostelike Deel,” ca. Jan. 1962.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, “Notule van Vergadering gehou te Otjinene op 27 Desember 1962 (sic),” 27 Dec. 1961.

Tjingaete confirmed the Mbanderu relationship with the state was on the rocks by threatening, “We expect an answer in a short time. If we don’t soon get an answer...we will publish [your promises] in the paper so that the public can see what difficulties there are between our people and to point out how many times we have asked the government for help and still haven’t gotten any.”⁵⁰⁸

Two Bulls in the Same Kraal

Duly threatened into action, the Minister of Bantu Affairs officially approved Epukiro’s division in March 1962. Trying to regain the upper-hand, Blignaut simultaneously attempted to take Nguvauva down a peg by denying him the Hoveka stool. Blignaut’s presumption of legitimate authority over the Hoveka stool sheds some light on the BAD ethos that treated African cultural intuitions and authority as something white administrators could give or take at will. In his letter informing Nguvauva of the division, the Gobabis Magistrate clearly laid this out: “the fact that you are being given Post 3 does not therefore mean that you are being given or recognized as having the ‘stool’ of Nikanor and Stephanus Hoveka. It is now extinct.”⁵⁰⁹ He also further explicated Nguvauva’s precise title, paring it down from the initial days when Nguvauva was to be the Mbanderu paramount: “As a consequence of this (the extinction of the Hoveka stool), you will now be recognized as the only headman of the south-eastern section (of Epukiro).”⁵¹⁰

Although the government finally sanctioned the division of Epukiro, BAD officers took no concrete action to enforce it. In the meantime Kutako prevented them from doing so in the future. He informed the UN that the BAD divided Epukiro and

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5, Magte Gobabis to Munjuku, “Verdeling van Epukiro Reservaat,” 13 Mar. 1962.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

gave Nguvauva his own ward in exchange for supporting the government, forcing Gerson Hoveka out of Post 3.⁵¹¹ To quell disputes arising from Hoveka's continued residence at Post 3, Blignaut had actually been planning to force him to move. Kutako's clever move pre-empted and prevented Blignaut from carrying out his intentions lest he confirm Kutako's claims. Thus, Gerson Hoveka remained at Post 3. This led to serious friction between Hoveka and Nguvauva over Post 3 residents' passes. Gerson Hoveka felt that his followers in the Post 3 ward should have his name on their passes; Nguvauva believed that anyone living in Post 3 should have *his* name on their passes. Just before Kutako's petition, Blignaut drafted a letter stipulating that, if Hoveka and his people wanted Hoveka's name on their passes, they would have to relocate to Otjinene ward. Because of Kutako's UN petition, the Magistrate abstained from relating this order because it would "just [give Hoveka] grounds to say 'see, they already decided to chase us out.' They will also translate it into a good example of how we want to force them out of the reserve."⁵¹² Blignaut tried to settle the matter by having each individual's headman listed on their pass, but also listing Nguvauva's name on the passes of Hereros and Hoveka followers living in Post 3.⁵¹³

Disinterested in the government's precarious international situation, in June 1962 Nguvauva went to Windhoek to confront Blignaut about the passes. After two hours of complaints, Blignaut reported, "[Nguvauva] cautioned me that at that time I said that two bulls cannot live peacefully in the same kraal and because I didn't forcibly remove Gerson from Munjuku's ward, there will be friction between them

⁵¹¹ SAB NTS 103595, Chief Mootzeng to Acting Secty General of UN, untitled telex, 21 Apr. 1962. See also NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/5/2, Magte Gobabis to HBSK, "Verdeling van Epukiro Reservaat," 2 May 1962.

⁵¹² NAN BAC 38 HN1/15/5/2, Magte Gobabis to HBSK, "Verdeling van Epukiro Reservaat," 2 May 1962.

⁵¹³ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, HBSK Blignaut to Secty BAD & Adjunct Minister of SWA, "Hoofman Munyuku Nguvauva van due Ovambanderus in Epukiro," 15 Jun. 1962.

later and it will be all my fault.”⁵¹⁴ Not willing to wait for Blignaut to come to Epukiro in July to settle the matter, Nguvauva informed the HBSK he would be back the next day to continue discussions.

The next morning, Blignaut awoke to utter chaos. His morning newspaper reported that Nguvauva met with the Carpio Commission and accompanying news reporters the previous day. The Mbanderu headman told the world and UN of his oppression under apartheid and he demanded SWA’s independence by December 31, 1962. When Verwoerd’s office called demanding to know how things got so out of control, Blignaut had no answers. Adding insult to injury, Nguvauva met with Carpio *before* his meeting with the HBSK and failed to mention it. Blignaut had always preached tight control as the quintessential hallmark of a Bantu Affairs Officer and Nguvauva cost him an enormous amount of face. This the HBSK would not overlook.

As a conscientious fence rider, Nguvauva was quite open to speaking with Carpio, but fury over the pass issue may have influenced his complaints and encouraged him to make his demand for independence. Whether Nguvauva and his entourage took these steps in their meeting with Carpio and then failed to mention it to Blignaut was a plan to set the HBSK up or stemmed from fear of telling him is unclear. Nevertheless, the next morning Nguvauva and his advisors promptly confessed their guilt, but pleaded that Nguvauva was innocent because “it was his tribe that had done it.”⁵¹⁵

Nguvauva’s entourage explained that they complained to Carpio about the injustice of pass laws, better treatment for whites even in prison, and the inferiority of reserve land and Bantu Education because “they were so bitterly angry about

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

apartheid policies ... [and]...so oppressed they could no longer draw breath.”⁵¹⁶ The deputation claimed they demanded independence “because they were so oppressed by the government’s apartheid policy and could see no future for themselves.”⁵¹⁷ They further informed Blignaut that the tribe “wished to give the government back its money for the five year development plan because their land was worthless.”⁵¹⁸ Reiterating their demand for independence, they then asked Blignaut for the government’s continued support and assistance until independence should arrive.

Short-tempered on a good day, Blignaut managed to maintain his composure through their explanations and even calmly thanked them for informing him of what transpired. Warming up by commenting that it would have saved everyone a lot of time if they had mentioned this at the previous meeting, he continued, “I want the headman to understand very clearly that the fact that his tribe made such a representation in no way exempted him from complete responsibility.”⁵¹⁹ If any “difficulties” arose as a consequence of their statements, Blignaut would hold Nguvauva “completely responsible.”⁵²⁰ In response to their comments about apartheid’s oppressiveness, he informed them that apartheid

is our traditional policy...but if they endure such lives of oppression where they cannot freely draw breath, it surprises me that they did not long ago trek to that paradise – Bechuanaland – where there is full freedom and no oppression. Where the headman is concerned, I want to assure him that, in case, after he has now seen how terrible he and his people are oppressed by the government, should decide to return to Bechuanaland, he should

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

just say. I will immediately give the superintendent instructions to pack up him and his belongings and transport them to the border free of charge.⁵²¹

He concluded by “thanking them for the money that we will be saving (by rejecting the five-year plan) to be used in other areas where government help is appreciated.”⁵²²

In attempting to smooth things over in his report to his superiors on the matter, Blignaut expressed his personal feelings about the situation. “Their whole attitude is typical of the Herero, that is, expert in speaking with two mouths and trying to play both sides. They have placed their matter before the UN committee leaders with the hope their request will be satisfied but on the other hand coming here with pretty words to secure the government’s help ‘to the last day.’ ”⁵²³ Regarding Nguvauva, Blignaut claimed “I never had any confidence in him as a Herero and always expected that, given the opportunity, his true colors would show.”⁵²⁴ He was further convinced that “Munjuku and his lieutenants always were, and are still, in contact with Kozonguizi [and SWANU].”⁵²⁵

Regarding this last claim, Nguvauva did indeed keep his political alliances deliberately ambiguous and open. By simultaneously committing to ensure tribal welfare and further African political interests, Nguvauva could noncommittally cooperate with both the government and African liberation groups like SWANU and SWAPO until SWA’s future as an independent state or apartheid satellite was resolved. Regardless of the outcome, this strategy would theoretically safeguard his personal power and his people. When there was an opportunity to side with the UN,

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

Nguvauva took it. When, a few months later, it became clear that independence was not imminent, he changed course.

At the 1962 Herero tribal meeting, Pieter Nguvauva, Munjuku's kinsman and advisor who was present during the Carpio fiasco in Windhoek, made a public apology for the Mbanderus. He announced, "I recognize that we sent a letter to the UN...I refused the money for the five-year plan but [we] knew the money was for the school for the country, our country, and [we have] since accepted."⁵²⁶ Employing a strategy of ambivalence to prevent the Herero Big Group branding Nguvauva as a government collaborator, Pieter cited Blignaut's proverbial metaphor of the two roads - the HBSK's path to Pretoria or Kutako's road to the UN. He said, "We the Ovambanderus are not sure what road we are on, but we don't support the government's policies and we also do not agree with Headman Hosea."⁵²⁷ Nevertheless, accepting funds and offering an apology were enough to reinstate Nguvauva in BAD's good graces.

One Bull Will Beat the Other to Death

As continued South African rule seemed inevitable, Nguvauva shifted his position towards the government and away from his fellow headmen in Epukiro. Edward Maherero and Gerson Hoveka's relations with the government had continued to deteriorate. With the launching of the Odendaal Commission in 1962 and the release of its report in 1964, development issues formed the basis of Epukiro politics for the remainder of the decade. As the government continued to waffle over dividing the reserve, water and schools turned into explosive areas of contention that entailed debates about loyalty, identity, authority, and development.

⁵²⁶ SAB NTS 103595/1/439, "Vergadering van Hererostamleiers op 6 en 7 September 1962 op Okakarara, WBENR," 7 Sept. 1962.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

Although nominally divided, because Epukiro had officially been proclaimed as one reserve, it could not legally have two separate budgets or funds for each ward. Thus, each group watched development jealously, claiming the superintendent was biased towards another group and griping that a greater percentage of tribal funds went towards development in the other ward.⁵²⁸ Edward Maherero claimed that, though more people lived in his ward, their grazing fees went towards water development in Post 3. Nguvauva likewise complained to Liaison Officer Gerber that the superintendent, “had done nothing for them at Post 3 even though Post 3 existed first and Otjinene was created later...He developed everything [at Otjinene] and nothing happened at Post 3.”⁵²⁹

Because completely dividing the reserve was impossible, partial division just created more problems than it solved. The international pressure Kutako and Kapuuo put on the administration to confirm Gerson Hoveka as a headman of Post 3 caused BAD’s plan to weaken Herero resistance by dividing the reserve to backfire. Bringing Nguvauva, who turned out to be much more savvy and independent than BAD officers anticipated, just added to administrative headaches. While division failed miserably of its own accord, in 1964 the Odendaal Report called for concrete steps toward creating Hereroland and failed to distinguish Mbanderus from Hereros. According to this gospel, Hereros and Mbanderus would simply have to learn to get along. BAD revoked the division.

None of the three headmen was happy about the “unification” of Epukiro, particularly Gerson Hoveka and Munjuku Nguvauva, who continued to fight over Post 3. Nguvauva and his advisors considered the unification just another way for the state to cause trouble in the reserve. They told the Magistrate, “The government

⁵²⁸ NAN BAC 62 HN1/15/6/27, Liaison Officer Gerber to HBSK, “Verslag van Besoek aan Epukiro Reservaat gedurende die Periode 29 Januarie tot 2 Februarie 1963,” 2 Feb. 1963.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

doesn't bring us together to live in peace...[We] have long asked that we must be divided. The government first approved and then they went back on their word. They divide us again today."⁵³⁰ His enduring complaint, and the one that would fuel his negotiations with the state through the 1970s, was that the Odendaal Plan "lumped all his people with the Hereros."⁵³¹ Reversing Blignaut's earlier axiom that two bulls cannot live in the same kraal, the new Liaison Officer, Van Zyl, informed Hoveka "There are [now] two bulls in the kraal."⁵³² Hoveka retorted, "One bull will beat the other one to death. The government has put the two bulls together in one place. The one gets more money than the other although they were appointed on the same day."⁵³³ Van Zyl ineffectually responded, "The headmen must cooperate."

Community Schools

While simultaneously trying to impress the ICJ and get apartheid underway in SWA, in the mid-sixties the state began pushing for "community schools," which only increased antagonism among the headmen. Like other euphemistically named apartheid initiatives such as "self-help" and "traditional authorities," community schools appeared to address longstanding African demands for schools and transfer power into African hands while tightening state control behind the scenes. While a locally elected African school board was supposed to run these schools, the government provided (and controlled) teachers, administrators, curriculum, and materials. Although BAD officers consistently denied any knowledge of Bantu Education and claimed it did not exist in SWA, "community" was just a flimsy screen to hide Bantu Education from the UN and ICJ. It conveniently conflated liberal ideas

⁵³⁰ NAN BAC 42 1/15/4/6 v.2, Otjinene Superintendent to Magte Gobabis, "Notule van Kwaartalike Vergadering gehou te Pos 3 op 20 April 1963," 9 May 1963.

⁵³¹ SAB BAO 6813/N117, "Epukiro: Pos 3," 6 Feb. 1965.

⁵³² NAN AHE 6 N1/15/6, "Samesprekings: Epukiro Reservaat," 22 Jan. 1965.

⁵³³ Ibid. Gerson received R4 per month whereas Munjuku received R10 per month.

of local empowerment with apartheid notions of separate development.⁵³⁴ None of the headmen in Epukiro wanted community schools; yet each desperately wanted proper education for the children in their communities.⁵³⁵ Thus, schools became embroiled in pre-existing struggles for turf, followers, and resources. They also became an important weapon for both headmen and BAD officers to make demands of one another.

Although the Kutako/Kapuuo faction was vocally opposed to community schools, Edward Maherero and his board accepted a community school against Kutako's instructions. He did make the caveat that they did not want Bantu Education. His acceptance appears to have been, at least partially, tied to dissatisfaction over his salary. Gerber reported, "Headman Edward Maherero then asked me...if we were dissatisfied with his work [and wanted to know] why he received R4 per month while the newly appointed Nguvauva was getting R12 per month."⁵³⁶ If Edward accepted a community school to ensure a raise, it worked on Gerber. The Liaison Officer considered it to be "a reasonable complaint" and argued "here is a Herero headman that goes against the will of Headman Hosea Kutako to accept a community school and gets R4 per month when the underhanded headman Munjuku slowly refused and he gets R12 per month."⁵³⁷

Things were a little trickier in the Post 3 ward. Because Nguvauva accepted the five-year development funds, the state decided to build a new community school at Post 10 in 1963. This school, just a few miles north of Post 3, would ostensibly

⁵³⁴ NAN BAC 42 1/15/4/6, Superintendent Otjinene to Magte Gobabis, "Distrikadministrasie: Kwartaalikse Vergaderings: Notule van Kwartaalikse Vergadering gehou te Otjinene op 15/2/1963," 20 Feb. 1963.

⁵³⁵ Herero communities long deplored the Rhenish Mission schools and had asked for the government to provide them with schools since the 1930s.

⁵³⁶ NAN BAC 62 HN1/15/6/27, Gerber to HBSK, "Verslag van Besoek aan Epukiro gedurende die Tydperk van 14 tot 16 Februarie 1963. 16 Feb. 1963.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

relieve overcrowding in Post 3's school and be open to all children regardless of their affiliated headman. At a rare meeting attended by both Hoveka and Nguvauva in February 1963, Liaison Officer Gerber informed the headmen "the administration will only help if [you] accept a community school at Post 10...and if [you] don't accept it, all assistance with opening the road between Post 3 and Post 10 as well as brick making and sinking boreholes would be stopped that very day."⁵³⁸ Hoveka immediately responded that "Senior Headman Hosea Kutako and Clemens Kapuuo already said to the administration that the Hereros would not accept it and that was also his answer."⁵³⁹ Nguvauva "began peddling around" and claimed he had not known the new school was to be a community school, to which Gerber insisted he had known for two years. Pieter Nguvauva responded that they wanted a school, but not a community school. Nguvauva lamented, "All we asked for was a hostel," and complained all the talk of community schools "makes my head ache."⁵⁴⁰

The problem of the Post 10 community school became more desperate as time went on. By 1965, BAD officers worked at a fever pitch preparing for the possible ICJ visit and upped the pressure to for the Mbanderus to accept the community school at Post 10. Nguvauva had, by this time, come around to accept the community school at Post 10 and in return received a quarantine camp for auctions, boreholes, regular medical visits, and financial assistance.⁵⁴¹ Hoveka continued to refuse, seeing it as a ploy to force him out of Post 3 and out of power. Determined to maintain his claim to Post 3, Hoveka argued with a representative from the Department of Bantu Education,

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ NAN BAC 42 1/15/4/6, Superintendent Epukiro to Magte Gobabis, "Notule van Kwaartaalvergadering gehou te Pos 3," 18 Feb. 1963.

⁵⁴¹ SAB BAO 6813/N117, "Epukiro: Pos 3," 6 Feb. 1965.

“I have long said that my children and those of my followers will not go to the school at Post 10. They will remain at Post 3.”⁵⁴²

Tensions in Hoveka’s relationships with Nguvauva and the state peaked in February 1965. Hoveka rejected all development plans telling the Liaison Officer, “I must wait until March. I am waiting on the World Court until March.”⁵⁴³ He further threatened the Superintendent and told him that he would be chased out after March. It is unclear precisely what he expected to happen in March 1965 as the ICJ did not make a ruling on SWA’s case until July 1966; however, his statements show the same sort of confidence in the UN and ICJ expressed that the Big Group demonstrated in Waterberg East. Whatever Hoveka expected the ICJ to do involved SWA’s independence and led to a heated debate with the Liaison Officer in January 1965. After pointing out the dangers of African independence as illustrated by the Suez Crisis and trying to steer him towards apartheid, the officer told him, “You can get your own government and your own parliament. You just have to cooperate. But you won’t do it. Everything is being handed to you on a silver platter.”⁵⁴⁴ Hoveka lashed out, “I don’t just want to rule the reserve. I want to rule all of SWA. SWA is my land and I want to have it. When we ran free it was good. God made us so.”⁵⁴⁵

The remaining years of the decade came down to a power struggle between Hoveka and Nguvauva. Although Hoveka stubbornly maintained his claim to Post 3, his refusal to cooperate or attend meetings left him sidelined by Nguvauva. When the school at Post 10 was completed in 1966, Hoveka claimed he would not send his

⁵⁴² NAN AHE 6 N1/15/6, Mnr. Trumpelman, “Verslag oor Besoek aan Epukiroreservaat vanaf 31 Januarie 1966 tot 2 Februarie 1966,” 15 Mar. 1966.

⁵⁴³ NAN AHE 6 N1/15/6, “Samesprekings: Epukiro Reservaat,” 22 Jan. 1965.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

followers there because he had not been informed the school was going to be built.⁵⁴⁶ When the schools inspector pointed out that Hoveka had been notified of each meeting about the school, the headman said he did not come to the meetings because there was no start time given in the notifications.⁵⁴⁷

Because Hoveka refused to attend reserve board meetings, Nguvauva ran things as he wished. Hoveka was outraged that Elifas Tjingate received a trade license without his consent. The Liaison Officer pointed out that the license had been approved by the reserve board, but that only Nguvauva and his advisors came to the meetings. Gerson Hoveka's brother Simeon complained, "trade licenses [are issued] and schools are being built with Nguvauva's approval, but Gerson is not aware of them...Gerson is just a headman in name only and is not recognized by the Government."⁵⁴⁸ When the Liaison Officer told Nguvauva that Hoveka and his advisors had complained about the trade license and claimed they were not informed of the matter, Nguvauva merely replied, "I don't know anything about it." Even though he clung to living at Post 3, Nguvauva appeared to have neutralized Gerson Hoveka by 1967.

Conclusion

Epukiro in the 1960s illuminates another dimension of Herero intra-ethnic identity politics and government efforts to manipulate them to further apartheid interests in SWA. Using apartheid rhetoric to encourage Mbanderu nationalism by bringing in their first candidate for a "Traditional Authority" and attempting to divide the reserve "for each group to develop on its own" was a risky move for the

⁵⁴⁶ NAN AHE 6 N1/15/6, Schools Inspector, "Verslag oor Besoek aan Epukiroreservaat vanaf 31 Januarie 1966 tot 2 Februarie 1966," 15 Mar. 1966.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ NAN AHE 6 N1/15/2, Liaison Officer to HBSK, 4 Aug. 1966.

government.⁵⁴⁹ While this gamble did not turn out as expected for either the administration or Nguvauva (whether it would pay off remained to be seen), it sheds new light on the contradictions and ambiguities of apartheid policies, the incongruence between idealistic rhetoric and contingent realities, and the roles of development and identity in African negotiations with the state.

At the time bringing Nguvauva from Bechuanaland seemed like a self-evident solution for both the state and Mbanderus. However, it greatly complicated BAD plans to divide Hereros and their land while simultaneously trying to fashion them into a single unit. The realities of intra-ethnic politics and the practical limitations created by SWA's international situation made it impossible for BAD officials to take the action necessary truly to divide and rule Epukiro. Development plans effectively served their purpose in dividing the reserve, but failed to lay a foundation for "Hereroland." The government bored a few successful holes to the east of Otjinene, but Hoveka's recalcitrant followers simply refused to trek there.⁵⁵⁰ BAD efforts to experiment with Bantu Authorities backfired as well. Nguvauva proved to be a much more formidable and demanding "Bantu authority" than BAD officers envisioned in their romantic imaginings of how the "state within a state" system would function. Nguvauva had his own agenda which did not include passively manipulation by a handful of strict white administrators in Pretoria.

Nguvauva was also not shy in his opposition to Kutako or demands for the same authority – after all, Maherero and Kahimemua had been equals. Yet, there was more to Nguvauva's cooperation with the government than just power. His battles with Kutako and Hoveka were personal, historical, and cultural. His noncommittal cooperation with the state was practical insofar as it appeared apartheid would prevail

⁵⁴⁹ NAN BAC 42 1/15/4/6 v.2, Superintendent Otjinene to Magte Gobabis, "Notule van Kwartaalvergadering gehou te Otjinene op 3 Junie 1960," 15 June 1960.

⁵⁵⁰ SAB BAO 6813/N117, Odendaal Liaison Committee, "Otjinene," 6 Feb. 1965.

in SWA. Cooperation with the government could protect and benefit his people in the short term. However, he can hardly be described as a “supporter” and, as evidenced by his statements to the Carpio Commission, he eagerly jumped ship when it looked as if the tide would turn towards independence.

While he waffled in his relationship with the apartheid government, Nguvauva never wavered in his opposition to Kutako and Kapuuu. For Nguvauva, both apartheid development and Traditional Authorities served as tools to achieve immediate objectives in Herero and Mbanderu society. He picked them up or discarded them as expedient. Although one’s relationship to the state had become a critical component of Herero identity, one’s attitude towards Kutako and Kapuuu mattered far more to Mbanderu identity. The battle lines of Epukiro’s ethnic identity politics were more complicated than those in Waterberg East and Otjituuo precisely because of the countervailing force of Mbanderu identity. In the same way that members of the Herero Small Group were denied their ethnic identity for cooperating with the government and rejecting Kutako, Hoveka and his followers were stripped of their Mbanderu identity for opposing Nguvauva and the government and cooperating with the Herero Big Group instead. Perhaps a worse and more traitorous epithet than whitefoot, Hoveka and his followers became Hereros.

Historical grievances became contemporary personal feuds and jealousies in 1960s Epukiro as they became entwined with apartheid development. Battles between Edward Maherero and Nguvauva were not just about whose funds paid for which borehole. They were Edward Maherero’s attempt to reassert Herero suzerainty over renegade Mbanderus and Nguvauva’s opportunity to assert Mbanderu autonomy and equality. Nor were struggles between Gerson Hoveka and Nguvauva really about schools or even, for that matter, about staying at Post 3. They were about the

legitimate claim to authority in Mbanderu society. Whereas the Hereros historically had had multiple chiefly clans, for the Mbanderus there could only be one chief. The Traditional Authorities Act and government interference intensified the stakes of this competition. This process of sorting out past wrongs and claiming contemporary legitimate authority escalated during the 1970s. Nguvauva's competitive feud with Kapuuo over the relationship between Hereros and Mbanderus would become viciously personal. Polarizations and alliances between and among Hereros and Mbanderus, the Big Groups and the Small Groups, would come to thoroughly dominate Otjiherero-speaking society. As usual, the apartheid state would attempt to manipulate these antipathies to suit their objectives of implementing apartheid in SWA.

PART III – THE 1970s

In 1970, the ICJ and UN denounced South African rule in SWA (increasingly referred to as Namibia) as illegal. Prime Minister B.J. Vorster's government predictably rejected this resolution despite its more internationally friendly attitude. Nevertheless, anticipating independence, various ethno-political factions in SWA, including SWAPO, SWANU, and NUDO, loosely banded together under the Namibian National Convention (NNC) as a united front against South African rule. Even the Small Group attended some NNC meetings, though its members did not join.⁵⁵¹ Seeking to divide and conquer, Bantu Affairs attempted further to splinter Herero society by accentuating longstanding and increasingly acrimonious questions of loyalty, ethnicity, and land restitution. However, significant changes began to occur in Namibian politics in the 1970s, which radically reoriented intra-Herero identity politics and Herero/Mbanderu relationships with one another, the South African government, and other African liberation movements. These changes emerged primarily from a constellation of external factors: escalating violence in southern Africa and alterations in the balance of white power in the region, transformations in international opinions due to the American Civil Rights movement and the state of the Cold War, and South African unrest, such as the 1976 Soweto Uprising. During the 1970s, these changes deeply impacted local Herero politics and South African rule in SWA.

Civil war in former Portuguese colonies in the late 1960s and 1970s exacerbated and encouraged revolutionary thinking and armed struggle in SWA. Portugal's Carnation Revolution in 1974 led to a civil war in Angola, permitting SWAPO to use the chaotic territory to launch attacks on SWA. Although SWAPO

⁵⁵¹The Small Group – by then known as the Society for the Preservation of the Royal House of Tjamuaha/Maherero – attended an NNC meeting in Feb. 1972. They joined NNC rival SWA Non-European Unity Movement (SWANEUM) later that year.

launched its armed struggle in 1966, serious fighting did not begin until the Angolan Civil War broke out in the mid seventies. Between 1966 and 1975, SWAPO had grown in numbers and made significant strides in gaining international recognition as Namibia's official liberation movement. In 1970, the UN also recognized SWAPO's armed struggle as justified and, in 1973, the UN recognized SWAPO as the sole representative of Namibian people.

The balance of white power in southern Africa was changing rapidly. In addition to the withdrawal of the Portuguese from Angola and Mozambique and civil wars in those countries, white rule was crumbling in Zimbabwe and all around South Africa. Vorster's apartheid government drew sharp international criticism from aiding Ian Smith's increasingly untenable government politically, financially, and militarily. To complicate South Africa's increasingly vulnerable position, communist aid from Russia, Cuba, and to a lesser extent China and North Korea, backed the spectre of majority rule in neighbouring countries. As the tide of the Rhodesian Bush War turned in 1972 and majority rule appeared inevitable, Prime Minister Vorster limited support for Smith and attempted to strengthen diplomatic and trade relations with independent African countries. His hope was that, by reaching out to these new African governments, bloody revolution and majority rule would bypass South Africa.

However, international opinion was quickly turning against South Africa. The American Civil Rights struggle critically shaped western thoughts about equality and democracy. South Africa's racial policies and continued colonial occupation of SWA became ever more globally anomalous and objectionable. Although the US continued officially to support the apartheid government in the fight against Cold War communism in southern Africa, its support waned in light of Civil Rights and changing international opinion. These changes were reflected at the UN, which

declared all South African activity in SWA after 1966 illegal and urged international sanctions against South Africa as a means of achieving Namibia's independence. The Western Contact Group, comprised of the US, Canada, the UK, France, and West Germany, formed in 1977 to ensure Namibian independence and supported the UN's position and efforts by pressuring South Africa to leave Namibia.

In addition to these regional and international threats to South African power in SWA, South Africa began to experience significant domestic problems, primarily economic recession and civic unrest. Workers' strikes were not limited to South Africa's industrial cities, but SWA's contract labor system also came under considerable pressure from Ovambo migrants, SWAPO, union organizers, and liberal church leaders. 20,000 Ovambo migrants went on strike in SWA in December 1971.⁵⁵² Over fifty people were killed in skirmishes with the South Africa Defence Force. A peasant rising in Ovamboland followed the labor strikes in early 1972, leading to a state of emergency in that homeland and its transformation into a war zone and police state. Although the strikes resulted in the dissolution of the SWA Native Labor Association (SWANLA), migrants' conditions failed to improve and the government issued racially-based identity cards in SWA soon thereafter.

Amid this growing international, regional, and local violence, political parties began to proliferate in SWA. Although many parties were ethnically based, varying across the spectrum of conservatism to radicalism, intra-ethnic umbrella organizations emerged in an effort to unify these disparate groups. Kapuuo's anti-apartheid National Convention (NC) was the most prominent of these umbrella organizations. In 1972, the Rehoboth Volkspartei, SWAPO's internal wing, SWANU, NUDO, and the Herero

⁵⁵²R. Gordon, *Mines, Masters, and Migrants: Life in a Namibian Compound* (Oxford: Hans Zell, 1978).

Chief's Council, among others, joined the NC.⁵⁵³ However, a new umbrella group also emerged in opposition to the NC in 1972. The SWA Non-European Unity Movement (SWANEUM) generally supported the apartheid regime, but mainly opposed Kapuuo's NC. Its members included the Rehoboth Baster Association, the Society for the Preservation of the Royal House of Tjamuaha/Maherero, and the Isaaks faction of the Berseba Nama.

Despite the NC's potential strength, a lack of support from SWAPO's external wing undermined its efficacy. Although Sam Nujoma, the leader of external SWAPO, and Kapuuo had been allies in the 1950s and the early days of SWANU, they had been drifting apart for some time and were beginning to come to loggerheads in the early seventies. Nujoma was committed to a Marxist-Leninist philosophy of governance and military organization whereas Kapuuo, though considered radical by the South Africans, was more firmly devoted to a federally organized democracy and chiefship. Both men envisioned themselves as the leaders of very different independent Namibias. Nujoma's international success, both attaining sole UN recognition as well as receiving aid money directly from foreign donor nations such as Norway, meant that he had no need for the NC. He would not share power with, or be subordinated to, Kapuuo. In 1974, Nujoma would pressure SWAPO's internal leader, a Herero by the name of David Hoveka Meroro, to withdraw from the NC and break up the coalition. This would be the final break between Kapuuo and Nujoma. It would also catalyze Kapuuo's political reorientation.

⁵⁵³SWAPO's internal and external wings refer to those SWAPO members remaining in SWA and led by David Hoveka Meroro, and those SWAPO members in exile under the leadership of Sam Nujoma.

CHAPTER 6: PARAMOUNT CHIEFS AND POTEMKIN HOMELANDS, 1965-1973

By the late sixties, lines within Herero society had been distinctly drawn along two intersecting axes: Herero/Mbanderu and relationship towards the government. On the one hand, the Herero Big Group, led by Clemens Kapuuu, and the Mbanderu “small group” led by Gerson Hoveka cooperated quite closely in opposition to the apartheid government. On the other hand, the Herero Small Group led by David Tjatjitua and Reverend B.G. Karuaera cooperated with the Mbanderu majority under Munjuku Nguvauva II and his advisor Elifas Tjingaete. This faction opposed the Herero Big Group and generally cooperated with the apartheid state. However, despite seemingly irreconcilable differences, both Kapuuu and Nguvauva hailed the ICJ and UN’s denunciation of South African rule in SWA in 1970 as a sign of imminent independence. They even both attended meetings of the Namibian National Convention (NNC) in the early seventies, although the Small Group and Nguvauva later joined rival group SWA Non-European Unity Movement (SWANEUM).

In the late sixties and early seventies, BAD began to take concrete steps towards creating a Herero Traditional Authority and removing Hereros from the outlying reserves to Hereroland. Government officers attempted to accomplish these objectives by using development to manipulate deepening divisions within Herero and Mbanderu society. Despite their mutual enthusiasm for independence, Nguvauva perceived Kapuuu as a greater threat to his power than ever and, knowing the slow pace of international politics, was not prepared to burn his bridges with the state. However, Nguvauva’s cooperation with the state and the Small Group was more about neutralizing Kapuuu and maintaining Mbanderu autonomy than it was about

loyalty to the apartheid state. His relationship with the apartheid government had always been rocky and he cooperated only so long as it behoved him. Indeed, Nguvauva's enthusiasm for independence would eventually create a rift between him and his right-hand man, Elifas Tjingaete, who reportedly wished to remain under the South African government, as well as between Nguvauva and the state.

This chapter examines the ways in which longstanding questions of identity, loyalty, and authority had thoroughly become entangled by the mid-1970s as each faction seemed to become firmly entrenched in its own perspectives and objectives. The Big Group seemed uncompromisingly hell-bent on independence while the Small Group and Nguvauva's Mbanderus appeared determined to prevent Kapuuo from gaining power at any cost. For its part, the apartheid state was determined finally to move forward with Traditional Authorities and removals to Bantustans despite Vorster's overtures to the international community. The state was not prepared to allow a radical like Kapuuo to obstruct their progress and the more they could play on intra-ethnic factionalism among Otjiherero-speaking society to quietly realize these designs, so much the better.

By tracing the ins and outs of these fissures and alliances in Hereroland, this chapter explores the ways in which each faction imagined Hereroland's future and its role therein. How did Kapuuo see himself fitting into an independent Namibia and what were the potential repercussions for the Small Group and Nguvauva should Kapuuo have his way? To what lengths was the apartheid state willing to go to achieve its particular objectives and how did its course of action measure up to its idealized goals? Moreover, this chapter considers the material implications of this political rhetoric in the lives of everyday Hereros –people were forcibly relocated, families were torn apart, and communities were divided in the process. These politics

struck at the very heart of how Herero peoples understood themselves and their identities as well as threatening the practical ways in which they made their living and lived their lives.

Waiting for Death

In the late 1960s, this knot of tensions within and between Hereros and Mbanderus, the Big Group and the Small Group, and Herero society and the apartheid state became both subordinated to and exacerbated by the question of Kutako's successor. This subject came ever more to the fore in the 1960s as the venerable Chief celebrated his 90th birthday. Kutako had formally announced Clemens Kapuuo as his successor in 1960. However, the apartheid government openly opposed Kapuuo and his radical politics. They consequently monitored succession politics carefully, but they did not begin to actively intervene until 1967 as the odds of Kutako's longevity decreased rapidly. In January 1967, the HBSK's office asked the state ethnologist in Windhoek, Kenneth Budack, two questions: "Who is the proper successor to Headman Hosea Kutako according to tradition?" and "What is the possibility that Clemens Kapuuo will follow Kutako?"⁵⁵⁴ The ethnologist succinctly summed up the government's position as follows:

Hosea is not the traditional Paramount Chief of the Ovaherero, but only the deputy. There can thus be no discussion of a traditional successor to him...Within the *Oruzo* (patriline) of Maherero, which today's Herero consider the *Kaptein's* line, according to the

⁵⁵⁴ SAB BAO 8/315/x54/1996/2, Budack to HBSK, "Opvolger van Hosea Kutako," 27 Jan. 1967.

information, Frederick Kavekunwa of Maun is the legal successor.⁵⁵⁵

Kutako's imminent death was a moment of considerable opportunity and danger for BAD. Kapuuo enjoyed considerable popular support and claimed a kind of traditional legitimacy as Kutako's hand-selected successor; if Bantu Affairs gave him an inch, they would be hard-pressed to neutralize him. Any hint of government interference would send Kapuuo directly to the UN, which was gaining ground in world opinion. However, the fact that Kapuuo could claim no chiefly lineage worked in the state's favour. Anxious to implement the Traditional Authorities Act in Hereroland, the state would emphasize his "commoner" status in order to sideline him and appoint a Traditional Authority or "crown prince" via the Preservation Society.

The question was how to manipulate the Herero succession question without appearing to intervene and BAD's solution was two-fold: de-legitimate Kutako and encourage what BAD perceived as rigid traditionalism within Herero culture. Budack outlined a plan to this end in a memo to the HBSK in March 1967. Playing on an "inclination towards ethnic unity and political centralization among the Ovaherero," he pointed out that appointing a Paramount Chief was the ideal solution, but "could not come from outside."⁵⁵⁶ The problem, he acknowledged, was that "A Paramount Chief of the Herero was...something unknown."⁵⁵⁷ Samuel Maherero provided the key to this conundrum. Budack continued, "Whenever we speak of Herero tradition, the Maherero clan still occupies a prominent place in public opinion today...The past is idealized and the majority consider Samuel Maherero as a National hero."⁵⁵⁸ Having just admitted there was no such thing as a Herero Paramount, he noted, "It is

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ SAB BAO 8/315/x54/1996/2, Budack to HBSK, "Kapteinskap by die Ovaherero – Kommentaar deur Etnoloog," 21 Mar. 1967.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

noteworthy that Hosea Kutako has no rights to the Paramount Chiefship on the grounds of traditional succession, but his status depends on instruction from Samuel Maherero.”⁵⁵⁹

BAD must not only invent the tradition of a Herero Paramount, but a tradition to legitimate it without anyone realizing the game. Budack’s analysis reveals how the drive to achieve separate development blinded the state. Herero society was much more prone to factionalism than centralization, a fact Bantu Affairs had been using to its advantage for the last twenty years and would indeed use again in its efforts to impose a traditional Paramount Chief. The question of then achieving Herero unity under this Paramount was never raised, but assumed to be a natural by-product of the Traditional Authorities Act. The Herero unity achieved by Kutako in his seventy years as Herero leader stemmed not from Samuel Maherero’s blessing, but arguably from the fact that he was *not* a member of one of the three main Herero chiefly families, and, unquestionably, from his leadership capabilities.

Nevertheless, Budack encouraged BAD to support a Paramount Chief selected from the Maherero clan to replace Kutako. He insisted that “only a Paramount Chief from that house will attract the requisite public support.”⁵⁶⁰ Astutely noting “there will be an unfavourable impact if the department involves itself in this matter already,” he proposed to operate through the Small Group. “Among the Ovaherero there is a considerable group of people that wants to reinstate a Paramount Chief from the House of Maherero after Hosea’s death.”⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

Development & Ethnic Consolidation

The Herero leadership question was entwined with South Africa's problematic foreign relations, which were beginning to fray over apartheid policies and continued occupation of SWA. South Africa's argument for an inalienable and on-going duty to SWA via the mandate was increasingly coming under fire. In turn, the justification for continued occupation and annexation shifted heavily to contemporary and fashionable development language. Weighing its options and the strength of development discourse, the Foreign Affairs Department wanted to know, "What will happen if we withdraw from SWA...in view of the fact that we possess the necessary experience and 'technical know-how' to keep SWA viable?"⁵⁶² Specifically referring to SWA's water challenges, the Director of Physical Development responded that "the indigenous population, if left to themselves, would bring about a state of stagnation in regard to new works and a state of retardation in regard to existing ones."⁵⁶³ While financial and technical inputs from other donor nations could keep SWA "viable," only white South Africans possessed the "specialized knowledge" to ensure progress. South Africans, he argued, "have long been in close contact with primitive peoples...they have learnt to appreciate their aspirations...In the development of any underdeveloped country, it is not only the technical skill which is of importance; the development of the human being is paramount."⁵⁶⁴

By 1970, development in Hereroland had not proceeded as rapidly or comprehensively as outlined in the Odendaal Plan. In 1969, journalist Wilf Nussey requested information about development in SWA from BAD in order to write an article on the subject. Concerned the article would only cause "unnecessary bad press

⁵⁶² NAN AHE 66 N1/5/2b, Dir. Physical Development to Dept. Foreign Affairs, "South West Africa: Request for Information by Department of Foreign Affairs," 31 Mar. 1967.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. Such a statement presages Vorster's more extraverted foreign policies and sensitivity to international outcry over the inhumane treatment of blacks in South Africa.

for our administration in SWA,” Bantu Affairs only told him that R3.5 million had been allocated for SWA in the South Africa Bantu Trust (formerly SANT) for the 1967-68 fiscal year.⁵⁶⁵ Refusing to provide any particulars about how the money was spent because “it could possibly look like we cannot fulfil our duties,” the Secretary of Bantu Affairs referred Nussey to the Odendaal Plan.⁵⁶⁶ He was, however, quick to point out that “development is not being carried out all at once [according to] the Odendaal Plan...It is only a general outline.”⁵⁶⁷

The apartheid government demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for planning, but, even with the booming economy of the 1960s, was much less successful in implementing those plans. Although schools, shops, neighborhoods, hotels, hospitals, and sewer systems were planned for Hereroland’s “economic growth points” like Okakarara, only a few schools and clinics had actually been built. These suffered from chronic staffing shortages and overcrowding. Hereroland was intended to remain primarily dependent on a ranching economy, yet it could barely support its population. Ideally, once adequate water supplies were developed, the homeland would support an influx of Hereros from liquidated reserves and white areas that would more than double the human population.⁵⁶⁸ As many intended deportees relied on stock farming, limited water and grazing would force many into the migrant labor system, and those who remained behind would become almost totally dependent on migrants’ remittances. A master water plan drawn up for Hereroland in 1972 could

⁵⁶⁵ NAN AHE 66 N1/5/2b, HBSK v.d. Watt to Secty BAD, “Versoek om Inligting: Mnr. Wilf Nussey, Redakteur van die Argus Africa News Service,” 15 Apr. 1969.

⁵⁶⁶ NAN AHE 66 N1/5/2b, Secty BAD to HBSK, “Versoek om Inligting: Mnr. Wilf Nussey, Redakteur van die Argus Africa News Service,” 2 Jun. 1969. The most significant development work was taking place in municipalities, which the state pressured into accepting low-interest government loans for town planning.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ SAB BAO 10784 H66/1936 v.3, Dept. Of Water Affairs, SWA Branch & Hydroconsultants, “Hereroland Master Water Plan – Interim Report,” May 1972. The Water plan did not envisage any significant industrial development in Hereroland, nor did it adequately provide for population increases – a fatal flaw in Verwoerdian apartheid planning. See Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 515.

only make Hereroland's water, and consequently economic, situation viable if nearly 1/3 of the population worked and lived outside the homeland.⁵⁶⁹

Nevertheless, water development and homeland removals were two areas in which the government was taking concrete steps. Although vague plans to consolidate outlying Herero reserves had periodically floated across official desks for decades, BAD began seriously planning removals in the late sixties and began to carry them out around 1970. While relocating Hereros from predominantly Herero reserves of Aminuis, Ovitoto, Otjimbingue, and Otjohorongu would be relatively straight forward, southern Herero communities, primarily located in the Tses reserve, presented a significant challenge. Southern Hereros, now living in areas officially classified as Namaland, had not only lived in the region for nearly a century, but had, for the most part, lost the ability to speak Otjiherero and only spoke Nama (Khoe-Khoe).

There was not only a question of whether to move these southern Hereros to Hereroland, but also of how to move them. Although they self-identified as Herero through the 1950s, relocation plans in Odendaal Report prompted them to refer to themselves as Nama-Damara and push for classification under the Department of Colored Affairs. Adding to the problem of classifying people who did not fit Verwoerdian ideals of clearly defined "nations," the Vaalgras community of southern Hereros possessed a German lease agreement for their land. In exchange for cooperation during wars with Hereros and Namas at the turn of the century, the German government gave this community a 20,000 hectare farm, Vaalgras, "Because you have dug water in this dry place and been true to us in the war, not using weapons against us when we fought your people, we will give our Vaalgras to you as your

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

own. You must pay £12 a year in land taxes.”⁵⁷⁰ After 1915, the South African administration ignored any such agreements and considered Vaalgras as crown land. Now, however, the Vaalgras Hereros could take their lease to the UN as further evidence of South African land alienation. Budack, the ethnologist, recommended they be classified as their own group and allowed to remain in Vaalgras to avoid creating new problems.⁵⁷¹

While the southern Hereros remained on the official backburner, plans to remove Hereros from the other reserves began to be enacted. Supplying adequate water to Hereroland was the first necessary step in this direction. The Department of Waterways began laying pipes from springs on the Waterberg Plateau to Okakarara in the late sixties, but the scheme proceeded slowly despite the pipe itself being laid quickly.⁵⁷² They planned to extend this pipeline over the next ten years to open ranching land in Hereroland’s interior.⁵⁷³ In addition to serving the 10,000 Hereros in Hereroland West, this pipeline was expected to support an additional 8,000 people, mostly women and children, who would be relocated to Eastern Reserve.⁵⁷⁴

Bantu Affairs hoped to accomplish these removals peacefully and voluntarily. To this end, the acting HBSK requested monthly film screenings from the Department of Information in 1969. In his request, he noted, “regarding the Hereros in particular, there is a great need for planting the homeland idea...I think particularly of films about the Transkei that I know from personal experience have had a great impact on

⁵⁷⁰ NAN AHE 66 N1/12/2, Budack to HBSK, “Die Namasprekende Hereros in Tses-Reservaat,” 8 Oct. 1968. Budack references a 1955 letter signed by Vaalgras leaders.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² NAN SAP 52/4/1/7b, SA Police District Commandant Otjiwarongo to Division Commander WDH, “Voorgestelde Stigting van ‘n Polisie Stasie te Okakarara, Hereroland,” 10 Sept. 1970.

⁵⁷³ NAN SAP 52/4/1/7b, SA Police, “Hereroland Wes Memorandum,” 31 Jul. 1970.

⁵⁷⁴ NAN SAP 52/4/1/7b, SA Police District Commandant Otjiwarongo to Division Commander WDH, “Voorgestelde Stigting van ‘n Polisie Stasie te Okakarara, Hereroland,” 10 Sept. 1970.

both white and black audiences.”⁵⁷⁵ Such propaganda was essential to waging the apartheid war in SWA as a hearts and minds campaign.

The third development arena in which the apartheid government wished to make headway was “governmental” – establishing “traditional authorities” and other governmental structures to run Hereroland as an “independent” homeland. First, in 1969 the Administrator of SWA ceased to be a member of SWA’s Bantu Affairs Commission. As the Prime Minister’s personal representative in SWA, the Administrator formerly possessed considerable control and influence over SWA’s Native/Bantu Affairs. Now, BAD would have virtual control over SWA’s African peoples, with the Administrator’s former powers devolving onto the HBSK.⁵⁷⁶ Secondly, BAD appointed a Chief Herero Affairs Commissioner (HHSK) in April 1970 to work alongside, rather than under, the HBSK. The HHSK was supported by two Herero Affairs Commissioners (HSK’s) in charge of Hereroland East and West, respectively. These were the first steps toward enacting the 1968 Law of Development of Self-Government for Native Peoples in SWA in Hereroland as recommended by the Odendaal Plan.⁵⁷⁷ Thirdly, BAD determined “as soon as the [Herero] ethnic group is ripe, tribal authorities and community authorities will be established.” There was little delay.

On July 18, 1970, Chief Hosea Kutako died at the age of ninety-six at his home in Aminuis Reserve. The government’s seemingly eternal impediment was now gone. The ensuing power vacuum would create an ideal opportunity to implement Traditional Authorities.

⁵⁷⁵ NAN AHE 66 N1/5/2b, Acting HBSK F.H. Cronje to Dept. Of Information, “Filmvertonings: Hereroland,” 22 Apr. 1969.

⁵⁷⁶ NAN AHE 20 N1/15/2, HBSK v.d. Watt to Secty BAD, “Hersiening van Delegasies: Suidwes Afrika: Magte aan die Administrateur in sy Houdanigheid as Lid van Bantoesakekommissie Gedelegeer,” 29 Sept. 1969.

⁵⁷⁷ NAN SAP 52/4/1/7b, South Africa Police, “Hereroland Wes Memorandum.”

The Politics of the Corpse

Though certainly not unexpected, Kutako's death seems to have taken Herero society and Bantu Affairs by surprise. Despite years of discussing this eventuality, everyone appeared unprepared for it. Kutako's death deepened the cleavage between the Big and Small Groups with his body becoming the battleground between them. Aaron Mugunda, an elderly member of the Windhoek advisory board and open government supporter, was Kutako's nephew and fictive brother. Though hardly on the same side of the political fence for the past two decades, family ties and Herero customs dictated that Mugunda make Kutako's funeral arrangements. Mugunda informed Assistant HBSK Cronje of the Chief's death on Monday, July 20, and asked if the government would provide Kutako's coffin as a gift in honour of their great leader.⁵⁷⁸ Sensing an opportunity to ingratiate themselves with the Small Group, the HBSK and HHSK agreed to purchase the coffin, but stipulated Kutako be buried in Hereroland rather than Okahandja, claiming it to have been his final wish.⁵⁷⁹

Mugunda was taken aback. He believed Kutako wanted to be buried in Okahandja, in the Rhenish Mission Church cemetery where Tjamuaha, Maherero, and Samuel Maherero were also buried. Not only was this the burial place of Herero chiefs, but Kutako had grown up in Okahandja. He never lived in Hereroland and Mugunda saw no reason why he should be buried there. However, in 1953, the Administrator in Executive Committee had prohibited further burials in Okahandja's Herero cemetery.⁵⁸⁰ Claiming this was to prevent the contamination of a nearby spring, the real issue was an ideological problem of separating black and white space. The cemetery lay in the center of town, the heart of white Okahandja, and the

⁵⁷⁸ SABBAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HBSK Cronje to Secty BAD Liebenberg, "Afsterwe: Herero Senior Hoofman Hosea Kutako," 14 Aug. 1970.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. The HBSK actually claimed burial in Hereroland was Kutako's last wish.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

hundreds, if not thousands, of black bodies that poured into this little town every year for Hererofest was simply unacceptable.

The burial ban was also an effort to re-orient Hereros toward Hereroland by encouraging a new “national” celebration in the homeland.⁵⁸¹ Administrators recognized that forcibly cancelling Hererofest would result in more letters to the UN; they hoped burying heroes elsewhere would cause the memory of Okahandja to fade. Despite the ban, Assistant HBSK Cronje feared that “any indication of government interference with the burial place would raise the suspicion of the Rhenish Mission Society,” a major anti-apartheid voice in the World Council of Churches.⁵⁸² He therefore consented to Kutako’s burial in the Rhenish Mission graveyard, which was “actually in the heart of the white section of town,” on the grounds that “Hosea was a member of this church.”⁵⁸³

According to the HBSK, Kapuuo did not hear about Kutako’s death until Monday the 20th. He reportedly rushed to inform the HBSK’s office, which Assistant HBSK Cronje described as “a calculated step in his objective of assuming the mantle of leadership over the Herero people from the late Hosea and hanging on his own shoulders.”⁵⁸⁴ Apparently by the time Kapuuo reached the HBSK’s office, the latter had taken Mugunda to select a coffin. Much to Cronje’s consternation, “Mugunda was clear to request something special...The old man’s ultimate choice was a coffin of R300.”⁵⁸⁵ After describing how “great satisfaction with the government was clearly visible in his...conduct and words,” the HBSK complained that “the department was

⁵⁸¹ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Secty BAD to Minister of BAD, “Herero Aangeleenthede,” 24 Jan. 1972.

⁵⁸² SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HBSK Cronje to Secty BAD Liebenberg, “Afsterwe: Herero Senior Hoofman Hosea Kutako,” 14 Aug. 1970.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. Kutako had been a member of the Rhenish Mission Church until 1955, when he led the move for Hereros to split with the RMS and form the *Oruвано* Church.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. The coffin had to be special ordered as it was not part of the regular inventory.

saddled with this expensive coffin and it might create problems with the auditor or something similar.”⁵⁸⁶

The next afternoon, Mugunda reported that Kapuuo had stolen Kutako’s corpse while Mugunda and Cronje were selecting the coffin. According to Cronje’s detailed account, “Kapuuo dashed off to Aminuis where Hosea died and seized the corpse and brought it back to Windhoek.”⁵⁸⁷ He then formally announced Kutako’s death and set the funeral for July 26. Assistant HBSK Cronje believed that Kapuuo “already knew about Mugunda’s dealings regarding the coffin and decided to carry out a form of ‘state grief’ by taking possession of the corpse. Thus, he would find himself in a position of power that would further promote his claim to the ‘Chiefship’ if he organized all the funeral arrangements.”⁵⁸⁸ In a sense, Kapuuo did hold the corpse hostage in exchange for official recognition. The security police finally discovered the body “in the cold storage of the white [people’s] chapel in the white cemetery.”⁵⁸⁹ Although Mugunda demanded government intervention, BAD refused to openly act, noting “it would create great problems for the authorities if the funeral arrangements were broken.”⁵⁹⁰

BAD officers considered the theft of Kapuuo’s corpse as an attempted coup and were unsure how secretly to negotiate with him for the corpse without inadvertently recognizing him as Herero Paramount Chief. Cronje believed that “personal dealings with him are completely out of the question because it would only recognize his attitude and leadership aspirations and encourage him to usurp.”⁵⁹¹

BAD quietly brought its involvement in the matter to Kapuuo’s attention by

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

announcing Kutako's death and the government's provision of the coffin on Radio Herero. At a meeting with BAD officers and the security police soon thereafter, Kapuuo was commanded to permit government representatives to attend the funeral and ensure that no rebellion took place. Kapuuo said he invited the HBSK, J.J. van der Watt, Assistant HBSK Cronje, and former CNC, H.J. Allen. He refused to invite the Commissioner-General of SWA's Indigenous Peoples, Jannie de Wet, or the new HHSK, Mr. Vercueil, on the grounds that he did not "know" them, meaning he refused to recognize their authority as apartheid government officials.

Although BAD officers appeared to have successfully navigated the corpse conundrum, the body brought severe strife between the Big and Small Groups and interpersonal conflict between Mugunda and Kapuuo. Using customary law to his advantage, Mugunda threatened to bring Kapuuo before the High Court. This appears to have worked. Saturday, 24 July, the Mugunda and Kapuuo factions met in the back of Kapuuo's Windhoek store to negotiate the body. Security police surrounded the building and Cronje watched from his car. At some point, negotiations became heated and the security police intervened in an argument. Although Kapuuo refused to relinquish the corpse, he agreed to take it to Mugunda's house that afternoon for Kutako's family and friends to view.

An acrimonious discussion between Kapuuo and Assistant HBSK Cronje ensued immediately after the negotiations concluded. Cronje wished to confirm that "high office holders [the Commissioner General of SWA and the HHSK] would not be exposed to any insults" at the funeral.⁵⁹² Kapuuo reiterated that he did not recognize these two men because they refused to recognize him as Paramount Chief. Cronje shortly informed Kapuuo "not to expect any government officer attend the

⁵⁹² Ibid.

funeral under these circumstances because his attitude smacked of intentional insult.”⁵⁹³ The HBSK crowingly reported that Kapuuo felt slighted by this. In the end, only Cronje and HBSK v.d. Watt attended the funeral.

Kapuuo’s speech at the funeral was decidedly hostile to the government and the Small Group. He reported how BAD officers tried to pressure him into inviting government officials and recounted his refusal because of their affiliation with the apartheid government. Kapuuo contended that the HHSK, Mr. Vercueil, had “moved the Hereros from their places and shifted them [Rietfontein Block]. It is the work for which he is appointed. It is his work to chase the Hereros away, to move them, as you hear that the people from Aminuis, Otjimbingue, and Ovitoto, etc. are trekking....Therefore I have refused to invite Mr. Vercueil.”⁵⁹⁴ He finished the speech off by mentioning the struggle for Kutako’s body: “We almost did not bury the dead because in Windhoek, a man who takes the whites’ side (Mugunda) tried to take the body away from me...Perhaps he would have had Vercueil attend the funeral.” In a letter to the Secretary of Bantu Affairs, Vercueil privately retorted, “according to Herero tradition, it is not customary to invite someone to a funeral; you go of your own volition or not at all.”⁵⁹⁵

Kutako’s corpse was unquestionably a site through which colonial power was negotiated and exercised. Disputes over his body reflect the extent of the deceased Chief’s own power in colonial, apartheid SWA. Though bodies were important in Herero culture as evidenced by the importance of Okahandja as a burial and

⁵⁹³Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴NAN BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, “Afskrif: Toespraak Gelewer deur Mnr. C. Kapuuo na die Inhuldingeremonie deur Mnr. J. Kandjie,” 26 Jul. 1970.

⁵⁹⁵NAN BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK Vercueil to Secty BAD, “Toespraak deur Clemence Kapuuo te Okahandja na die Begrafnis van die Wyle Senior Hoofman Hosiah Kutako,” 20 Aug. 1970.

pilgrimage site, corpse theft was most irregular.⁵⁹⁶ For the apartheid government, Kutako had been the greatest hindrance to policy implementation; controlling the place of burial and mode of his funeral would be a symbolic, if pyrrhic, victory over their long-time foe. Although generally opposed to Kutako, the Small Group derived its sense of Herero identity and justification from “traditional” chiefship, particularly that of Samuel Maherero. Despite calling him a fraud and usurper, Kutako represented an important link to Samuel Maherero. Drawing on traditional burial practices via Aaron Mugunda was a valuable legitimization of the Small Group’s position in opposition to the Big Group.

Finally, Kutako’s body was of considerable significance to the Big Group and Kapuuo in particular. For the Big Group, Kutako symbolized the Herero nation and its struggle for survival and freedom for nearly a century. However, the importance of the Chief’s corpse to Kapuuo was of a more immediate nature. Kutako and his blessing were integral to legitimating Kapuuo’s position as heir apparent to the state and the Small Group, likening his own appointment to Kutako’s designation by Samuel Maherero. Controlling the burial was not only a way of demanding state recognition as Herero paramount by holding the body for ransom, but it permitted Kapuuo to publically and symbolically perform his status as Kutako’s legitimate successor. In a very tangible and palpable sense, state administrators, Small Group leaders, and Kapuuo understood controlling Kutako’s corpse as an indispensable key to commanding Herero allegiance and power. Possessing the Chief’s body was a way of claiming legitimate authority over Herero society and, by extension, SWA.

⁵⁹⁶ Vedder also describes how Herero men would visit the graves of powerful ancestors with particularly urgent pleas, rather than the standard method of communicating through the Holy Fire. He also writes that on these rare occasions, men would dress as women based on the belief that ancestors were more likely to take pity on female petitioners. “The Herero,” in Hahn, Vedder, & Fourie, eds., *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (1966): p. 170.

Kapuu v. Karuaera: Negotiating “Tradition”

Kutako’s burial intensified rather than resolved tension among the Big and Small Groups and the government. Although the Chief’s Council confirmed Kapuu as Kutako’s successor in 1960, Kapuu claimed at the funeral that Kutako again conferred the Paramount Chiefship to him on his deathbed. Shortly after the funeral, Herero elders ritually installed Kapuu as Paramount Chief.⁵⁹⁷ Big Group leaders, including several Mahereros and Mbanderu headman Gerson Hoveka, wrote to the HBSK, “immediately after the funeral of the late Chief Hosea Kutako, this appointment was confirmed by the headmen of the Herero nation and the Herero people, including the Ovahimbos and Hereros from Botswana at Okahandja, who numbered 12,000.”⁵⁹⁸

The Small Group immediately asked Bantu Affairs to intervene and prevent Kapuu from gaining power within Herero society. In a letter to the HBSK in August 1970, Small Group leaders describing themselves as “The Herero Kraal Heads” contended that Kapuu’s claim was invalid because “the Headman may not possess the Chiefship as an heirloom to give his friend.”⁵⁹⁹ Rather, these men, led by Reverend B.G. Karuaera and J. Kamberipa, argued that because Kutako had only been Maherero’s regent, “the majority of the Herero people and the royal family of Maherero are of the opinion that the Stool must revert to our care.”⁶⁰⁰ After proposing several “children of royal blood” to become Paramount Chief, they concluded by asking the HBSK “to not accept Clemens Kapuu’s claim as Chief of the Hereros. It is not according to Herero Tradition.”⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁷ NAN BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Herero leaders to HBSK, 18 Oct. 1970.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ NAN BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Herero Kraal Heads to HBSK, “Clemens Kapuu Anstelling,” 6 Aug. 1970.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

After nearly a century of colonial intervention and severe dislocation, there was no clear notion or tradition of Paramount Chiefs or Royal Houses in Herero society. Samuel Maherero's position as "Paramount Chief" was a well-known colonial invention and considered illegitimate by most Hereros at the time. Ethnographic evidence suggests that such concepts did not exist in the precolonial era but emerged in the apartheid era from idealized conceptions of the past as well as imperatives stemming from both Herero society and the apartheid state. Disputes over Paramount Chiefship were not merely contestations over the meanings of a tradition; the struggle even to define Herero traditions served an important arena for larger debates about power and identity in Herero society. Inventing and manipulating Herero traditions was an essential component for each faction to legitimate and perform its claim to authority and consequently shape Herero society and the state to its advantage.

Tradition was an important entry point for BAD officials to intervene in Herero politics and carefully craft "tradition" to suit their own objectives. Such was the case with Kenneth Budack, the state ethnologist who determined in 1967 there had never been a Herero Paramount Chief in precolonial society. Tasked with investigating the Small Group's claims in 1970, he backtracked and reinterpreted: "A Paramount Chief was previously unknown, but the successors of Tjamuaha gradually gained greater power and influence among the people. They gradually came to overshadow the other Kapteins over time."⁶⁰² He contended that most Hereros considered the Mahereros as "the royal branch" and would only consider a Maherero leader, noting, "Descendents of other Kapteins have no claim in this connection."⁶⁰³ However, twentieth century Herero politics clearly demonstrate that Mahereros were

⁶⁰² NAN BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Budack to HBSK, "Eropfolging: Huis van Tjamuaha/Maherero - Kommentaar," 21 Sept. 1970.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

not considered the undisputed leaders of Herero society. Herero unity during this period had much more to do with Kutako's personality than any position as Samuel Maherero's regent.

Nevertheless, the Small Group and Bantu Affairs set much store by Samuel Maherero's highly questionable title. Both groups recognized this momentary power vacuum as their only opportunity to sideline and neutralize Kapuuo. Budack urged the HBSK to "recognize one of the traditional candidates" as "this will apparently be the last opportunity to reinstate the succession according to Herero rights and traditions."⁶⁰⁴ In conjunction with neutralizing Kapuuo, this was BAD's only chance to transition to Traditional Authorities by appointing someone tractable but legitimate. Moreover, it would open the door to restructuring Herero leadership along "traditional" clan lines. Budack urged the department to "give official recognition to other Kaptein houses within the Herero ethnic group...the houses of Zeraua and Kambazembi."⁶⁰⁵

Hostilities between the Big and Small Groups soon manifested as a personal battle between Rev. Karuaera and Kapuuo in the local press. Karuaera had been a member of the Herero Chief's Council and quite close to both Kapuuo and Kutako. However, after a falling out with Kutako, he was expelled from the Chief's Council in April 1969 and soon emerged as a Small Group leader. He publically claimed that the Big Group's letter confirming Kapuuo as Paramount was actually a petition for official recognition by Bantu Affairs.⁶⁰⁶ Kapuuo responded that the letter was merely intended to "introduce him to the authorities."⁶⁰⁷ SAPA reported that the letter had been written on Assistant HBSK Cronje's instructions. Cronje reportedly told

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, *Windhoek Advertiser*, 23 Oct. 1970. See SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Herero leaders to HBSK, 18 Oct. 1970.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

Kapuuu, “the Herero people [must] introduce [him] to the Bantu Commissioner (HHSK) in Waterberg Reserve as successor to Hosea Kutako.”⁶⁰⁸ Defending himself in an apologetic letter to the HHSK, Cronje stated that he told Kapuuu, “This office wants nothing to do with his so-called ‘chiefship.’”⁶⁰⁹ Neither did Karuaera; he contended in the *Windhoek Advertiser* that “Kapuuu was never elected or appointed as Chief. Both by blood and heredity, this man does not qualify for the chiefship. The Herero nation rightly refuses to accept any house other than Tjamuaha.”⁶¹⁰ Karuaera then openly planned a mass meeting in Okakarara to publically discuss Kapuuu and the succession.⁶¹¹

By November 1970, Bantu Affairs began formulating a plan to deal with Kapuuu by supporting the Small Group’s efforts to appoint a Maherero as Herero Paramount. Karuaera’s Okakarara meeting, now set for late January 1971, provided a seemingly ideal opportunity. HHSK Vercueil wrote the Secretary of Bantu Affairs that the Small Group would “choose among themselves, considering all claims to the chiefship without my help...the candidate will be pointed out and officially presented to me so that state recognition can be bestowed on him.”⁶¹² Vercueil was “glad about the intended meeting” because it would “fight against Kapuuu’s self-righteous campaign in which he acts as if he has already won.”⁶¹³

Kapuuu went on the offensive to mitigate the potential damage caused by Karuaera’s Okakarara meeting. He gave an interview for Radio Herero around early November, which was, for obvious reasons, never aired by SABC. The interview is

⁶⁰⁸ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, SAPA Correspondent S. Davis to HBSK, 23 Oct. 1970.

⁶⁰⁹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Asst. HBSK Cronje to HHSK, “Leierskap: Hererovolksgroep,” 27 Oct. 1970.

⁶¹⁰ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, *Windhoek Advertiser*, 23 Oct. 1970.

⁶¹¹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, *Windhoek Advertiser*, 26 Oct. 1970.

⁶¹² SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Vercueil to Secty BAD, “Aanwys van Hoofleier vir die Hererovolksgroep,” 5 Nov. 1970.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

nevertheless telling about the contemporary stakes of Herero politics. When asked whether the Hereros would accept the homelands policy, Kapuuo answered that regional (separate) development was unacceptable and that the Hereros were still focused on the restoration of their traditional lands. Directly referencing the genocide, he stated, “The Hereros will not be sent back to the Sandveld.”⁶¹⁴ Forced relocations to remote areas of Hereroland were disturbingly similar, in both method and location, to German efforts to murder Hereros in the desert, an event only one or two generations removed from 1970s Herero society. While Herero removals realistically dimmed the chances of land restoration, they also strengthened Herero resolve and brought the land issue back to the forefront of Herero politics.

Kapuuo’s answers to further questioning about SWA’s future reveal not only that he clearly saw himself as a leader in an independent and federal Namibia, but also his feelings about the Paramountcy.⁶¹⁵ When the commentator asked directly if Kapuuo was a descendent of Maherero, he answered evasively: “This system of relatedness has been established by the headmen and if I hadn’t fulfilled the requirements, they would never have chosen me. In addition to relatedness, the intelligence of a candidate must also be taken into consideration. Not just anyone from the family can be chosen as a successor.”⁶¹⁶ Kapuuo was related to the Mahereros through his matriclan and Kutako’s nephew.⁶¹⁷ Although Kapuuo was related to Maherero, his failure to directly answer the question and draw attention to the fact that, though related, he was not Maherero’s descendent suggests that lineage

⁶¹⁴ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK to Secty BAD, “Onderhoud met Clemence Kapuuo deur Radio Herero,” 11 Nov. 1970.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ J. Gewalt, “Who Killed Clemens Kapuuo?” in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 3 (2004): p. 561.

was perhaps more important in Herero society than the Big Group let on. The Small Group's claims may have had more validity than Kapuuo wished to admit.

Shortly thereafter, Kapuuo attempted to trump Karuaera and the government by reverting to the traditional Herero tactic of petitioning the UN. Although people, including South African government officials, still placed considerable faith in the UN's ability to intervene in SWA, Herero patience was beginning to wear thin after twenty years of relative inaction. Kapuuo nevertheless sent a lengthy petition to the UN Committee of the Twenty-Four in which he stated his claims to the Paramountcy up front. He began, "We wish to inform you that the South African government is trying to divide the Herero nation by encouraging a few Hereros who are opponents of the Herero Chief to appoint their own leader."⁶¹⁸ Calling out his opponent by name, Kapuuo continued, "The few Hereros who oppose the Herero Chief are led by Mr. B.G. Karuaera...He has now become an ally of the South African government and holds meetings frequently with [them] aimed at appointing another leader who would be a friend to the South African government."⁶¹⁹

To combat Kapuuo's strategy of reducing Small Group opposition to a handful of easily targeted individuals, Small Group leaders Karuaera and Tjatjitua organized a formal pressure group with Nguvauva in 1971. Calling themselves the "Society for the Preservation of the Royal House of Maherero," they elected Frederick Tjamuaha of Botswana as their "crown prince" to stand in opposition to Kapuuo. Elected at the Okakarara meeting, Frederick was Tjamuaha's great-grandson through his oldest son Kavikunwa. The Small Group contended that Frederick's father, Nikodemus Kavikunwa, should have inherited Maherero's position as Chief or Big Man. Instead, Samuel Maherero had illegitimately usurped this position and then left power to

⁶¹⁸ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Kapuuo to UN Committee of the Twenty-Four, "Petition from Chief Clemens Kapuuo Concerning Namibia," 15 Nov. 1970.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

Kutako. They argued that, as Kutako was only regent, it was time for authority to revert back to the House of Maherero rather than passing to Kapuuu, who had no legitimate claim to the Paramount Chiefship. While the Preservation Society contended that the Paramouncy question divided Herero society, they informed *Die Suidwester*, “All will come right when Frederick Tjamuaha comes to Southwest to rule his people.”⁶²⁰ Although *Die Suidwester* reported that Tjamuaha “had already gotten the necessary travel documents to move he and his people to SWA,” the fact that he was a citizen of Botswana would become a fairly significant problem over the next few years.⁶²¹ This debate over legitimate authority in Herero society became deeply entangled with the apartheid state’s development and relocation plans in Hereroland in the early 1970s.

The Waterberg Pipeline and Rietfontein Block

Although the government won Small Group support for apartheid policies such as Traditional Authorities and Homelands by endorsing their election of a “crown prince,” in early 1971 the hideously slow pace of physical development threatened to derail that cooperation. The Waterberg Pipeline was, according to HHSK Vercueil, “still very far from completion[and] poorly planned and executed.”⁶²² The asbestos pipes frequently broke under the intense pressure necessary to move water up the steep hillsides and the water itself had a mineral content too high for human consumption.⁶²³ Moreover, the occasional trickle of water into Okakarara had no place to go as reticulation and retention facilities had not yet

⁶²⁰ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, *Die Suidwester*, “Man van Botswana Gekies: Hereros Verskil oor Leier,” 25 Jan. 1971.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, HHSK Vercueil to Secty BAD, “Hereroland en Aminuis: Ontwikkelingswerk,” 15 Jan. 1971.

⁶²³ Ibid.

been completed. The HHSK recommended that a 2000 gallon tanker truck traverse the area around Okakarara to provide drinking water for residents and their livestock as it would be “many years” before the existing pipeline could be sufficiently extended.⁶²⁴ Vercueil warned, “The excessively slow tempo of physical development attempted in this homeland does not mean that we are going to retain those loyal Hereros we have already won.”⁶²⁵ The Senior Adjunct Secretary for Bantu Affairs concurred and urged the Director of Development Works to “strengthen the HHSK’s hand by positive action, especially since Clemens Kapuuo and his lieutenants are there agitating and making Hereros suspicious against the government. The present political situation in SWA is dangerous and we don’t want to sleep too late.”⁶²⁶

Beginning in 1970, Bantu Affairs had begun to push for Hereros to trek to Rietfontein Block on the Botswana border in order to create space for the anticipated influx of deportees. Formerly a white settlement, Rietfontein possessed a small number of productive boreholes clustered at one corner, though white farmers had abandoned the area due to water shortages. Government efforts to resettle people at Rietfontein predictably met with resistance among the Herero Big Group who protested “A Herero has never lived in Rietfontein!”⁶²⁷ They considered it as a nail in the coffin of Herero land claims and contended, “The government wants to divide our people and package us up like biscuits in wrappers...the government must forget these things because what is ours is ours.”⁶²⁸

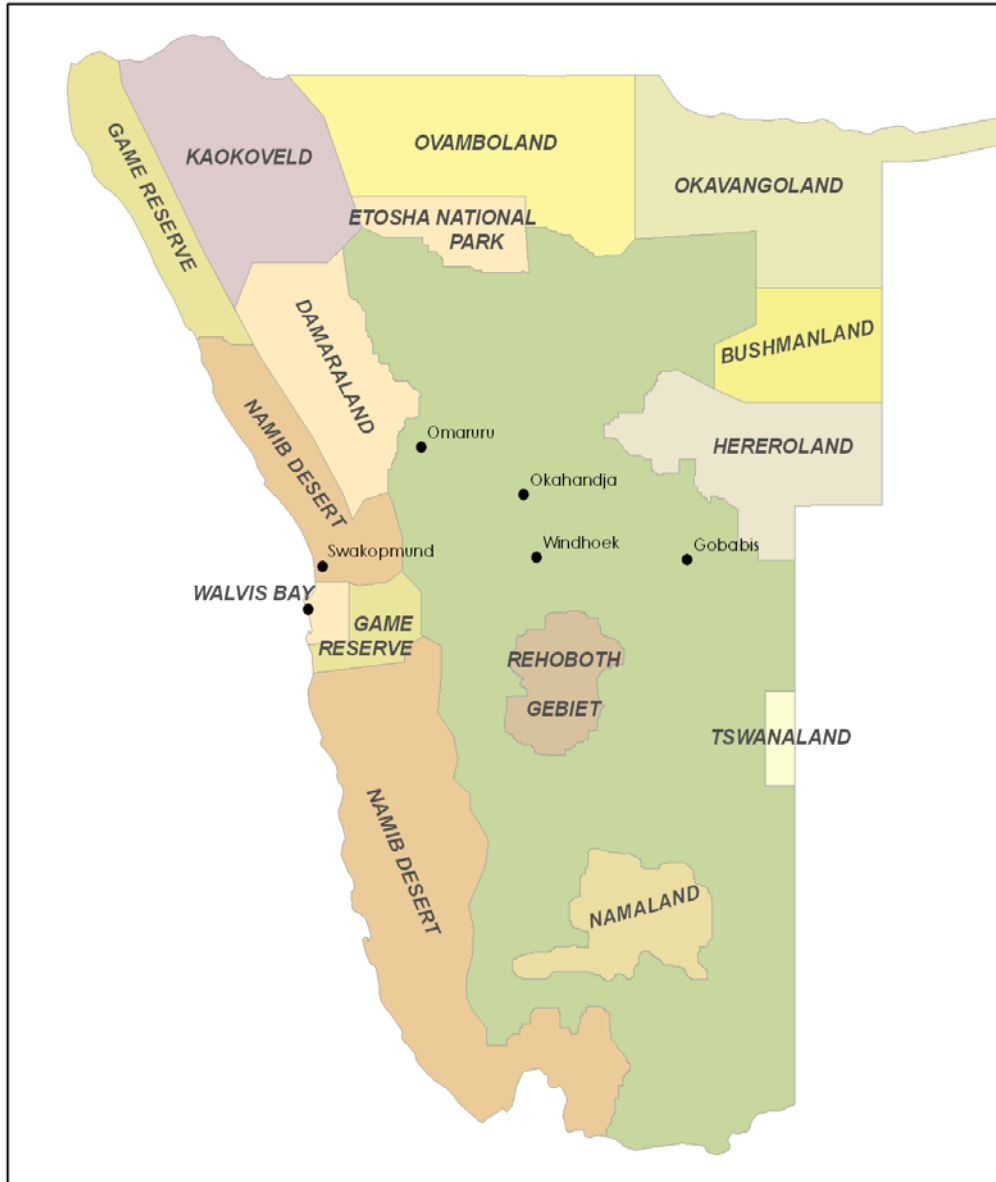
⁶²⁴ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, HHSK Vercueil to HBSK v.d. Watt, “Voorsiening van Water vir Huishoudlike Gebruik in Waterberg-Oos Reservaat: Distrik Hereroland-Wes,” 22 Jan. 1971.

⁶²⁵ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, HHSK Vercueil to Secty BAD, “Hereroland en Aminuis: Ontwikkelingswerk,” 15 Jan. 1971.

⁶²⁶ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, Sr. Adjunct Secty BAD to Director Development Works, “Hereroland en Aminuis: Ontwikkelingswerke,” 5 Feb. 1971.

⁶²⁷ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Security Police to Secty BAD, “Hererostamvergadering te Otjinene: 22/4/71 tot 24/4/71,” 25 May 1971.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.



Map 6: Proposed Bantustans in SWA, ca. 1968

In contrast, the Rietfontein issue actually created something of a crisis in Mbanderu society. Throughout the 1960s, Headman Munjuku Nguvauva II had generally been considered as “well disposed” to the government in comparison with his arch rival Gerson Hoveka, though he was hardly a stooge, as evidenced in Chapter 5. The two headmen still fought over Post 3 in Epukiro and refused to attend meetings together. Initially, however, Headman Nguvauva was quite favourable to the prospect of trekking to Rietfontein. He called a meeting in Gobabis in March 1971 to encourage the “Mbanderus to forget the past and look favourably on and accept the government homelands policy...the government’s offers, such as water installation, fenced watering holes, schools, auctions, and houses in Rietfontein, along with other forms of government help were to be accepted.”⁶²⁹ The security police, now a ubiquitous presence at meetings in Hereroland, believed that Nguvauva’s turnabout resulted from his desire to “seize the opportunity early to create an Mbanderu block in the proposed homeland.” They believed Nguvauva was responsible for urging Mbanderu emigration in order to strengthen his position within Hereroland and eventually press for a separate Mbanderuland. Nguvauva had not yet moved to Rietfontein himself, which the government considered “can clearly be ascribed to his fear that, if he should trek before sounding out his people, they might go over to Gerson Hoveka.”⁶³⁰

Since at least October 1970, Nguvauva pushed for Rietfontein to be only open to Mbanderu settlement and known as Mbanderuland or the Mbanderu Block. However, in April 1971, he informed the security police in Gobabis that his people had rejected this exclusivity and that he agreed that “Rietfontein was a part of Hereroland and must not be recognized as a special block for a specific group of

⁶²⁹ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Maj. Van Heerden, Security Police Pretoria to Secty BAD, “Aanvaarding van Regeringsbeleid deur Mbanderus,” 12 Mar. 1971.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

people.”⁶³¹ At this point, Claudius Heuva, Nguvauva’s Chief Advisor and former translator from Aminuis (see Chapter 1), turned on him and demanded to know “why he (Nguvauva) had created the wrong impression...that Rietfontein must first be recognized as an Mbanderu block.”⁶³² According to the police officer, “Munjuku was conspicuously hostile against Claudius Heuva and refused to answer his question.”⁶³³ Munjuku Nguvauva concluded by stating he would not permit any of his followers to go to Rietfontein.

It is unclear precisely why Munjuku Nguvauva changed his position on Rietfontein’s status as an Mbanderu area versus a portion of Hereroland. He may have feared losing his followers in Epukiro, and thus his status as Epukiro headman, to Gerson Hoveka for which he had fought so hard in the fifties and sixties. Approximately 600 of SWA’s two to three thousand Mbanderus had trekked to Rietfontein by late 1970 and wished it to be an exclusively Mbanderu settlement.⁶³⁴ Bantu Affairs was certainly prepared to delineate Rietfontein as an Mbanderu homeland and actively referred to it as such.

After Nguvauva’s turnabout, the Rietfontein Mbanderus repudiated his authority and his people in Epukiro continued to trek there. In response, Nguvauva attempted to both prevent any further migration to Rietfontein and to exert his control over those already settled there. In a letter to the Assistant Herero Affairs Commissioner for Hereroland East, he wrote, “No person that falls under me may be allowed by [your] office to trek to Rietfontein or post their cattle there...Of the people

⁶³¹ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Security Police to Secty BAD, “Aanvaarding van Regeringsbeleid deur Mbanderus,” 14 Apr. 1971.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK to Secty BAD, “Aanvaarding van Regeringsbeleid deur Mbanderus,” 7 Jun. 1971.

who have already moved to Rietfontein, they are still my people.”⁶³⁵ These actions placed Nguvauva in a bind. On one hand, he would have to trek to Rietfontein to retain his headmanship if his people kept trekking; on the other, trekking behind his people after ordering them not to go would be a significant blow to his pride and would not even ensure his continued status as headman. Down to just 400 followers by June 1971, Nguvauva threatened to cease all cooperation with the government if they did not prevent his Mbanderus from trekking to Rietfontein.⁶³⁶

Bantu Affairs did not support Munjuku in his request to prevent any further Mbanderu trekkers to Rietfontein and proceeded to appoint a new headman for “Mbanderuland.” The elected Headman, Elifas Tjingaete, formerly one of Munjuku’s strongest supporters, informed the Assistant HSK, “We don’t want a headman who is 100 miles from us and... hinders our people’s progress. We trekked to Rietfontein with the aim of separating ourselves from the Hereros.”⁶³⁷ While the new HHSK, Mr. Pieterse, was pleased that “having only Mbanderus settled here has already awoken their own national consciousness,” he worried “it may create future problems as the Mbanderus are too few to rightfully have their own government.”⁶³⁸ This problem could be circumvented if the Rietfontein Mbanderus would accept a “community authority,” a sort of mini-Bantustan in which land would be held communally and decisions made by the local headman and his advisors.⁶³⁹ Rietfontein Mbanderus voted 47 - 2 for a community authority separate from Herero and Nguvauva’s

⁶³⁵ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Munjuku to AHSK, untitled, 6 May 1971.

⁶³⁶ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK Vercueil to Secty BAD, “Aanvaarding van Regeringsbeleid deur Mbanderus,” 7 Jun. 1971.

⁶³⁷ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, AHSK to HHSK, “Navraag: Aanstelling van ‘n Hoofman te Rietfontein,” 19 May 1971.

⁶³⁸ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK Vercueil to Secty BAD, “Aanvaarding van Regeringsbeleid deur Mbanderus,” 7 Jun. 1971.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

oversight.⁶⁴⁰ Bantu Affairs officers were thrilled that they may finally be able to implement apartheid structures and traditional authorities among Herero-speakers. While the Rietfontein Mbanderus' decision to accept a community authority would inspire the Herero Small Group, official approval for the Mbanderus remained tied to ongoing debates over the Herero paramountcy.

Finding a Crown Prince

Although the Society for the Preservation of the House of Maherero and Small Group elected Frederick Tjamuaha in January 1971, efforts to bring him to SWA did not get underway until much later in the year. While the government was deeply interested in the Chiefship issue and supported the Preservation Society and Small Group in the hopes of establishing a Traditional Authority, it refused to openly participate in this process in order for it to appear organic and to avoid international censure. The Senior Adjunct Secretary of Bantu Affairs contended, "There must be no official interference into the question of Herero leadership."⁶⁴¹ He nevertheless recommended that the Minister of Bantu Affairs quietly ensure that the Department of Foreign Affairs expedite Tjamuaha's emigration via diplomatic channels. Although Tjamuaha visited SWA in August 1971, the HHSK, Mr. Pieterse, repeatedly stressed that the government could not intervene in selecting a Paramount and could not officially recognize Tjamuaha until he became a citizen of SWA.⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ SAB BAO 5/497/F56/16 v.1, HHSK Pieterse, "Vergadering deur die Hoofhererosakekommissaris in Rietfontein-Reservatte te die Plaas Lister om 9:15 vm op 5 Augustus 1971," 5 Aug. 1971.

⁶⁴¹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Sr. Secty BAD to Minister BAD, "Opvolger vir Hosea Kutaku," 7 Jun. 1971.

⁶⁴² SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Pieterse, "Samesprekings Tussen Hoofhererosakekommissaris en Hereroleiers op 17 Augustus 1971 te Windhoek (Hoofbantoesakekommissaris Kantoor)," 17 Aug. 1971. The issue of citizenship was somewhat confused and obfusatory because the South African government was actively in the process of revoking South African and SW African citizenship rights of blacks and making them "citizens" of the homelands.

Bantu Affairs was also hesitant to openly install Tjamuaha as Paramount Chief because of potential opposition and backlash by the Big Group. Such opposition was forthcoming. At the annual (but unofficial) Herero meeting that Kapuuo called in May 1971, he raged in an extended speech, “Where does the government get off choosing a leader for the Hereros? ...It makes no difference if the Hereros want to have this person, so long as he supports the Odendaal Plan. Just remember that you did not choose this man and that he also comes from Botswana (like Munjuku Nguvauva).”⁶⁴³ Kapuuo possessed the vast majority of Herero support – nearly 500 representatives trekked to his unofficial meeting from all parts of SWA and Botswana.⁶⁴⁴

This placed Bantu Affairs in a stalemate. They could not afford to impose Tjamuaha on a majority opposed to him, but neither could they acknowledge Kapuuo. This on-going impasse gave Kapuuo the upper hand. HHSK Pieterse lamented that Kapuuo “can go on posing as a leader without his position as such being touched... In the long run, he can strengthen his position and it will be all the more difficult to dethrone him.”⁶⁴⁵ He argued that the only way to dismantle Kapuuo’s power base was to tacitly support the Small Group, appoint hereditary chiefs from among the other “royal houses,” and find a back-up for Tjamuaha with SW African citizenship.⁶⁴⁶

Establishing a community authority for the Small Group presented a potential strategy for moving beyond, or at least mitigating, this impasse. Around 1970, David Tjatjitua, the official but largely unsupported headman of Waterberg East, trekked with his followers to Okamatapati, further northeast of Okakarara along the

⁶⁴³ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Security Police to Secty BAD, “Hererostamvergadering te Otjinene: 22/4/71 tot 24/4/71,” 25 May 1971.

⁶⁴⁴ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Security Police to Secty BAD, “Aansoek om Veligsheidsverslae ten Opsigte van Frederick Ndjezehuha Tjamuaha en Richard Temuso Muhinda,” 22 Jul. 1971.

⁶⁴⁵ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Pieterse, “Memorandum oor Leierskap van Hererovolk,” 17 Aug. 1971.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

Omuramba Omatako in Eastern Reserve. The Okamatapati Hereros were initially hesitant about appointing a community authority lest it somehow interfere with or undermine the appointment of the crown prince.⁶⁴⁷ After the HHSK explained that the Paramount Chief would still be in charge in Hereroland and outlined the physical development Okamatapati would receive if they accepted a community authority, the Small Group agreed.⁶⁴⁸ Although David Tjatjitua was the leader of this group, he refrained from putting himself forward as headman so as not to lose his claim to Waterberg East and because he wished to be officially appointed as the Chief of the Kambazembi royal house under the Traditional Authorities system.⁶⁴⁹

Local officials supported the Mbanderu and Herero community authorities as a means to moving forward with governmental development in Hereroland, which seemed doomed to fracture and countless delays. However, officials in Pretoria, concerned with international opinion, were not so hasty. The Secretary for Bantu Affairs, Myburgh, wished to know if “we should proceed with community authorities at this stage or if we should wait until the leadership question is solved; that is to say, if prospects for a speedy solution...are realistic?”⁶⁵⁰ Pieterse responded, “It will be a long road to self government...The people must learn to accept the power of their leaders...This is one of the reasons why I want to get started with the two community authorities. There is still hope to get them on the right path. ...The communities are

⁶⁴⁷ SAB BAO 5/497/F56/16/6 v. 1, HHSK Pieterse, “Notule van Vergadering Gehou te Okamatapati,” 19 Sept. 1971.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid. One interviewee recalled the government giving cattle to the Okamatapati Hereros. Interview with Z., Okahandja, Namibia 22 Feb. 2010.

⁶⁴⁹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Pieterse to Secty BAD Myburgh, “Herero Aangeleenthede,” 26 Oct. 1971.

⁶⁵⁰ SAB BAO 5/497/F56/16/6 v.1, Secty BAD Myburgh to HHSK Pieterse, “Gemeenskapsowerheid vir Mbanderu en Oostelike Reserwaat: Konsep Regulasies,” 20 Sept. 1971.

not only well-disposed, but favour development on all levels. They will accept guidance.”⁶⁵¹

Interpreting HHSK Pieterse’s earlier hesitation to recognize Frederick Tjamuaha on the grounds that the Herero tribe had not made their views known, Rev. Karuaera held a large meeting in Windhoek’s Katutura Township to this effect in September 1971. Approximately 1,500 people turned out for the meeting in which Frederick Tjamuaha’s family tree was explained in great detail by Karuaera, Munjuku Nguvauva, and others. Nguvauva reportedly asked the crowd if there was anyone who thought Tjamuaha should not take the throne and opposed the restoration of the Royal House. The crowd apparently replied in unison, “He is the real successor to the throne; restore the Tjamuaha/Maherero Royal House and pay homage to him [Frederick Tjamuaha].”⁶⁵² After the speeches, the stool of the paramount chief was brought in and Tjamuaha placed upon it.⁶⁵³ According to the Preservation Society’s report, Headman Munjuku, “following the custom of the Herero,” placed his hands upon Tjamuaha’s shoulders and said:

There are the people we place in your hands; you are the
Paramount Chief. Rule your people with gentleness and love. Do
not waver. Your forefathers’ house, the Tjamuaha Maherero Royal
House, is again reinstated and you are installed today as King of
the Hereros...⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵¹ SAB BAO 5/497/F56/16/6 v.1, HHSK Pieterse to Secty BAD Myburgh, “Gemeenskapsowerhede vir Mbanderu en Oostelike Reserwaat: Konsepregulasies,” 18 Oct. 1971.

⁶⁵² SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, “Vereniging vir die Behoud van Tjamuaha/Maherero Koninklike Huis,” 25 Sept. 1971.

⁶⁵³ References to the metaphorical stool of Samuel Maherero do not appear in the archival record until ca. WWII. This is the first and only reference I have ever encountered regarding a physical stool. Its origins are unknown.

⁶⁵⁴ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, “Vereniging vir die Behoud van Tjamuaha/Maherero Koninklike Huis,” 25 Sept. 1971.

The crowd “cheered with gladness and said ‘Long live the King! Long live the King!’”⁶⁵⁵

Karuaera and the other Preservation Society leaders immediately submitted a request for the government to recognize Frederick Tjamuaha as Paramount Chief of the Hereros and permit him and twenty family members to relocate to SWA.⁶⁵⁶ They also sent a petition to the UN informing the Committee of the Twenty-Four that the Herero Chiefship issue was

finally settled in accordance with the traditions of the Herero people and no amount of pressure within or without by foreigners will be permitted to alter the traditions of the Herero people...Those individuals who claim to have succeeded the late Chief Hosea Kutako and who are trying to mobilize the support of foreign groups...cannot succeed because they are acting against the traditions of our people.”⁶⁵⁷

Attuned to international opinion and South Africa’s increasingly precarious position, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs informed Bantu Affairs that “the time is not yet ripe for the South African authorities to assign anyone, either Clemens Kapuuo or Frederick Tjamuaha, as the official Herero leader.” Nevertheless, he conceded, “you may consider it desirable to allow Tjamuaha and his followers to settle in Hereroland ...the whole matter will have to be carefully planned so that it appears from the outside as if the South African government has not meddled in the

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Preservation Society Reps to HHSK, “I/S Staaterkenning van Kroonprins Frederick Tjamuaha as Opperhoof van die Hereros,” 10 Oct. 1971.

⁶⁵⁷ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Small Group leaders to Chairman of the UN Committee of the 24, Untitled Petition, 22 Nov. 1971.

Herero leadership question.”⁶⁵⁸ They arranged for Frederick and his family to illegally cross the border into SWA in March 1972 and sought to “legalize his residence in an unobtrusive way.”⁶⁵⁹

Bantu Affairs was concerned that Kapuuo would make Tjamuaha’s illegal arrival and residence in SWA into a political affair. They were right. Kapuuo organized a full-scale Herero boycott of all state services.⁶⁶⁰ The HHSK worried that taking action against Kapuuo would “stain the state in a way that must be avoided” and morbidly, if presciently, prophesied that it would be “many years before state recognition can be given to Frederick” unless “Kapuuo should die or exit the stage prematurely.”⁶⁶¹ Herero resistance transcended the boycott against government services; assault and socio-economic sanctions became common between members of the opposing Herero factions. The Security Police claimed that Kapuuo held “court” in which to coerce people to join his cause and/or fine them for disloyalty.⁶⁶² The Big Group also vandalized development works bestowed on the small group, such as fences. This Big Group intimidation campaign appears to have been somewhat successful as Tjamuaha returned to Botswana with little intention of coming back to SWA. Nevertheless, HHSK Pieterse contended that “progress must continue with aid loans to the Small Group for their development...[they] must receive as much help

⁶⁵⁸ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Secty Foreign Affairs to Secty BAD, “Suidwes-Afrika: Leierskap van die Herero,” 14 Dec. 1971. Myburgh, BAD Secty wrote the Minister of BAD that for Foreign Affairs to negotiate visas for Frederick Tjamuaha and his followers was just “unnecessarily chasing rabbits,” and suggested Frederick and his people sneak across the relatively unpatrolled border and settle illegally in Hereroland. He noted, “We can arrange for the Police Department to close their eyes a bit.” See SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Myburgh to Minister of BAD, “Herero Aangeleenthede,” 24 Jan. 1972.

⁶⁵⁹ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Adjunct Secty Community Development to Secty BAD, “Aanwesigheid van Frederick Ndjezuhuha Katjii Tjamuaha,” 13 Mar. 1972.

⁶⁶⁰ SAB BAO 2/1792/T9/1/1/3/13, HHSK to Secty BAD, “Interdepartementele Komitee insake Navorsing en Dienslewering in Verband met Bantoe Ontwikkeling,” 20 Mar. 1972.

⁶⁶¹ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK to Secty BAD, “Aanstelling van Frederick II,” 25 Apr. 1972.

⁶⁶² SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Commissioner SAP to HBSK & Division Commander Security Branch, “Hererofees: 26-27 Augustus: Okahandja,” 21 Jun. 1972. The Police Commissioner claimed that the Big Group found one man guilty of membership in the Preservation Society and fined him an ox worth R150.

and development possible so they can serve as a showcase for the government's good intentions."⁶⁶³

Artificial Droughts & Potemkin Homelands

Good intentions only went so far and intra-Herero tensions soon became entangled with serious water shortages in Hereroland, increasing everyone's distrust towards the government, including the well-disposed factions.⁶⁶⁴ Communication breakdowns between Water Affairs and BAD resulted in only new six boreholes drilled in Hereroland between 1970 and 1972.⁶⁶⁵ Moreover, many existing boreholes began to collapse in the early seventies.⁶⁶⁶ The HHSK complained, "The natives are so absolutely dependent on water for their existence that supply must be made priority number one."⁶⁶⁷ He noted that adequate water supplies were essential to maintaining any Herero cooperation: "It makes [Hereros] suspicious when promises cannot be carried out...the Herero is by nature evasive and petulant to cooperate under circumstances that appear unfavourable to him. Funds for such an important item as water supply for Hereroland should never be reduced."⁶⁶⁸ Despite the government's obvious deficiencies in carrying out development plans, the HHSK refused to place all blame on the state. He insisted that Hereros had "prejudiced themselves against

⁶⁶³ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936 v.2, HHSK to Secty BAD, "Hereroland: Onrus," 5 May 1972.

⁶⁶⁴ SAB BAO 8/309/X53/1936, "Mbanderu Vergadering gehou te Lister, Rietfontein Blok," 11 Apr. 1972. Claudius Heuva complained the government had "departed from the agreement we made" by defaulting on development promises.

⁶⁶⁵ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936 v.2, HHSK to Secty BAD, "Hereroland: Onrus," 5 May 1972. See also SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, Asst. HHSK to HHSK, "Boorgate Epukiro Reservaat," 19 Aug. 1971; SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, HHSK to Director of Waterways, "Watervoorsiening: Rietfonteinblok," 4 Oct. 1971; and SAB BAO 10784.H66/1936 v.2, Adjunct Secty Labor & Housing to Adjunct Secty Community Affairs, "Hereroland: Onrus en Onluste," 29 May 1972.

⁶⁶⁶ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936, HHSK to Director of Waterways, "Watervoorsiening: Rietfonteinblok," 4 Oct. 1971.

⁶⁶⁷ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936 v.2, HHSK to Secty BAD, "Hereroland: Onrus," 5 May 1972.

[development]. They take a martyr's attitude in order to stress the most desperate situation possible to the outside world... [They] stamp it as Odendaal Oppression."⁶⁶⁹

Despite, or perhaps because, Namibian independence increasingly loomed as an eventuality, Vorster's government proceeded with homeland policies and ethnic fragmentation even though these philosophies were beginning to wear thin in the Republic. Late 1972 witnessed a new urgency in homeland removals. In a minute titled "Clearing up Black-Spot Reserves in SWA," the Secretary of Bantu Affairs informed the HBSK that there were six such reserves, including the Herero reserves of Aminuis, Otjimbingue, and Ovitoto.⁶⁷⁰ He wished to know the number of people and livestock to be moved, when and how to move them, and how much this process would cost.⁶⁷¹ Regarding the three Herero reserves, the HBSK lamented the "serious problem with water [in Hereroland]" and noted "the land around the water is also maximally populated."⁶⁷² However, he assured the Secretary, "The removals will be done as soon as the abovementioned problems are remedied."⁶⁷³ However, large scale resettlement would be impossible until a scheme to pipe water from the Okavango River was completed around 1980.⁶⁷⁴ He also observed that the Hereros in these reserves "have no inclination to move to the homelands and the Department may have a difficult time convincing them to trek in order to clean out the area."⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ NAN AHE 66/N1/16/4 v.2, Secty BAD to HBSK, "Opruiming van Swartkolle Reservate in SWA," 6 Jun. 1972.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² NAN AHE 66/N1/16/4 v.2, HBSK to Secty BAD, "U Skrywe Gedateer 6 Junie 1972 het Betrekking," 23 Jun. 1972.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936 v.2, Adjunct Secty Community Affairs to Adjunct Secty Labor & Housing, "Hereroland: Watervoorsiening," 10 Nov. 1972. See also SAB BAO 10784/H66/1936 v.3, Secty BAD to Minister BAD, "Ontwikkeling en Vestiging van Hereroland," 26 Mar. 1973.

⁶⁷⁵ NAN AHE 66/N1/16/4 v.2, HBSK to Secty BAD, "U Skrywe Gedateer 6 Junie 1972 het Betrekking," 23 Jun. 1972.

The matter of how to achieve removals became a serious problem due to more frequent UN intervention in SWA. UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim visited SWA in March 1972 and then sent Swiss Ambassador Dr. Alfred Escher on a follow-up visit in September. The Big Group demanded to have a private meeting with Dr Escher at which an informant reported they wished to demand the Ambassador throw the new HHSK, Mr. Snyman, out of Hereroland.⁶⁷⁶ To combat this dissent, BAD officials determined, “efforts must be taken to encourage Hereros...to trek to Hereroland but compulsion must not be exercised.”⁶⁷⁷ BAD considered “buying” the black spot reserves, which were conveniently owned by the government, meaning they were not obligated to offer Africans, technically squatters, any compensation.⁶⁷⁸ The most common tactic was to shut off critical water facilities. One man recalled, “One day the people put up a fence around the water hole and made the people move east to an area (Hereroland) just for wild animals, not cattle, goats, donkeys, and horses.”⁶⁷⁹ As water supplies failed, Hereros would have little choice but to trek into the homeland with their livestock.

As the HBSK predicted, BAD faced stiff opposition from Hereros living in black spots. In Otjimbingue, the Rhenish Mission Station, which was situated on a private lot in the reserve, permitted Hereros to squat on its property, “furthering the

⁶⁷⁶ SAB BAO 8/315/ X54/1996/2, HHSK Snyman to Secty BAD Myburgh, “Hereroleierskap: Frederick Tjamuaha: U X54/1996/2 Gedateer 26 Oktober 1972 Verwys,” 15 Nov. 1972. Dierks reports that South African representatives were present at all of Escher’s meetings with Africans and the Big Group presumably was denied a strictly private meeting with the ambassador. See K. Dierks, *Chronology of Namibian History* (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 1999): p. 139.

⁶⁷⁷ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, “Samespreking insake Herero-Aangeleenthede, Maandag 19 November 1973,” 19 Nov. 1973. Threats of force were however an effective tool. Deportees from Otjituo claimed the police told them to leave by a certain date “or else.” Forced to walk, they left all their belongings in Otjituo. Interview with T. K. & C. Z. Tsumeb, Namibia, 20 Feb. 2010.

⁶⁷⁸ NAN AHE 66/N1/16/4 v.2, Secty BAD to HBSK, “Opruiming van Swartkollie: Verbeterings van Plakkers/Huurders,” 3 Jan. 1973.

⁶⁷⁹ Interview Z., Okahandja, Namibia, 22 Feb. 2010.

residents' attitude of passive resistance to moving to the homeland."⁶⁸⁰ Hereros belonging to the Zeraua faction in Otjohorong reserve were on rocky terms with the Maherero faction and, in order to remove them to Hereroland, they would have to be settled in "the eastern part of Hereroland, that is to say, the poisonous part that surely cannot be developed."⁶⁸¹ Otjohorong Hereros reported "they would rather be shot than trek."⁶⁸²

In addition to these black spot reserves, the southern Hereros were coming under increasing pressure to relocate. They split into two factions in the late 1960s.⁶⁸³ The Vaalgras Hereros succeeded in their claims to Nama-Damara identity and residence rights and were not moved.⁶⁸⁴ However, a Herero community based around Tses village, established by Hereros fleeing the genocide and its aftermath, continued to self-identify as Herero despite the fact that most only spoke Nama.⁶⁸⁵ Bantu Affairs first attempted to convince their headman, Hembapu, to relocate to Otjinene by describing it as a veritable Eden and promising water and other infrastructural development.⁶⁸⁶ They may have also taken Hembapu and some advisors to a green and lush area (calling it Hereroland) to demonstrate the benefits of moving.⁶⁸⁷ While Hembapu complied and moved with a few followers, most Tses Hereros, under

⁶⁸⁰ NAN AHE 66/N1/16/4 v.2, 21 BSK Karibib to HBSK, "Plakkers op Sendingstasies wat nog in 'n Tuisland Gevestig moet word," 21 Jun. 1973.

⁶⁸¹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Pieterse to Secty BAD, "Herero Aangeleentede," 26 Oct. 1971. Referring to milkweed plants, *Asclepias*, which are toxic to livestock during certain parts of the year.

⁶⁸² SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Untitled, ca. May 1975.

⁶⁸³ Interview with S. S., Tses, 18 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁸⁴ The Nama Headman of Berseba Reserve protected the Vaalgras Hereros by claiming them as his people. Nama-speaking Hereros living in neighbouring Berseba reserve were also left alone. See Interview E. U., Berseba, Namibia, 18 Dec. 2009. Some Nama-speaking Hereros were declared to be Damaras and moved to the Damara homeland on the fringe of the Namib Desert, including the Riemvasmaakers of South Africa. Interview with Chief Joel Stephanus, Vaalgras, Namibia, 17 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁸⁵ Many Tses Hereros considered Nama their home language, but learned some Otjijherero at the Herero school in Komnarib in Tses Reserve. Interview with A. B., C. N. & E. K., Keetmanshoop, Namibia 17 Dec. 2009. See also Interview with O. K. & N. K., Tses, Namibia, 19 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁸⁶ Interviews with K. & K., Tses, Namibia, 18-19 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁸⁷ One woman described Hembapu as "very big but not very bright." Interview Tses, Namibia, 19 Dec. 2009.

Headman Nikanor Kauru, refused to move, unimpressed with BAD promises. One woman recalls that the removal was preceded by a drought that BAD officers artificially exacerbated by shutting down boreholes.⁶⁸⁸

In the early-1970s, the South African Police rounded up these Tses Hereros, mostly single women and the elderly, and forced them onto trains to Omitara, where they were then taken by trucks to uninhabited areas in Otjinene reserve, nothing like the green pastures promised by the state.⁶⁸⁹ They recalled, “[The government] forced us onto trains with guns. The deportation impoverished the people...When we got [to Hereroland] it wasn’t good land and the livestock perished. We were left with no prospect of security.”⁶⁹⁰ Relocation was a scarring experience. The small stock on which many deportees depended for sustenance died in droves in Hereroland due to tulip poisoning, epizootics, and wild carnivora.⁶⁹¹

Torn from their communities, southern Herero deportees recalled a generally negative reception from Otjinene Hereros and remember being called derogatory names and told they were not real Hereros. Integration appears to have been most difficult for those who only spoke Nama. Language became a new symbol of ethnic identity, branding Nama-speaking Hereros as misfits and imposters while accentuating their sense of alienation.⁶⁹² Deportees proficient in Otjiherero did not report these feelings of estrangement, but recalled that Otjinene Hereros treated their

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ The precise date of the deportation is unclear. Interviewees generally refer to “around 1970.” Hembapu had been officially installed as a headman with his own ward in Otjinene by 1975. Interview with A. B., C. N., & E. K., Keetmanshoop, Namibia 17 Dec. 2009. Deportees uniformly reported that the police used force to remove communities. Most southern Hereros were settled in Okatjana, Ombuianyama, and Olifantspan in Otjinene. See also Interviews with K. & K., Tses, Namibia, 18-19 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁹⁰ Interviews with K. & K., Tses, Namibia, 18-19 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid. These people credited lions and wild dogs for the demise of their small stock. See also interview with A. B., C. N., & E. K., Keetmanshoop, Namibia 17 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁹² Interview with N. K., Tses, Namibia, 18 Dec. 2009.

ability to speak Nama like a party trick.⁶⁹³ As one woman recalled, “knowing Otjiherero opened doors.”⁶⁹⁴ Nevertheless, southern Herero deportees described southern Namibia as home and many returned to the region in the 1990s.

The Royal House Begins to Crumble

By 1973, the Small Group, under the auspices of the Preservation Society, began to experience strains in its relationship with Bantu Affairs. Crown Prince Frederick Tjamuaha, driven back to Botswana by Kapuuo’s intimidation campaign, had still not returned to SWA by late August 1973. Although Tjamuaha claimed a severe drought in Botswana required his presence, Karuaera reported that he had been disillusioned by “all the wrong things going on between the [Herero] people, between the so-called leaders (Kapuuo and the Big Group) who reject the things the government wants to do for them and prevent the people from partaking in them.”⁶⁹⁵ Tjamuaha insisted he would only return to SWA if the South African government promised to openly recognize him as Herero Paramount Chief. He did however promise that, “upon his arrival, he [would] immediately jump on the right path and show the people that improvement is based on cooperation with the government.”⁶⁹⁶

While Bantu Affairs did not wish to close this door irrevocably, South Africa’s increasingly fragile foreign relations precluded taking such a rash action as committing to Tjamuaha. In a discussion with Karuaera about Tjamuaha, the HHSK pointed out that, “according to the opinions of some [Herero] people, the Hereros had never had a traditional Head Chief, but only a ‘strong man’ installed in times of

⁶⁹³ Interview with C. K. & E. K., Tses, Namibia, 18 Dec. 2009. See also interview with A. T., Tses, Namibia, 18 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁹⁴ Interview with J. B., Tses, Namibia, 18 Dec. 2009.

⁶⁹⁵ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Bezuidenhout to Secty BAD, “Hereroleierskap: Frederick Tjamuaha,” 27 Aug. 1973.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

emergency or threat.”⁶⁹⁷ Karuaera rejected this claim, distinguishing between a strong man (i.e. big man) and a Head Chief and insisting on a traditional bloodline.⁶⁹⁸

Kapuuo and the Big Group still opposed any idea of a “crown prince” or Paramount other than Kapuuo.

The Herero Small Group’s insistence on a “crown prince” also alienated the Mbanderu majority, with whom they had been historically aligned in generally supporting the government. The Rietfontein Mbanderus refused to recognize Tjamuaha as their Paramount and, although Headman Nguvauva continued to support Tjamuaha, he only “recognized [Tjamuaha] as head chief of the Hereros, but not over the Banderus, only on equal footing with him (Nguvava).”⁶⁹⁹ The ethnologist surmised that this position resulted from “the misconception that the Paramount Chief really gets power...while in reality it is a status position.”⁷⁰⁰

Moreover, given Nguvauva’s refusal to tow the government line a docile manner, BAD was hesitant to support bringing in another relatively unknown headman from Botswana.⁷⁰¹ The HHSK recommended that, if the state were to support Tjamuaha, he “must sign on paper that he will honor and support the government and if he doesn’t he immediately be turned back and deported for breaking this arrangement.”⁷⁰² By the end of the year, BAD officials determined that “the leadership question must be dropped from the present until a leader proves that he would be accepted as such.”⁷⁰³ Clemens Kapuuo had, however, proven himself to

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid. The HHSK’s assertion is more historically accurate, as discussed throughout this dissertation.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, Ethnologist Bothma to Adjunct Secty (Community Affairs), “Hereroleierskap,” 18 Oct. 1973.

⁷⁰¹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HHSK Bezuidenhout to Secty BAD, “Hereroleierskap: Frederick Tjamuaha,” 27 Aug. 1973.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, unknown author, “Samespreking insake Herero-Aangeleenthede, Maandag, 19 November 1973.”

be that generally accepted leader, but he was also the most outspoken critic of the government in SWA. Therefore Bantu Affairs resolved, “There must never be reference to [Kapuuu] as ‘Chief.’”⁷⁰⁴

The chiefship question, which had consumed so much time, energy, and concern since the mid-1960s, was effectively dead in the water by 1974. While Kapuuu had not succeeded in gaining recognition as Herero Paramount, neither had Bantu Affairs succeeded in getting rid of Kapuuu. Although the Preservation Society would continue to petition for a Crown Prince, soon jettisoning Tjamuaha in favour of SWA citizen Jefta Maherero, the government generally began to sideline the group. From a position of relative security and potential power at the turn of the decade, Karuaera and the Preservationists found themselves increasingly marginalized by the mid-seventies. Headman Nguvauva experienced a similar marginalization as his relationships with the state and Mbanderus continued to crumble. He would, however, be more successful at repositioning himself in a favourable alliance, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The early 1970s were perhaps the moment of the most intense government intervention in Herero affairs. The chaos and power vacuum created by Kutako’s death proved an opportune moment to carry out the imperatives of physical and governmental development. This moment of confusion provided the government an opportunity to intervene directly in the Herero succession question in order to finally marginalize Kapuuu and implement Traditional Authorities policies. Herero leaders’ preoccupation with the chiefship question also permitted Bantu Affairs to begin

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

homeland removals on a somewhat large scale for the first time since the homeland policy had been suggested for SWA in the late 1950s. While withholding water access was a critical means of forcing Hereros into the homeland, the influx of people and animals into Hereroland required serious attention to solving the water problems there. Nevertheless, Hereroland's water situation remained serious - nothing like the developed areas BAD officers reportedly showed to headmen like Hembapu – and it would be a decade before any remotely viable solution would be in working order.

In the early 1970s, Bantu Affairs still struggled with the problem of balancing Herero factionalism as a ruling strategy with the final objective of transforming Herero-speakers into a docile community living harmoniously in Hereroland. South African interventions during this period and the Chiefship politics initially intensified intra-Herero politics along the predictable Big Group/Small Group and Herero/Mbanderu axes. Kapuuo and Hoveka appeared allied against Karuaera and Nguvauva. However, this chapter has demonstrated how forced removals, community authorities, and government ambivalence towards the “Royal House” created significant changes in these seemingly solid alliances. By the end of 1973, Kapuuo and Hoveka remained solidly aligned, with Hoveka's Mbanderus seeing themselves as an integral part of the Herero nation, though still distinctly Mbanderu. However, the Preservation Society had become marginalized, its cause and claims for a “crown prince” becoming more absurd as SWA's political situation verged on conflagration. Nguvauva had lost most of his followers and terminated his fairly secure relationship with the apartheid government. Recognizing the Preservation Society and South African government as sinking ships, he would soon distance himself from them and move on to more promising pastures.

1973 would prove to be a pivotal year in Herero politics. Alliances and fractures among Herero factions and the state began to intensify and would soon radically change over the next three years. The first armed skirmishes with SWAPO in the Caprivi and along the Angolan border, UN calls for sanctions against South Africa, and a growing alliance between the UN and SWAPO, led to a rash of protests, strikes, and uprisings in SWA. The South African government had to walk a fine line in order to maintain control and meet its objectives in SWA.

The government intensified its project of development propaganda and negotiations with the UN on the one hand and continuing policies of ethnic fragmentation on the other. In addition to the 1973 bribes of international news outlets and the purchase of the *Washington Star* that would be uncovered in the 1979 Muldergate Scandal, the Vorster government organized a “Multi-National Advisory Council for SWA” as evidence of a move towards democracy. However, a BAD committee on SWA simultaneously pressed forward with Verwoerdian ethnic homeland policies. They insisted that ethnic consolidation was an essential condition for Herero governmental development. Given the problem of geographical fragmentation, this committee urged,

Efforts must be taken to encourage Hereros from Aminuis, Otjimbingue, and Ovitoto reserves to trek to Hereroland, but compulsion must not be exercised...development that must be undertaken by headquarters in the homelands must be made attractive to the reserve residents to rouse their interest to move

thither. In the abovementioned reserves, only basic services must be provided.⁷⁰⁵

To further this objective of “ethnic consolidation,” and make Hereroland remotely viable for increased settlement, the government (through Bantu Affairs, Waterways, and Area Settlement) began to seriously explore a plan to pipe water from the Okavango River to Hereroland.⁷⁰⁶ The impacts of these alterations in foreign affairs and physical and governmental development on Herero politics will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

⁷⁰⁵ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, unknown author, “Samespreking insake Herero-Aangeleenthede, Maandag 19 November 1973.”

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 7: PIPE DREAMS, 1973-1980

Kapuuo had reached a stalemate with the apartheid government by 1973: he had not managed to become the official Herero Paramount Chief and Bantu Affairs had not been able to marginalize him. Kapuuo remained very much opposed to the apartheid government and it, in turn, considered him one of its most inimical public enemies. Moreover, the specter of SWAPO's communist "terrorism" loomed larger, the UN deepened its commitment to SWA's independent, and international anti-apartheid activism intensified, forcing the South African government to renegotiate its position and its allies as its political hold on SWA began to deteriorate.

These changes in international, regional, and domestic politics deeply impacted intra-Herero politics, Herero/Mbanderu relationships with the state, and apartheid tactics within SWA. This chapter explores the ways in which the highly politicized intra-Herero tensions examined in Chapter Six became deeply entwined with these larger national and international issues. This volatile political milieu forced Herero, Mbanderu, and South African politicians to walk a fine line in their negotiations with one another, the international community, and their own constituents. Water development and debates over identity, authority, and sovereignty would continue to play key roles in competitions for power and contestations over SWA's future during the 1970s.

The South African government, Kapuuo, and Nguvauva shifted their political strategies and alliances in response to alterations in the local, regional, and international political situation. Prime Minister Vorster redirected historical government efforts from encouraging infinitesimal intra-ethnic divisions to focusing on manipulating African politics on SWA's national stage. Although persisting with the homelands policies through the 1970s, the wars raging just outside of South

Africa's borders and the UN's sanctioning of SWAPO's armed struggle meant that Vorster had to make a show of democratic concessions. As will be examined in this chapter, Kapuuo's falling out with the UN and SWAPO would facilitate this objective quite neatly. Increasing international and national isolation demanded that Kapuuo radically re-negotiate his political stance; however, capitalizing on intra-Herero identity politics and apartheid development permitted him to recover and re-group. Finally, these political changes would provide Nguvauva with opportunities to try to improve his position with relation to Kapuuo and the apartheid government and to ensure a favourable position for himself and Mbanderus in the event of Namibia's independence.

As this chapter demonstrates, for all the international and regional political tensions igniting in and around SWA, local politics remained at the center of SWA's politics in the seventies. Water allocation and development would continue to play a significant role in African relations with one another and negotiations with the apartheid state. It would also be critically important to South Africa's delicate balancing act in the 1970s. Local access to boreholes and wells remained a central dimension of these politics, although in the early 1970s, water development in Hereroland became focused on the possibility of building a major pipeline through the homeland first proposed in 1973 at the Prime Minister's Council for SWA.

The Prime Minister's Council for SWA

In March 1973, Kapuuo and SWAPO's internal leader, David Hoveka Merero, pushed through police barriers at the Windhoek Airport to petition Ambassador Kurt Waldheim to investigate workers' conditions in SWA in the wake of the deadly Ovambo labor strikes of late 1972. Kapuuo and Merero had been allies from the days

of the African Improvement Society in the 1950s. The South African police arrested Merero and 100 other SWAPO supporters during the airport incident, but the demonstration had the desired effect on Waldheim. The Ambassador returned to the UN with a renewed commitment to Namibian independence. Two months later, in May 1973 the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that Kapuuo demanded the UN take over SWA in preparation for independence. Bantu Affairs was quite put out about this statement, considering it “decidedly unhelpful for the general welfare of the Herero and other native peoples of SWA.”⁷⁰⁷ The Adjunct Secretary for Community Affairs was, however, more concerned with the newspaper’s reference to Kapuuo as “Head Chief” and sent a statement to this effect to be published in the paper.⁷⁰⁸

In an effort to counteract this rapidly disintegrating state of affairs, Prime Minister Vorster established a “Multi-National Advisory Council for SWA” in March 1973. He intended for the council to demonstrate cooperation between the apartheid government and SWA’s black political leaders in planning SWA’s future. The council met three times in 1973: in Windhoek, Johannesburg, and Cape Town. In addition to various government and white political representatives such as Minister of Bantu Affairs Dr. M.C. Botha, the Advisory Council invited a number of “well-disposed” African leaders from each of SWA’s ethnic groups. These included Dr. Ben Africa of the Rehoboth *Bastervereniging*, Herero Small Group leader David Tjatjitua of Waterberg East, Andrew Kloppers of the Colored Council and president of SWANEUM, Headman Elifas Tjingaete of the Rietfontein Mbanderus, and moderate white pragmatist (and later renegade) Dirk Mudge of SWA’s Executive Committee

⁷⁰⁷ SAB BAO 5/479/F56/17/11 v.1, Adjunct Secty for Community Affairs, J. Serfontein, to Adjunct Secty Departmental Admin, “Berig in Rand Daily Mail van 9 Mei 1973: SWA Chief Favours UN Take Over,” 18 May 1973.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

and NP.⁷⁰⁹ The council excluded Kapuuo's NC, SWAPO, and SWANU as the most vocal African opposition to South African rule, although Kapuuo officially "rejected" the council because of its "ethnic basis."⁷¹⁰

Mbanderu Headman Munjuku Nguvauva was initially a member of the Advisory Council as the government still considered him to be an ally, although they suspected he would not be cooperative. He was still smarting from Bantu Affairs' refusal to support him over the Rietfontein treks and their appointment of Elifas Tjingaete as headman over *his* followers. Nguvauva was initially non-committal about joining the Council and, according to Historian Klaus Dierks, he "related with relish how he and other communities were wined, dined, and feasted with oxen by Vorster" at the Council's first meeting.⁷¹¹ However, considering the possibility that Nguvauva might be a liability, the meeting's organizers wisely scheduled him to speak last. Nguvauva designed his speech to embarrass the South African government. He rejected the Council arguing, "One cannot rebuild a cracked house on weak foundations – one must first tear down the building before one starts anew."⁷¹² Following this, he walked out of the Council meeting.⁷¹³

The second Council meeting in Johannesburg in August focused on development and SWA's Waterways Director gave a lengthy presentation. The Director's speech was heavily influenced by Doxiadis's philosophy on urban

⁷⁰⁹ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/3, "Notule van die 2de Sitting van die Eerste Minister se Adviesraad vir Suidwes-Afrika Gehou te Holiday Inn, Jan Smutslughawe op 16 en 17 Augustus 1973."

⁷¹⁰ Dierks, Klaus. "Nguvauva, Munjuku II, Ovaherero (Ovambanderu) Chief," *Namibia Library of Dr. Klaus Dierks: Data Base of Namibian Biographies*. www.klausdierks.com (25 April 2012).

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Dierks, *Chronology*, p. 141.

planning.⁷¹⁴ Doxiadis was a Greek high-modernist architect best known for his planning of Islamabad circa 1960. The Director of Waterways was particularly interested in Doxiadis's theory of Ekistics, which suited the apartheid state's objectives and philosophy quite well. Ekistics, or the science of human settlement, rejected Le Corbusier's notion of a settlement as a collective machine and rested on the assumption that ideal settlements should be founded on a community's ethnic background and geographic location in order to best incorporate their heritage. As an avant-garde urban planner who extolled the virtues of ethnic settlement and development, Doxiadis was like a gift from heaven to the apartheid state. State planners had long sought to package apartheid in liberal development discourse; separate development, they could now argue, was simply Ekistics.

The Director of Waterways urged the Council, "we must place the special circumstances of local problems in a world context and... approach our water problems in a regional context...I want to test Doxiadis's statement with reference to our water provisioning system in SWA."⁷¹⁵ Using Hereroland as an example, the Director discussed the problems of low rainfall, high evaporation rates, and weak or saline boreholes amid a growing population. He estimated that, to provide for Hereroland's water needs by 1985, approximately 50,000 boreholes would be necessary and would cost roughly seventy million rand. Countering such an absurd suggestion, the Director introduced the proposed Omatako pipeline, which would cost an estimated R32 million and provide water to Hereros at twenty cents per cubic meter.⁷¹⁶ According to Secretary van Onselen's memo to the Minister of Bantu

⁷¹⁴ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/3, "Lesing Gelewer aan die Eerste Minister se Adviesraad vir Suidwes Afrika op 16 Augustus 1973 deur die Direkteur van Waterwese in Suidwes Afrika."

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ One cubic meter of water is approximately 264 U.S. gallons.

Affairs regarding settlement in Hereroland, the pipeline would also be accompanied by nearly a million rand worth of boreholes and excavation dams by 1980.⁷¹⁷

The Omatako pipeline was an effort to appease the international community on the one hand and maintain control over SWA on the other. Changing international, regional, and domestic circumstances demanded that South African planners think seriously about water development on a national, rather than strictly local, scale. State engineers planned to tackle SWA's water issues through a network of three major pipelines or canals supported by periodic retention dams: the Kunene Scheme discussed in Chapter Four, a pipeline from the Fish River in the south, and a pipeline from the Okavango River in the east. All three of these pipelines would ultimately service Windhoek. The Odendaal Report laid out plans for all three lines, but the government only gave the Kunene Scheme immediate attention. The state approved the Omatako, or Eastern National Water Carrier, in 1974 and began construction shortly thereafter. It was completed in 1985. An expensive undertaking, the Omatako pipeline served industrial centers and areas of white settlement such as Grootfontein, Tsumeb, and Windhoek as well as the white farmers living on Hereroland's fringes. However, the Omatako pipeline possessed a curious feature not found on the other pipelines – a diversionary pipe through a native homeland. This was an unusual and expensive choice for a government which had used water shortages to discipline Herero communities for so long.

On a local level, the Omatako pipeline would provide enough water to support expanded settlement, infrastructural development, and a ranching economy in Hereroland. This water diversion to Hereroland was essential to making Hereroland's

⁷¹⁷ SAB BAO 10784 H66/1936 v.3. van Onselen, Secty BAD to Minister BAD, "Ontwikkeling en Vesiging van Hereroland," 26 Mar. 1973.

independence theoretically viable and the homelands policy internationally palatable. However, van Onselen's memo reveals that this diversion would allow further homeland removals by opening up new grazing land, but it was plagued by milkweed and therefore poisonous to livestock.⁷¹⁸ Although the government had no plans to eradicate these toxic plants, the pipeline's diversion suggests that the plan was an effort to placate international critics. Other homelands did not receive such water supplies, even in communities more amenable to the government than the actively hostile Herero Big Group.

Even though it appears that the pipeline's diversion may have been an effort to make Hereroland a model Bantustan, little would change for Hereros. Despite additional water and grazing land, Hereros would still be limited to 100 head of large stock. This was the same stock limit as had initially been set in the reserves when they opened in the 1920s. While stock limits were essential to preventing overstocking and veld degradation, a problem ironically caused by colonial policies of cramming transhumant pastoralists onto inadequate land, they also prevented Hereros from living off of their livestock. The continuation of these limits was one more way of forcing Hereros into the labor market "without using compulsion." The new water scheme was a way to make old policies internationally acceptable and more efficient.

From a regional perspective, the Okavango pipeline served as a potentially necessary lifeline for SWA in the case of escalating violence. The Kunene Scheme, which provided water and hydroelectric power to north-central Namibia, depended on the Calueque Dam in Angola, the first phase of which was completed in 1972. When the Angolan Civil War erupted in 1975, the South African military jealously guarded the dam and used it to justify their intervention into the conflict. As of late 1973,

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

South Africa sensed the very real possibility of losing access to the Calueque Dam. Opening up a second supply line, even if it too was also on the Angolan border, was a sensible idea.

These regional issues and the Cold War's intensification in southern Africa ideologically supported the Prime Minister's Council on SWA. The apartheid government could thank the communist threat for keeping it in power so long. Internationally, the West could not afford totally to alienate South Africa, given communist activity in the region. Nor could the apartheid government risk losing western support against Russian and Cuban backed militant black independence movements. From a domestic perspective, the apartheid government promoted its repressive measures as a guarantee of white safety from the Red Menace and majority rule. Within the context of the Cold War and demands for independence in SWA, SWAPO became "terrorists." Because the UN supported SWAPO, Vorster's government depicted it as an agent of communist evil. The government attempted to draw African support by playing on frustration with the UN's slowness and ineffectiveness as well as many Africans' strong opposition to communism. SWAPO and the UN became common enemies against which only the state could protect.

In addition to water, terrorism was a major theme of the second Council meeting. In a press conference at the end of the meeting, Vorster explained that, in addition to questions of development, race relations, and water provisioning, it was "the unanimous wish of all members of the Council that the residents of the homelands be given the opportunity to actively take part in the eradication of terrorism...[and they] unanimously condemned terrorism in the sharpest language."⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁹ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/3, "Onderhoud met Pers op 17 Augustus 1973 te Holiday Inn Jan Smuts," 17 Aug. 1973.

Dirk Mudge, who would later reject apartheid, stated that he was most impressed by “the unanimous condemnation of terrorism and the desire of [African] people for peace and a stable government, which they consider necessary for homeland development.”⁷²⁰

Several African representatives also made statements regarding the growing political divide in SWA. Andrew Kloppers pointed out, “what sticks with me is the strong stand the Council members have taken against terrorism...[They] have also given their opinions about the UN’s position, which, as a power for peace, permits terrorist hearings in the Trustee Committee meetings at the UN.”⁷²¹ David Bezuidenhout, the Vice President of the Coloured Council, put the matter most forcefully, calling the UN “evil” and complaining, “These people believe hearsay blown up to enormous proportions – things that are altogether unacceptable to a normal healthy brain...the UN is not working in the interests of the non-white people of SWA, but in spreading communist ideologies.”⁷²²

In his statement to the press, Bezuidenhout touched on a raw nerve – the myth that African representatives to the council were government stooges, which they were anxious to dispel. Bezuidenhout concluded his speech by bemoaning that “as soon as someone deviates from the popular trend [in order] to think for himself, he is called a stooge. But if you follow the group that calls you a stooge, they put you on a pedestal and make you into a hero, which is actually just wrong.”⁷²³ Headman Elifas Tjingaete also weighed in: “We are not stooges of the government; we are appointed by our

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Ibid.

own people to further their interests and to this end, we have come to decide the future of our people.”⁷²⁴

The “stooge” issue is slippery. On the one hand, the apartheid government actively attempted to buy the loyalty of African leaders with development and other perks, expecting compliance in return. However, just as the government fanned the flames of “terrorist” hysteria, anti-apartheid activists certainly encouraged the use of the term “stooge” to inflame and polarize the struggle by denying the spectrum of political viewpoints in SWA. By implying blind obedience, the term “stooge” does not account for the possibility that African leaders cooperated with the government as part of a survival strategy, using the system to benefit their communities without necessarily buying into apartheid ideology. It also overlooks the fact that many African leaders and communities strongly objected to SWAPO’s political stance and/or international interference in SWA’s problems. Despite a plethora of political parties and interest groups, Africans in SWA were increasingly forced to choose between the apartheid state and SWAPO over the course of the 1970s.

When the Council met for the third and final time in Cape Town in September 1973, Kapuuo made a statement rejecting the Council and its resolutions on behalf of Herero society and the National Convention. Kapuuo’s statement not only reinforced his position as de facto Herero Paramount but also reiterated the link between Herero ethnic identity and opposition to apartheid. However, Kapuuo made this statement after a meeting with Dirk Mudge, then a senior member of SWA’s Executive Committee and acting Administrator of SWA. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

“both men expressed support for contact and dialogue at a responsible level to solve problems of SWA. They both rejected force.”⁷²⁵

This meeting reflects a fairly radical change in position by both Kapuuo and government representatives in SWA. Throughout the sixties, Kapuuo generally refused to cooperate with or even speak to government officers. Likewise, Mudge’s meeting with Kapuuo was something of a first as government officials would formerly never have deigned to meet with African leaders on relatively egalitarian and cordial terms, although Vorster was somewhat more open to this practice than his predecessor. The meeting further demonstrates the growing rift between Kapuuo and Nujoma’s SWAPO (Kapuuo was still on good terms with Meroro and his wing) as well as Kapuuo’s awareness of a political need to move to a more moderate position in order to survive against Nujoma. Dirk Mudge, who began to move away from the NP ideologically around 1972, likewise recognized the necessity of reaching out to African leaders in an attempt to stave off overwhelming black support for SWAPO and potential civil war. Their mutual rejection of the use of force repudiated SWAPO’s armed wing, the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), as well as a commitment to non-violent negotiations. The UN’s refusal to grant Kapuuo’s petition for recognition of the NC alongside SWAPO in 1973 pushed him even further into the moderate camp. Two months later, in November, the UN recognized SWAPO as the sole voice of black Namibians.

Irreconcilable Differences & Tentative Parleys

The likelihood of violence in SWA skyrocketed in 1974. The growing possibility of civil war in Angola had the potential to stimulate revolutionary

⁷²⁵ SAB BAO 5/479/F56/17/11 v.1, *Rand Daily Mail*, “Hereros Reject PM’s Council,” 27 Sept. 1973.

sentiment in SWA and provide PLAN fighters a place from which to attack SWA. Waves of arrests of SWAPO members in early 1974 heightened tensions in SWA. The South African Police arrested David Hoveka Meroro in January 1974 and took him to Pretoria, where he was tortured and detained in solitary confinement for five months. By June, six to ten thousand Namibians, mostly SWAPO adherents, had fled SWA to Angola. This exodus significantly increased SWAPO's capacity for armed struggle and extended its military front by over 1,500 km, from Ruacana Falls to the Caprivi Strip.⁷²⁶ Looming guerrilla warfare combined with the possibility of expulsion from the UN led Vorster to instruct A.H. Du Plessis, an NP hardliner, member of Vorster's cabinet, and Chairman of SWA's Executive Committee, to announce that whites must start talks with black leaders to ensure SWA's future.⁷²⁷

Amid this mounting tension, the government began actively, if tentatively, promoting communications with Kapuuo. Whereas Bantu Affairs previously encouraged the idea of a hereditary Herero Paramount Chief as a rival for Kapuuo, they began to change their position in 1974. The Society for the Preservation of the House of Maherero jettisoned Frederick Tjamuaha as Crown Prince in May 1974 and selected Jephta Maherero as his replacement. The Preservationists soon began to lobby the government to recognize him as Herero Paramount.⁷²⁸ In response, the Secretary of Bantu Affairs cautioned the Minister, "As a consequence of the changed attitude of Clemens Kapuuo, it is necessary that this matter [of Jephta Maherero] must be very carefully handled and an over hasty decision can only cause problems.

⁷²⁶ Dierks, 143.

⁷²⁷ Ibid, 144. Grotper, 114.

⁷²⁸ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Secty of Preservation Society J.G. Katjirungu to HHSK, "Herstigting van Tjamuaha/Maherero Koninklike (sic) Huis: en Aanwysing van die Kroonopvolger," 6 Jun. 1974.

Clemens still considers himself to be the Herero leader...”⁷²⁹ Budack, the state ethnologist, recommended recognizing Kapuuo as the Herero political leader alongside Jephtha Maherero as the traditional leader. He did, however, note that such a concept was utterly foreign to Hereros and that each side considered its candidate as both political and traditional leader while seeing the other as grasping pretenders.⁷³⁰

Kapuuo had bigger fish to fry than Jephtha Maherero and the Preservation Society. After the UN denied the NC recognition in late 1973, Kapuuo travelled to West Germany in June 1974 to examine the possibility of establishing international NC offices in Bonn, London, and New York.⁷³¹ When he met with West German officials, he did not ask for, and was not offered, assistance for the NC. However, shortly after Kapuuo’s return to SWA, in December 1974, Nujoma, leader of SWAPO’s external wing, pressured its internal wing to withdraw from the NC, crippling the organization.

Immediately after SWAPO’s defection, Kapuuo made an announcement that underscored the deeply rooted ethnic factionalism of Namibian politics. A week before Ovamboland’s homeland elections, Kapuuo made a statement directed to Kurt Waldheim and UN commissioner for SWA, Sean McBride, publically accusing SWAPO of only representing Ovambo interests. He cited their resignation from the NC as evidence “they are not willing to cooperate with other blacks.”⁷³² He further demanded Ovamboland’s partition from SWA and exclusion from the liberation

⁷²⁹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Secty BAD to Minister BAD, “Koerantberig: Leierkrisis by die Herero: Ministeriële Navraag 6/2/4 Herero van 19 Julie van 1974,” 15 Aug. 1974.

⁷³⁰ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Budack to HBSK, “Hereroleierskap: Kommentaar deur Ethnoloog,” 15 Aug. 1974.

⁷³¹ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Secty for Foreign Affairs to SA Ambassador to West Germany, “Mr. Kapuuo’s Visit to West Germany,” 5 Jul. 1974. See also SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Adjunct Secty BAD to Secty BAD, “Mnr. Kapuuo se Besoek aan Wes-Duitsland,” 23 Aug. 1974.

⁷³² SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, *Rand Daily Mail*, “Kapuuo Calls for SWA to be Split,” 8 Jan. 1975.

struggle on the grounds that Ovambos had never lost their land. Framing SWAPO as just another oppressor, Kapuuu contended, “The tribes of southern and central SWA have suffered for more than 70 years under German and South African governments. They would not allow their rights, their land, and their future to be decided by the political organization of just one tribe, the Ovambos, who have not been involved in the long struggle.”⁷³³ He concluded, “The southern tribes had fought colonial wars...and their land was taken by white farmers. But the Ovambo homeland has remained intact.”⁷³⁴

Kapuuu was clearly stung by SWAPO’s departure from the NC, which he considered treacherous. His announcement and its timing suggest that it was also made in retaliation against the UN for only recognizing SWAPO. Rather than the representative of all Namibians, Kapuuu implicated the UN in favouritism and corruption by insisting that SWAPO was an ethnically based party. More importantly, however, Kapuuu’s statement reflects the importance of Herero land claims and a history of violence to Herero identity and claim-making in the anti-colonial, anti-apartheid struggle. In Kapuuu’s formulation, Ovambos had no grievances (migrant labor apparently did not count) and therefore no right to either command the resistance campaign or rule independent Namibia. As well, rejecting SWAPO on these grounds was intended to differentiate Ovambos from central and southern Namibians, throw their claims to national representation into question, and encourage non-Ovambos to support Kapuuu. Although Kapuuu was arguably becoming more cosmopolitan and concerned with “national” issues in the early seventies, he nevertheless remained deeply rooted in Herero history and Herero concerns.

⁷³³ Ibid.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

The apartheid government quickly attempted to capitalize on the NC's fission and Kapuuo's polemics. The Commissioner-General for the Native Peoples of SWA, Jannie de Wet, surmised, "the thinking of the NC must now fall in line with that of many whites," who supported the partition of Ovamboland as the answer to SWA's problems. Such a solution would hopefully dispel violence and show the world that South Africa was not afraid of decolonization. Besides, because Ovamboland was landlocked and possessed no resources beyond a considerable unskilled labor force, it would have to remain dependent on the industrial centers of SWA and South Africa for survival. Nevertheless, Bantu Affairs also feared Kapuuo could fall from grace after his outburst and the NP split. They quickly contemplated supporting Jephtha Maherero in order to gain Herero support. In early January 1975, the Department of Community Affairs and the Commissioner-General of SWA's Native Peoples, encouraged BAD to recognize Jephtha Maherero claiming, "[it] can bring security among the people and further their cooperation with the government in spite of criticism by Kapuuo who is busy quickly falling into decline."⁷³⁵

Kapuuo seemed to decline precipitously in February 1975 when the more radical members of the NC, such as SWANU and the Rehoboth Volkspartei, ousted Kapuuo as president and re-formed with SWAPO's internal wing to form the Namibia National Convention (NNC). The HHSK reported that after the NC's break-up and Kapuuo's anti-SWAPO remarks, "SWAPO threatened to kill Kapuuo and burn down his shop and his house. As a consequence of these threats, Kapuuo has brought in

⁷³⁵ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Adjunct Secty Community Affairs to Secty BAD van Onselen, "Dringend: Die Volgende Teleks is van Sy Edele die Kommissaris-Generaal, Suidwes-Afrika Ontvang," 7 Jan. 1975.

people from the homeland to protect him.”⁷³⁶ After these threats, the HHSK noted that Hereros in Waterberg East enforced a total boycott of a store owned by a Meroro, presumably a relative and possible supporter of SWAPO’s David Hoveka Meroro.⁷³⁷ Nevertheless, Kapuuo gathered NUDO and the Herero Chief’s Council (he chaired both organizations) along with the more conservative groups in the NC to form the National Convention of Namibia (NCN).⁷³⁸ Still staunchly anti-South African, the NCN differentiated itself from the NNC by rejecting armed struggle and declaring its willingness to engage in talks with South African leaders.

The Turnhalle Conference

SWA’s most famous talks, the so-called Turnhalle Conference, named after the German colonial military gymnastics hall where it was held, convened in September 1975. The conference’s ostensible objective was to devise a constitution providing some kind of “democratic” representation for all racial and ethnic groups. However, being the apartheid government’s brainchild, this constitution would simultaneously ensure white supremacy and South African control while attempting to avoid SWAPO’s leftist radicalism and offset the sheer weight of the Ovambo population. Vorster began planning the conference sometime in late 1974. Intending to foil SWAPO, he contrived the conference to represent the broad spectrum of

⁷³⁶ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, HHSK, “Verslag deur Hoofhererosakekommissaris, Okakarara, met Betrekking tot die Huidige Posisie van Herero/-Bandero Aangeleenthede met Spesiale Verwysing na die Posisie van Clemens Kapuuo en die Koningshuis,” ca. 12 Jul. 1975.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Other groups in NCN included the Rehoboth Liberation Party, a conservative breakaway faction of the Rehoboth Volkspartei, the National Independence Party, and the Damara United Front. The latter was widely suspected of having been created by the Bureau of State Services (BOSS) to ensure homeland implementation in Damaraland. See Grotpeter, 83-4.

Namibian society by inviting delegates from every ethnic category in the territory. Kapuuo's harangue of SWAPO as an Ovambo-dominated party set the stage nicely.

Preparations began in earnest in May 1975 and included a discursive about-face by the government. On May 5, the government held a symposium to prepare a hand-selected group of white NP bureaucrats for the changes to come. The main players included A.H. du Plessis, Dirk Mudge, and Eben van Zijl. Van Zijl was, like Mudge, a young and rising NP member. In 1975, he was the Vice-Chairman of the NP in SWA as well as a member of SWA's Executive Committee. However, he was much more conservative than Mudge. At the symposium, Mudge and van Zijl addressed the gathering and declared that South Africa had had no rights over SWA since the days of JBM Hertzog.⁷³⁹ This shocking statement was followed a few weeks later by Vorster's public contention that the peoples of SWA should determine their own future and that independence was an option. He was, however, sure to reject possible UN oversight of SWA.⁷⁴⁰

These South African leaders set to work recruiting suitable African representatives for the Turnhalle Conference. The representatives, chosen from each ethnic group, were, without exception, politically moderate. More often than not, selected delegates did not represent their ethnic group's majority view. Therefore, SWAPO, which easily commanded the Ovambo majority, was not invited to participate. The Turnhalle's composition was designed to ensure the prolonged ethnic fragmentation and the entrenchment of the homelands policy under the guise of national unity and democracy. Anxious to legitimate the conference, organizers strove hard to get Kapuuo on board.

⁷³⁹ Dierks, 146.

⁷⁴⁰ Dierks, 147.

Although Kapuuo had become politically isolated in the world of radical African politics, he maintained significant political purchase, a fact of which he was well aware. He was the only African leader not aligned with the radical movement to have a significant following and international recognition. While SWAPO and the NNC naturally rejected the Turnhalle, Kapuuo saw opportunities to negotiate for Herero lands, to achieve political power on the national stage, and the chance to gain formal recognition as the Herero Paramount Chief. He drove a hard bargain with the NP, gaining thirty-four Herero delegates to the Conference; in other words, twenty percent of the delegates represented seven percent of SWA's total population.⁷⁴¹ He also insisted that the government allow Hereros to remain in Aminuis reserve, abolishing the Tswana homeland outlined in the Odendaal Plan, in order to win Herero support.⁷⁴²

Around May 1975, both Kapuuo and the South African government set about attempting to dissipate the intra-ethnic factionalism in Herero society. Before formalizing relations with Kapuuo, the state wished to determine the exact extent of his following. The HHSK employed the state ethnologist, the Department of Information, the Bureau of State Services, the Security Police, district Magistrates, and municipal officers to this end.⁷⁴³ Budack, the ethnologist, produced a detailed intelligence report on every major Herero community complete with information on each influential person in each neighbourhood, their age, marital status, occupation, political affiliation, and attitude towards Kapuuo.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴¹ Grotpeter, 526.

⁷⁴² Dierks, 147.

⁷⁴³ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, HHSK, "Verslag deur Hoofhererosakekommissaris, Okakarara, met Betrekking tot die Huidige Posisie van Herero/-Bandero Aangeleenthede met Spesiale Verwysing na die Posisie van Clemens Kapuuo en die Koningshuis," ca. 12 Jul. 1975. See also Gewalt, "Who Killed Clemens Kapuuo," p. 565.

⁷⁴⁴ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Budack, untitled document, ca. May 1975.

Budack's report demonstrates overwhelming Herero support for Kapuuo and dwindling numbers for the Preservation society and other small group leaders, including Mbanderu Headman Munjuku Nguvauva. The HHSK insisted, "Were it not for Kapuuo's changed attitude, he would not have received the amount of support he now has. The dark horses like the small group and royal house would not have remained irrelevant. Kapuuo has done what these other well-disposed people always did before (namely, cooperate with the state)."⁷⁴⁵ Although the government began to put off the Preservation Society because of their limited support and Kapuuo's changed position, the HHSK was nevertheless unprepared officially to recognize Kapuuo. He informed the Secretary of Bantu Affairs, "We have no choice but to accept [Kapuuo] as the undisputed Herero leader, but not as Paramount Chief. My opinion is that the 'stool' of Paramount Chief [should] remain vacant until a legal claimant, who is accepted as such by the people, claims the stool."⁷⁴⁶

The HHSK's final report on the state of Herero society provided further clarification on Herero factionalism as of 1975. Kapuuo commanded nearly seventy-five percent of all Otjiherero-speakers' support. Elifas Tjingaete's Rietfontein Mbanderus comprised the largest constituency outside of Kapuuo's influence amongst the Otjiherero-speaking population. However, Kapuuo wisely made peace with Tjingaete and gained the Rietfontein Mbanderus' support.⁷⁴⁷ The HHSK reported that Kapuuo recognized the distinctiveness of Tjingate's Mbanderus as a separate community and made no effort to influence them. Therefore, the HHSK reported,

⁷⁴⁵ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, HHSK, "Verslag deur Hoofhererosakekommissaris, Okakarara, met Betrekking tot die Huidige Posisie van Herero/-Bandero Aangeleenthede met Spesiale Verwysing na die Posisie van Clemens Kapuuo en die Koningshuis," ca. 12 Jul. 1975.

⁷⁴⁶ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK to Secty BAD, "Hereroleierskap: Vertoë deur die Vereniging vir die Behoud van die Koningshuis," 8 Aug. 1975.

⁷⁴⁷ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, HHSK, "Verslag deur Hoofhererosakekommissaris, Okakarara, met Betrekking tot die Huidige Posisie van Herero/-Bandero Aangeleenthede met Spesiale Verwysing na die Posisie van Clemens Kapuuo en die Koningshuis," ca. 12 Jul. 1975.

“The Mbanderus at Rietfontein are altogether prepared to cooperate with the Hereros to form an overarching government so long as it doesn’t impede their progress.”⁷⁴⁸

Although Tjingaete attempted to reconcile with Nguvauva and bring about communication between Kapuuo and the Preservation Society, such efforts were unsuccessful. In fact, the Preservation Society sent Jephta Maherero to the US in June 1975 to achieve some kind of international recognition.⁷⁴⁹ Kapuuo and Tjatjitua’s Small Group at Okamatapati did however reconcile in August 1975.⁷⁵⁰

Despite Kapuuo’s growing popularity in Herero society, the HHSK was uncomfortable with the degree of support the government appeared to be giving him. He lamented that the small group, who “[were] well-disposed to the government, happily desire to develop on the basis of separate development, reject foreign interference, and search for peaceful solutions,” should be denied the chance to send representatives to the Turnhalle because they did not support Kapuuo. The HHSK further contended, “Kapuuo and his people have not recognized the government of South Africa as the legal authority of SWA. They look to the UN for their freedom. They have now changed. They made the following remark: ‘We have made peace with the government; our only enemy is SWAPO.’”⁷⁵¹ However, SWAPO was beginning to make incursions among Munjuku Nguvauva’s followers as well as Herero youth, particularly students and teachers at the Paulinum High School in Otjimbingue. Budack and the HHSK referenced rumours and complaints floating

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ SAB BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2, HHSK to Secty BAD & Director of Homelands, “In Opvorging van my Teleks van 4 Augustus Volg Nou due Nuusberig soos deur Clemens Kapuuo en Tjingaete aan die SAUK Verstrekk is,” 6 Aug. 1975.

⁷⁵¹ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, HHSK, “Verslag deur Hoofhererosakekommissaris, Okakarara, met Betrekking tot die Huidige Posisie van Herero/-Bandero Aangeleenthede met Spesiale Verwysing na die Posisie van Clemens Kapuuo en die Koningshuis,” ca. 12 Jul. 1975.

around Herero society that Kapuuo was dictatorial, cabbaged NUDO funds for personal use, and had been “bought by the Boers.”⁷⁵²

The Turnhalle Conference convened on 1 September, 1975 with 156 ethnically delineated delegates meeting to discuss a constitution. Many of the delegates had also been members of the Prime Minister’s Council, such as Dr. Ben Africa and Andrew Kloppers. Although Elifas Tjingaete of the Rietfontein Hereros attended with four other delegates, the Herero Small Group was not represented, having been marginalized to accommodate and appease Kapuuo.⁷⁵³ SWAPO and NNC protests inaugurated the meeting and led to another wave of SWAPO arrests.⁷⁵⁴ All Turnhalle proceedings were held *in camera* and delegates were sworn to oaths of secrecy. This was hardly an auspicious start for promoting a transparent democratic government.

The threats of communism and Ovambo domination provided a convenient justification for the government to maintain and promote an apartheid structure for SWA’s government. Fearing Ovambos would vote as a block for SWAPO, the meeting never discussed a one-man, one-vote system of franchise. Instead, the meeting proposed voting by ethnic blocks, with some system of balance to prevent Ovambo dominance and maintain significant white power. Ironically, South Africa’s divide and conquer policies were largely responsible for the ethnic blocking in SWA that now threatened to derail South African control. Moreover, this government that

⁷⁵² Ibid. See also SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Budack, untitled document, ca. May 1975. The regional representative for the Information Department also mentioned rumours of people calling Kapuuo a sell-out and the growth of radical youth movements among Otjiherero speakers in the Kaokoveld. See SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, J.J. Jonker, Regional Representative to D.G. Grobler, Secty for Information, “Politieke Groeperinge in Kaokoland,” 12 Jun. 1975.

⁷⁵³ After Kapuuo’s reconciliation with David Tjatjitua, the latter initially planned to attend the conference, but later withdrew in an attempt to act as a neutral go-between in an effort to reconcile Kapuuo with Rev. Karuaera.

⁷⁵⁴ Dierks, 147.

the NP delegates proposed was the one outlined in the Odendaal Plan, with a few cosmetic changes. Despite a national parliament to which all ethnic groups would send representatives, South Africa would continue to control, or at least heavily influence, national administration. Homeland governments, described as a federal system, comprised the second administrative tier. Finally, community authorities, like those in Rietfontein and Okamatapati, would form the local government.

Kapuuo's participation in such discussions, so obviously based on ethnic factionalism and apartheid ideology, contrast sharply with his criticism of the Prime Minister's Council just a year before. His decision to take a leading role in this conference reflects the considerable degree of change in SW African politics during 1974 and 1975. Kapuuo certainly had personal vested interests in cooperating with the Turnhalle Conference. First, it granted him access to political power and backing after becoming estranged from the NC. This support provided him a potential opportunity to defeat Nujoma and rise to prominence in a reformed SWA. Kapuuo's about-face drew considerable respect from whites, who now viewed him as a moderate, intelligent, and well-spoken foil for Nujoma's radicalism, which seemed to portend doom for whites in SWA. Second, cooperation with the South African government offered Kapuuo the chance for recognition as Paramount Chief, which would ideally provide both the apartheid state and Kapuuo a kind of "indigenous" or "African" legitimacy. He had other, more altruistic, motives as well. Participating in the Turnhalle allowed Kapuuo to use his not inconsiderable influence to push for governmental reform from within. Finally, Kapuuo's cooperation bolstered Herero people's position within a South African dominated but reformed state, a position they would likely not have if SWAPO came to power.

Dirk Mudge, rapidly developing ever more liberal leanings, chaired the Turnhalle Conference. Mudge saw his role as a mediator between blacks and whites and he was increasingly convinced of the need for ethnic and racial integration at all levels of society. This proposition logically demanded apartheid's total dismemberment in SWA. Fearing Mudge's dangerous liberalism, Prime Minister Vorster quickly took action. In November 1975, Vorster ordered Du Plessis to relinquish his cabinet post and return to Windhoek to lead the NP delegation at the talks. According to Grotper, "Vorster wanted Dirk Mudge out of the leadership post because Vorster considered Mudge to be too sympathetic towards blacks."⁷⁵⁵ Du Plessis's return to SWA and the Conference soon led to a rift between Du Plessis and Van Zijl on one hand and Mudge on the other. Mudge remained at the Turnhalle Conference in an effort to seek actual constitutional reform and Namibian independence.

The Turnhalle Conference continued over the next two years. Opposition to the talks resulted in the Okahandja National Unity Conference in November 1975. This conference made for strange bedfellows – SWAPO and the NNC on the left meeting with far right groups marginalized by Kapuuo's alliance with the government, such as the Preservation Society, Nguvauva's Mbanderus, and the Vaalgras Hereros. Over the next two years, hostility towards Kapuuo and increasing frustration over South Africa's fickle treatment encouraged several members of the Preservation Society and Nguvauva's Mbanderus to join SWAPO outright.

In 1976, the Turnhalle attempted to gain international approval for their constitution. Nearly forty delegates travelled to the US to convince the US government and the UN that the conference represented all of SW African society.

⁷⁵⁵ Grotper, 114.

This visit was strategically timed. Angola had just become independent at the end of 1975 and the country had immediately erupted into civil war. The Turnhalle delegation attempted to present their plan as a peaceful solution to a situation that would otherwise, almost certainly, dissolve into violence. Drawing on Cold War tensions, the delegation further pointed out the close alliance between SWAPO and Angola's Russian-backed MPLA. However, the Turnhalle delegation damaged its cause by consistently describing its mission as saving SWA from SWAPO. SWAPO's international influence within the UN, and even with the US, had continued to grow despite US support for South Africa's invasion of Angola in 1975. Henry Kissinger and the UN rejected the Turnhalle proposals on the grounds that they could not be truly representative since SWAPO had been excluded. They pushed for an independent, unitary Namibia based on a system of universal franchise.

Protests at the Paulinum

While national and international politics changed quickly in SWA, the question remains of how everyday Hereros responded to Kapuuo's actions, his changed relationships with the state and the UN, and SWAPO's growing influence. A series of events beginning in May 1976 centered on the Paulinum High School in Otjimbingue demonstrate the extent to which these broader political changes had become entwined with local Herero politics. These events also reveal how these larger national, regional, and international politics became folded into the land restitution paradigm.

As mentioned above, pro-SWAPO/anti-Kapuuo sentiment grew most rapidly in Herero society at the Paulinum in Otjimbingue, run by the Rhenish Mission (now

called the Evangelical Lutheran Church or ELK). The Paulinum's headmaster, Rev. Zephania Kameeta, was a Herero and Chairman of the NNC. He presided over Kapuuo's ejection from the NC. He was also an officer in SWAPO's internal wing and the leading proponent of Liberation Theology in SWA. Although Otjimbingue was in the Okambahe Reserve and therefore part of Damaraland, it boasted a significant Herero population as the seat of the Zeraua clan. The Zerauas, historically dissatisfied with what they perceived as the Mahereros' high-handed attitude, generally supported Kapuuo as a moderate and because "he was always smart enough to stay out of their affairs."⁷⁵⁶ The government had appointed Kapuuo's supporter, Aron Kahiko, as their headman against their wishes. Kahiko's over-zealous and despotic tendencies soon made him contentious, particularly once he started persecuting the Paulinum.

In May 1976, Kapuuo and other Herero leaders decided to hold a meeting on the school grounds to discuss the Turnhalle Conference, although Kapuuo was out of the country and did not attend. Both Kapuuo and Aron Kahiko invited the Otjimbingue Superintendent, Mr. Balt. In his report on the matter, Balt lamented, "Unfortunately there was very little discussion over the summit (Turnhalle)."⁷⁵⁷ Aron Kahiko spoke first. According to Balt, Kahiko "had a huge rant against the Paulinum and all Germans."⁷⁵⁸ Kahiko accused the German missionaries running the school of atrocities committed by German soldiers during the Genocide, placing particular emphasis on Herero land theft. He further stated that "he knew well that the people from the Paulinum were all SWAPO and now teach the students SWAPO's doctrine [and he] wanted to warn the German teachers not to come here and preach SWAPO,

⁷⁵⁶ SAB BAO 8/315/X56/17, Budack, untitled document, ca. May 1975.

⁷⁵⁷ NAN AHE 18/N1/15/4, Supt. Balt to BSK Karibib, "Distriksadministrasie: Vergaderings: Otjimbingue," 16 May 1976.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

but just God's word, otherwise, they will be tossed out of the land."⁷⁵⁹ He demanded to know why Ovambo students could not learn in their own land and insisted on the Paulinum's closure.⁷⁶⁰ He concluded his speech by warning everyone to leave Otjimbingue: "It is Hereroland and doesn't belong to SWAPO."⁷⁶¹

After Kahiko sat down, Balt reported that Fanuel Kozonguizi, formerly of SWANU but now Kapuuu's legal counsel, also condemned SWAPO. Kozonguizi was perhaps the most knowledgeable and legitimate person to speak out about SWAPO and SWA's domestic and international affairs. He was a founding member of SWAPO and had been close to SWAPO leaders such as Toivo Ya-Toivo in Cape Town in the late 1950s. As a member of the Herero Chief's Council at the same time, he represented the Hereros at the UN with Rev. Michael Scott. He was also a founding member of SWANU, although he resigned from that organization in 1966. Kozonguizi had travelled widely promoting Namibian independence, attended a host of international conferences on decolonization, and knew Namibia's liberation politics inside and out. According to Balt, Kozonguizi attempted to disillusion the Hereros and Paulinum students of SWAPO's leftist ideology. He described the SWAPO detention camps for "traitors" in Zambia.⁷⁶² Kozonguizi further contended the Hereros "must not wait on the UN because they haven't managed to do anything in thirty years and made no progress in the last year. It is a very weak organization; they just talk and nothing is ever done."⁷⁶³

These two speeches reveal much about mid-1970s Herero politics. Both Kahiko and Kozonguizi framed SWAPO as a potential oppressor of the Herero

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Ibid. Christian Williams' recent dissertation explores the experiences of SWAPO detainees and confirms that they were overwhelmingly of non-Ovambo ethno-linguistic origin.

⁷⁶³ Ibid.

people. By linking SWAPO to the German Genocide and Herero land claims resulting from that era, Kahiko's speech drew SWAPO into a linear narrative of a succession of Herero oppressors depriving them of rights and freedom. The very real metaphor of land encompassed such persecution. This narrative firmly rooted Herero identity in the historical grievances of colonial Genocide and land theft. Secondly, Kahiko's sentiments illustrate the lack of a cohesive Namibian identity or sense of unity. Although South African colonial and apartheid policies were undoubtedly overwhelmingly responsible for this, Herero political claims and demands were always first and foremost about Hereros rather than Africans in general. Land restitution claims precluded any Ovambo participation in Herero liberation.

The quick splintering of Namibian liberation politics shattered the brief moment of unification in the late fifties and early sixties. Kapuuu's ousting by the NC and his criticism of SWAPO reinforced Herero anti-Ovambo/anti-SWAPO sentiments. While Kozonguizi's distrust of SWAPO was based on his personal experience rather than just emotion, his comments about the UN demonstrate Herero disillusionment with the organization. After all, Kutako had initiated the petitioning campaign and brought SWA's situation to the world's attention when Ovambo chiefs blindly supported the apartheid government. Hereros had patiently believed and trusted in the UN despite decades of inefficacy. To have Kapuuu's NC rejected in favour of SWAPO as the only legitimate representative of Namibians must have been a significant affront and blow for much of Herero society.

Kameeta and the students at the Paulinum did not take these hostile speeches lying down. A few days later, Kameeta, Daniel Tjongarero (the new leader of SWAPO's internal wing), thirteen students, and "a long-haired white" protested outside of Balt's office. The Superintendent called the police to stop the protestors

with their “illegible signs and slogans of Namibia, shouting and expressing unfounded accusations.”⁷⁶⁴ Balt reported that Aron Kahiko and his advisors complained that afternoon that the Paulinum was “busy instigating and inciting the people to create difficulties.”⁷⁶⁵ The Superintendent also intimated to the BSK in Karibib that the Security Police had been investigating activities at the school.

In late September, sensing an opportunity to strike against the Paulinum, Aron Kahiko asked Superintendent Balt if he had heard about the seventeen Hereros arrested in Okakarara for housing two SWAPO members (“terrorists”). Balt recorded, “In the same breath [Kahiko] asked if the government knew how many terrorists (SWAPOs) were being housed at the Paulinum [and] if the government was aware that the goat-bearded men who stay alone might also be housing terrorists.”⁷⁶⁶ Balt confirmed these two men were indeed known to be SWAPO members and did indeed receive a number of visitors, but did not mention their known involvement in any subversive activities. Kahiko nevertheless insisted that the two men lived alone in a remote area “for evil [purposes].”⁷⁶⁷ He also stated that as soon as Kapuuu came back from abroad (presumably his trip to the US with the Turnhalle) the two of them would “act against the Paulinum.”⁷⁶⁸

Kahiko’s campaign against the Paulinum was presumably directed at Kameeta for his role in expelling Kapuuu from the NC, and it appears to have been accompanied by growing Herero hostility towards SWAPO members and sympathisers. In his capacity as NNC President, Kameeta wrote to Kahiko as

⁷⁶⁴ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/2, Superintendent Balt to BSK Karibib, “Bantoe Politiek en Onrus: Klagte Teen die Paulinum Teologiese Opleidingsentrum van die ELK,” 31 Aug. 1976.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁶ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/3, Superintendent Balt to BSK, “Bantoe Politiek en Onrus: Teen die Paulinum: Otjimbingue,” 29 Sept. 1976.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

Otjimbingue Headman and NUDO district president, calling him out for forsaking his responsibility for “the wellbeing of all inhabitants in this area, irrespective of their political or religious affiliation” and turning the tables on Kahiko’s designation of SWAPOs as terrorists.⁷⁶⁹ Kameeta’s reference to religious affiliation insinuates that Kahiko had been intimidating Hereros who maintained membership in the ELK rather than joining the Herero *Oruвано* Church. The Reverend continued to discuss the “escalation of violence against SWANU and SWAPO members, which is occurring mainly in the Okakarara and Aminuis reserves.”⁷⁷⁰ Because SWANU and SWAPO were NNC members, he unequivocally contended, “It is impossible for the NNC to be silent in view of these childish and antiquated ‘political’ practices. We are also aware that what you are doing bears full approval of the South African government and to its utmost satisfaction...we can’t tolerate these actions of spiritual terrorism anymore.”⁷⁷¹

Kameeta’s letter demonstrates that Herero opposition toward NNC members or sympathisers was not limited to Kahiko’s activities around the Paulinum, but were widespread across Hereroland and Herero society. Events at the school received considerable government and public attention due to the Paulinum’s importance and Kameeta’s prestige. This escalating violence at the school and across Hereroland reflected the ways in which on-going Herero and Mbanderu intra-ethnic antagonism became enmeshed with national politics and inter-ethnic factionalism in SWA. Members of the Herero Small Group as well as Nguvauva’s Mbanderus were beginning to support SWAPO. Consequently, these factions received the brunt of Herero pro-Kapuuo ire.

⁷⁶⁹ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/3, Rev. Kameeta to Aron Kahiko, “RE: Looming Violence in this Area,” 4 Oct. 1976.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid. Underline in original.

Secondly, further evidence bears out Kameeta's accusation that Kahiko acted with the knowledge and approval of the South African government. The BSK at Karibib specifically requested of Balt that "[Kahiko] must please be thanked again for his positive cooperation."⁷⁷² As Kahiko's activities generated more and more hostility from Kameeta and Otjimbingue's Herero and Damara residents, Balt confirmed that the government intervened in his appointment as headman: "The biggest mistake was allowing His Honor, Minister M.C. Botha, [to] appoint Aron Kahiko as headman. The Hereros were against him and are still so now...now that the residents know he was an appointed headman, they look for faults, and don't make a mistake, they find faults. The opposition party now claims that he was just appointed as a member of the alliance (Kapuuo's cooperation with the government)."⁷⁷³

Kameeta led a delegation of 120 Hereros and five Damaras to Superintendent Balt to protest Kahiko's leadership and to demand his removal. The strength of this deputation demonstrates the extent of Herero opposition to the headman – Kahiko only mustered seven followers at this meeting. Balt reported that Herero dissatisfaction against Kahiko stemmed from his insistence that he sign their hated passes to work in Walvis Bay. One such worker "cursed" Kahiko by stating that he "wasn't a Herero, but a Damara that was made into a big deal by the Hereros."⁷⁷⁴ As Hereros often looked down on Damaras, who had served as Herero slaves in the precolonial era, this statement intentionally insulted Kahiko by calling his identity into question. In spite of this name-calling, Otjimbingue Hereros generally cooperated with their Damara neighbours and wished to appoint a Damara headman to replace

⁷⁷² NAN AHE 66 N1/9/3, BSK Karibib to Superintendent Balt, "Bantoe Politiek en Onrus: Paulinum Teologiese Seminarie: Otjimbingue," 12 Oct, 1976.

⁷⁷³ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/2, Supt. Balt, "Kommentaar deur F.R. Balt," 31 Jan. 1977.

⁷⁷⁴ NAN AHE 66 N1/9/2, Supt. Balt to BSK Karibib, "Oproerigheid en Onrus: Otjimbingue," 31 Jan. 1977.

Kahiko.⁷⁷⁵ Kahiko's supporters then violently beat this protester with kerries. Balt reported that although he considered Kahiko to be a good headman, "I would not have appointed him and would hold an election to diffuse the dissatisfaction and all the nasty things that are going on here."⁷⁷⁶ Kahiko nevertheless stayed on as Headman and continued to oppose anything related to the Paulinum.⁷⁷⁷

Dreams Deferred & Dreams Fulfilled

The cordial relationship between the government and Kapuu/Hereros began to grow strained around 1977. Despite Kapuu's general cooperation with the state, development in Hereroland remained largely fictional due to the sharp recession and economic sanctions of the 1970s combined with efforts to move Hereros into the homelands. In Ovitoto reserve, which was intended for liquidation, the residents complained about the lack of water, noting "we must buy water from other farms so that our animals can drink."⁷⁷⁸ They further complained that the transience of Bantu Affairs officers meant that nothing ever got done: "All the HBSK's take the complaints and go. We ask that you make good on them."⁷⁷⁹ The HBSK and Agricultural Officer replied that nothing could be done about the water crisis, "Our money is finished. We must wait until next year."⁷⁸⁰ The next year was a drought year. Ovitoto Hereros were forced to rent water and grazing outside the reserve; they

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁷ NAN AHE 18 N1/15/4, Supt. Balt to BSK Karibib, "Onrus en Propaganda: SWAPO Vergaderings: Otjimbingue," 28 Oct. 1977.

⁷⁷⁸ NAN AHE 22 N1/15/4, "Notule van die Vergadering Gehou te Ovitoto Reservaat op 20/4/76, 20 Apr. 1976.

⁷⁷⁹ NAN AHE 22 N1/15/4, "Notule van Vergadering wat Gehou was te Ovitoto Reservaat op die 1st Junie 1976, 1 Jun. 1976.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

were out of money and lost considerable numbers of stock.⁷⁸¹ The government told them to relocate to Hereroland and/or cull their donkey population.⁷⁸²

Within Hereroland, the HBSK reported positively on Bantu Affairs' efforts to develop Hereroland. He noted in a letter to the Administrator, "A lot has been done to develop the homelands – to build them up so the residents can make an economical and self-maintaining living. This department has not skimmed on costs and effort to implement the ideology of self-rule."⁷⁸³ However, it was not enough. The government was still removing people to the homelands, putting further pressure on those underdeveloped areas. Even in cooperative areas, residents became disillusioned with the government's inability to carry out development promises. In Okamatapati, residents wished to fence watering holes to protect the water from contamination and prevent overgrazing on the surrounding veld so they would not have to move their stock to Epukiro every year during the dry season. "Our biggest problem is the fencing wire," they complained, "We have now been waiting a very long time for fencing wire."⁷⁸⁴ When the HSK responded that there was no money for this project, they responded accusingly, "We have been waiting more than three years for the border fence. You have never told us there is no money. Money was available in the budgets."⁷⁸⁵ The government's inability to deliver on its development promises seriously damaged its support among the Small Group, which had stood by the government from the start. It also disillusioned the newly cooperative Big Group.

⁷⁸¹ NAN AHE 22 N1/15/4, "Notule van Vergadering wat Gehou was te Windhoek met die Hoofbantoesakekommissaris op 31 Augustus 1977," 31 Aug. 1977.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ NAN AHE 66 N1/11/3, HBSK to Administrator SWA, "Beoogde Ontwikkeling: Bantoegebiede: 1976-77," 11 Dec. 1975.

⁷⁸⁴ NAN AHE 66 N1/15/4, "Hoofman R. Uzera en Raadslede van die Otjituuo Reserwaat," 19 Oct. 1977.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

At the Turnhalle, internal cooperation between Kapuuo and the government began to break down. Although the conference ratified a draft constitution in March 1977, South African ran into considerable problems. SWAPO contended that the Turnhalle constitution was simply a neo-colonial ploy to ensure Bantustanization by relying on a few loyal chieftains, mainly referring to Kapuuo.⁷⁸⁶ The Western Contact Group intervened in the UN Security Council to prevent the constitution's implementation and demanded economic sanctions unless South Africa withdrew from SWA. Vorster's government met with the Western Contact Group to negotiate a settlement over the course of 1977, promising open elections and an interim government, while simultaneously continuing to pursue homeland removals in SWA.

The question at this point is the extent to which and why Kapuuo supported the Turnhalle constitution. Did he conceive of it as a federal system capable of protecting Herero interests from external control by a strongly centralized state such as that envisaged by SWAPO? Did he support it because he felt that it could bring about independence in a peaceful manner? Did he support it because it promised him power? While there is no clear answer, evidence suggests that the answer to all these questions is a tentative yes. Kapuuo had burned his bridges with SWAPO. There would be no room for him in a SWAPO government and, if his accusations were true, a SWAPO government would detrimentally affect Herero interests. Kapuuo had always pushed for Namibian independence, both before and after the Turnhalle Conference, although we cannot precisely know his stance on independence during the conference. It is possible that he was willing to sacrifice independence on the altars of protectionism and personal power.

⁷⁸⁶ Dierks, *Chronology*, 153.

The case for personal power is clearer. Beginning in August 1977, high government officials began to discuss the possibility of officially recognizing Kapuuo as the Herero Paramount Chief. Jannie de Wet, the Commissioner General of SWA's Native Peoples, discussed this possibility with the Minister of Bantu Affairs on August 24, 1977.⁷⁸⁷ South African sources suggest that Kapuuo raised the matter and requested official recognition, although this cannot be confirmed.⁷⁸⁸ Given domestic and international outrage over the Turnhalle and South Africa's continued occupation of SWA, de Wet considered Kapuuo's recognition as "only to South Africa's advantage in retaining control over SWA."⁷⁸⁹ The Department of Political Development, responsible for implementing Traditional Authorities, which had initially rejected Kapuuo's claims on the grounds that he was not a Maherero, now granted his original 1970 petition.⁷⁹⁰ The Secretary for Political Development noted, "Kapuuo is the strongest and most respected black leader in SWA...there was talk that, if the interim government is installed, he would be the most acceptable person for all ethnic groups for the position of State President."⁷⁹¹ Making a friend of SWA's future leader could be extremely valuable to South Africa if forced to relinquish official control over the territory. After all, the apartheid government was nothing if not tenacious and semantics had never mattered much when it came to SWA.

Kapuuo became Paramount Chief in September 1977, concurrent with the appointment of an Administrator General to work with a UN representative in the countdown to elections for an interim government. These dual appointments reflect

⁷⁸⁷ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Adjunct Secty Political Dev. to Minister BAD, "Erkenning van Clemens Kapuuo as Hoofkaptein van die Herero-Volk in Suidwes-Afrika," 24 Aug. 1977.

⁷⁸⁸ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, J.L. Serfontein, Secty of Political Dev. & Chief Director of Homeland Affairs to Chief Director of Finance, "Betaling van 'n Stipendium aan Clemens Kapuuo: Hoofkaptein van die Hererovolk in Suidwes Afrika," 9 Sept. 1977.

⁷⁸⁹ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Adjunct Secty Political Dev. to Minister BAD, "Erkenning van Clemens Kapuuo as Hoofkaptein van die Herero-Volk in Suidwes-Afrika," 24 Aug. 1977.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid.

the government's continued strategy to play both sides of the fence – cooperating with the UN on one hand and appointing a Traditional Authority for Hereroland on the other. The government proposed to pay Kapuuo R5,700 per year as Paramount Chief, a sum comparable to Ovambo Paramounts but paltry compared to the at least R20,000 he received during his tenure at the Turnhalle Conference.⁷⁹² Insisting that he had been Paramount since Kutako's death, Kapuuo demanded seven years back-pay at his proposed salary.⁷⁹³ The government balked at this demand. They contended that Kapuuo had been hostile to the government until he was shut out of the NC and denied recognition by the UN. They refused to compensate him to the tune of R5,700 per year. If approved, back-pay would total about R8,000.⁷⁹⁴ Beyond money, compensating Kapuuo raised larger questions. The HBSK contended, "Mr. Kapuuo's claims for back-pay for his services since 1970 to now create a number of problems, namely:

- a) If we refuse to compensate him and he turns against "us" – the struggle against SWAPO cannot be won.
- b) If we compensate him, SWAPO and other groups will say we bought him, especially as the sum is very large."⁷⁹⁵

The government could neither afford to lose Kapuuo nor keep him. However, Kapuuo's request for recognition was secret. The government left it unannounced as

⁷⁹² SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, J.L. Serfontein, Secty of Political Dev. & Chief Director of Homeland Affairs to Chief Director of Finance, "Betaling van 'n Stipendium aan Clemens Kapuuo: Hoofkaptein van die Hererovolk in Suidwes Afrika," 9 Sept. 1977. For payments to Turnhalle delegates, see Grotmeter, *Dictionary*, 527.

⁷⁹³ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HBSK to Chief Director (of either Finance or Homelands), "Memorandum: Sake Rakende Mnr. Clemens Kapuuo: Leier van die Hererovolk in Suidwes Afrika," ca. 1 Nov. 1977.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid. See also SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HBSK to Secty BAD, "Terugbetaling van 'n Bedrag van R7743 aan Hoofkaptein Clemens Kapuuo vir Dienste Gelewer vanaf 18/7/70 tot 31/8/77," 2 Nov. 1977.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

“it may have a negative effect on his political image.”⁷⁹⁶ Such an arrangement also shielded the government bribery accusations and gave them blackmail material if relations with Kapuuo soured.

Kapuuo’s request for recognition reflects two things. First, it demonstrates that, for all Kapuuo’s refusal to either recognize the state or require its recognition, the official title of Paramount Chief meant a great deal to him. Even though it was a day late and a dollar short, it was a triumph over Rev. Karuaera and the Preservationists. It was also a triumph over the apartheid government. Kapuuo persevered and, although he needed them, he gained the upper hand. Secondly, recognition was essential to his survival in SWA’s uncertain future. Even though South Africa agreed to free elections for a unified interim government, Kapuuo now had a position from which he could not be unelected. It guaranteed him position and influence no matter what happened.

The Shot Heard Round Southern Africa

While Kapuuo quietly negotiated recognition and payment with the South African government, his outward political affiliations underwent change. The South African government continued to centralize administrative control over SWA and press ahead with the homelands policy under the guise of preparing for independence. Vorster appointed Justice M.T. Steyn as SWA’s first Administrator General in July 1977 in order to permit South Africa to oversee SWA’s transition to autonomy. The

⁷⁹⁶ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, Chief Dir. Homelands to Chief Dir. Finances, “Staatsinkomsterekening: Begrotingspos 6 Bantoe-Administrasie en Ontwikkeling 1977/78 – Program 7: Ondersteunende en Verwante Dienste – Subprogram: Tradisionele Stambestuur (Programkode 080/224/24) Betaling van Stipendium aan Hoofkaptein Clemens Kapuuo van die Hererovolk in Suidwes Afrika,” 21 Nov. 1977.

government intended SWA to become a satellite, ironically similar to communist Russia's soviet republics which South Africa so opposed. Although Steyn possessed almost dictatorial powers, he was known for impartiality and soon relaxed pass laws and repealed much petty apartheid. In December 1977, the departments of Bantu Administration and Development as well as Water Affairs were theoretically removed from Pretoria's control and transferred to Steyn's oversight. However, the fact that Mr. G.J.J. van Vuuren, SWA's HBSK, attended a South African national HBSK's conference in early 1978, suggests SWA's Bantu Administration was not totally dissociated from Pretoria.⁷⁹⁷ This meeting was singularly focused on the acceleration of homeland removals.

Dirk Mudge broke with the NP in September 1977. Three days later, the NP of SWA, led by du Plessis and van Zijl, officially dissolved ties with the NP of South Africa. Mudge organized a federated coalition of moderate whites and black parties represented at the Turnhalle into an umbrella party called the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) in November 1977. The DTA elected Kapuuo as its first president. Grotpeter argues that the South African government supported these divisions (and, in the NP's case, may have ordered the split) as the only hope for alleviating international demands for an independent multi-party democracy in SWA.⁷⁹⁸ It is unclear to what extent Mudge and Kapuuo formed the DTA as part of a government plan - they had not totally severed their connections with the government and a government slush fund provided extensive funding for the organization.⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁷ NAN AHE 66 N1/15/5, "Notule van Konferensie van Hoofbantoesakekommissaris Gehou op 19 en 20 Januarie 1978," 20 Jan, 1978.

⁷⁹⁸ Grotpeter, *Dictionary*, 91.

⁷⁹⁹ Gewald, "Who Killed Clemens Kapuuo?" p. 569.

The DTA under Kapuuo was extremely short-lived. Unidentified assailants shot and killed Kapuuo behind his shop in Katutura, Windhoek, on March 27, 1978. Gerson Hoveka was with Kapuuo at the time and received a bullet wound to the ankle.⁸⁰⁰ It is unclear who killed Kapuuo. Both the South African government and SWAPO pointed fingers at one another. Klaus Dierks and Jan Bart Gewald contend that the South African government shot Kapuuo and attempted to frame SWAPO by using Russian weapons.⁸⁰¹ They argue that the South African government benefitted most from Kapuuo's death, using the incident and ensuing Herero-Ovambo ethnic clashes to justify a crackdown on SWAPO inside and outside of SWA, effectively derailing the UN's independence process.⁸⁰² The fact that the archival files on Kapuuo, which are densely detailed up to this point, suddenly fall silent in February 1978 is extremely suspicious. Gewald also notes that, by blaming SWAPO, the South African government used Kapuuo's assassination as a planned excuse to invade Angola and attack SWAPO's civilian camp at Cassinga and delay independence for another ten years.⁸⁰³ On the other hand, Kapuuo's death benefitted SWAPO and Nujoma as well. South Africa now lacked a credible moderate black leader capable of rivalling Nujoma.

Whoever killed Kapuuo, his death provoked extreme hostility between Hereros and Ovambos in urban areas and between DTA/NUDO supporters and SWAPO/NNC supporters in both Katutura and rural areas. As mentioned above, this may have been by state design. In Ovitoto Reserve, Boardman David Ndisero reported that SWAPO incited unrest and he asked the Superintendent for weapons:

⁸⁰⁰ NAN A557/40, *Ozombuze*, "Groot Leier Doodgeskiet," May/July 1978.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid. See also Klaus Dierks *Bibliography of Namibian Personalities* and J. Gewald, "Who Killed Clemens Kapuuo?" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, no. 3 (2004): pp. 559-576. Gewald provides an excellent account of the assassination based on previously unexplored materials.

⁸⁰² Klaus Dierks, *Bibliography*.

⁸⁰³ Gewald, "Who Killed Clemens Kapuuo?"

“We have all discussed the unrest and incitement of SWAPO...The leaders are the most threatened. These strange elements are armed and we are not. For this reason we ask the state for weapons...We have lost three leaders and we are in danger because it is known that these people are out for our blood.”⁸⁰⁴ The NUDO Youth Leader, J. Karuaihe, blamed SWAPO and cynically noted that Kapuuo had been instrumental in getting Nujoma out of SWA and to the UN: “People don’t always thank you or act in your best interests. The late Clemens Kapuuo was thanked with a bullet for helping Sam Nujoma out of the country.”⁸⁰⁵

Kapuuo’s death seems to have united dissident Herero factions to some degree and reveals the extent to which intra-Herero factionalism had been resolved. In late May 1978, a large delegation of Herero leaders from all over SWA converged on Okahitua, near Okakarara, and elected Kauima Riruako as Paramount Chief of the Hereros.⁸⁰⁶ Riruako had been living in New York as NUDO’s representative to the US and UN as well as attending university in New York since 1973, after a tortuous journey to escape southern Africa.⁸⁰⁷ Riruako was an ideal candidate to bring together the Herero Big and Small Groups. He not only satisfied the Big Group as Kapuuo’s protégé and confidante, but he was also Kutako’s nephew. Moreover, he

⁸⁰⁴ NAN AHE 22 N1/15/4, “Notule van Vergadering wat Gehou is te Ovitoto Reservaat op die 24ste April 1978.”

⁸⁰⁵ NAN A557/40, *Ozombuze*, “Groot Leier Doodgeskiet,” May/July 1978.

⁸⁰⁶ SAB BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2, HBSK van Vuuren to Administrator General Steyn, “Aanstelling van Kauima Riruako as Hoofkaptein van die Hererovolk in die Plek van Wyle Hoofkaptein Clemens Kapuuo,” 9 Jun. 1978.

⁸⁰⁷ NAN A557/40, *Ozombuze*, “Kuaima Riruako Aangewys as Opvolger van Clemens Kapuuo,” May/July 1978. See also, Grotper p. 439-40 and Dierks, *Bibliography*. Riruako was held in detention as an illegal immigrant in Botswana, then later worked with the OAU and studied in Ghana until he was expelled in the coup against Nkrumah. He then fled to Lusaka where SWAPO detained him for refusing to join them. Zambian police eventually handed Riruako into South African custody and he was tortured and kept in solitary confinement for a year. After Israel Goldblatt sued for his release, the South Africans released Riruako into Zambia where SWAPO again imprisoned him. Dr. Kenneth Abrahams, a relative by marriage, rescued Riruako and he eventually made his way to a UN transit camp and to the US in 1973.

satisfied the Small Group's demands for a descendant of Maherero to act as Paramount Chief as he was Maherero's great nephew.

Riruako was in Paris when Kapuuo was assassinated and could not immediately return. In the meantime, the Herero Chief's Council selected Headman Gerson Hoveka as Acting Paramount. This selection demonstrates the considerable lengths Hereros and Mbanderus had come in bridging the seemingly insurmountable divide that emerged between Stephanus Hoveka and Edward Maherero in the 1950s. Rietfontein Headman Elifas Tjingaete gave a speech to church leaders in SWA after Kapuuo's death which further attests to shrinking intra-Herero factionalism in the late 1970s. Many of SWA's churches, particularly the ELK, vocally opposed apartheid and generally supported SWAPO. According to the Herero newspaper, *Ombuze*, "Mr. Tjingaete made it clear that the church leaders were also responsible for the death of Mr. Kapuuo."⁸⁰⁸ He accused them of "encouraging violent talk among the people. Whose mouthpiece are you? ...Your task is to pray and to do it without discrimination. But what you are busy doing is supporting murderers. And afterwards, you see yourselves as the leaders of our country looking for peaceful solutions to our problems."⁸⁰⁹

The marked difference in Herero/Mbanderu responses to Kapuuo's death versus Kutako's reflects profound alterations in Namibian politics during the 1970s. The intense politics surrounding ethnic identity and authority, so prevalent following Kutako's death, were markedly absent in 1978. Instead, the perception of SWAPO as a common enemy, South Africa's diminishing power, and Kapuuo's efforts to mend fences appear to have catalyzed Ovaherero unification following the assassination.

⁸⁰⁸ NAN A557/40, *Ozombuze*, "Groot Leier Doodgeskiet," May/July 1978.

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Riruako's election as Kapuuo's successor furthered this reconciliation process. Nevertheless, while certainly a considerable resolution of more than thirty years of fractious division, Herero unification was incomplete and still characterized by some internal divisions. Headmen Ewald Kavetura and Mika Tjavare fell out with Riruako in 1980.⁸¹⁰ Moreover, Herero youth tended to be far more radical than their elders – Namibian school children also went on strike in response to the Soweto Uprising and many ran away to the Angolan front, signing on with SWAPO's army.⁸¹¹ Nguvauva's Mbanderu faction remained on the outs with vast majority of Hereros and Mbanderus belonging to the DTA and the government.

By April 1978, Nguvauva became extremely disgruntled about the state of affairs in Hereroland East. A gate and fence had been erected between Rietfontein and Epukiro and, although Nguvauva did not have a key to it, the Rietfontein Mbanderus possessed two. It is unclear exactly when and by whom this fence was erected– it may have been a development by the Rietfontein Community Authority. Nguvauva still considered himself as the rightful headman of the Rietfontein Mbanderus and viewed the fence as government retaliation against him. Working in a jibe about Bantu Affairs' arrogance in deciding Africans' "readiness" for development, he asked the HSK, "Why is there a gate between we who are of the same nation? ...Are [the Rietfontein Mbanderus] perhaps ripe for the freedom to move?"⁸¹² To add insult to this injurious gate, the Headman and Boardmen at Rietfontein received higher

⁸¹⁰ NAN AHE 19/N1/15/6 v.1, "Algemene Verslag – Hereroland Wes," Feb. 1980.

⁸¹¹ See C. Williams, 2011 and *Remembering St. Therese* (Cape Town: Out of Africa, 2003). Personal communication with S.S., P.S., and W.K., Keetmanshoop, 2007.

⁸¹² NAN AHE 66 N1/15/4, "Vergadering te Pos 3, Epukiro op 28-4-1978," 28 Apr. 1978.

compensation than their counterparts in Epukiro due to their positions within the Rietfontein Community Authority.⁸¹³

To make matters worse, the DTA began agitating against Nguvauva's people in an effort to get them to leave the NNC and join the DTA instead. Nguvauva complained to the HSK, "because the DTA is favourable to the government, we are poorly treated. They say that tribal officers who don't belong to the DTA will be fired. Such people then join the DTA out of pressure. They also say that people who don't belong to the DTA may not live at Rietfontein."⁸¹⁴ In characteristic fashion, the HSK refused to talk about "politics" and assured the Headman that no one would be fired or discriminated against for not joining the DTA. Nevertheless, he added, "I can however do nothing about the DTA if they are doing anything wrong. It is a matter for the police. I must focus on the development of the area and the welfare of the residents."⁸¹⁵

This comment sent Nguvauva on a diatribe that unleashed decades of grievances against a world that seemed resolutely opposed to him. He retorted, "The state is always slippery. If they see that there is unusable land with no water, it goes to me."⁸¹⁶ He was particularly upset about a borehole the Agricultural Division drilled in his area, which was extremely deep and therefore expensive. This borehole appeared to be a microcosm of all of Nguvauva's troubles. He continued:

There are complaints brought against us with that borehole...In Windhoek they will complain that Munjuku has no right to the borehole. In 1962, after I was chosen as

⁸¹³ Ibid.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

headman by the majority, and then I spoke with Carpio, it was said that I was a bad person. Then it was said that I must go to Rietfontein because I had no right to stay in Epukiro. I constantly ask the other group to cooperate, but they refuse. The borehole was approved but the other people (Rietfontein Mbanderus) have gone in with the others (Hoveka and the Hereros) and they say it was not approved....A court is the only solution.⁸¹⁷

Nguvauva's complaint about the Rietfontein Mbanderus, the Hereros, and the state with regard to this particular borehole demonstrates that his position within Herero society was as contentious as ever. It also shows that, despite all the national and international politics swirling around in SWA, local water jealousies and rights continued to be extremely important in negotiating intra-Herero politics. This borehole reflected tensions among Mbanderus, tensions between Nguvauva and Herero society, tensions between Nguvauva and the state, and national debates between the DTA and NNC as well as Namibia's future. Conversely, all of these bigger debates were rooted in local issues of critical resource allocation, identity, and power. Later that year, Nguvauva again complained about boreholes in the reserve and accused the HSK of incompetence and inactivity. "We fight over the holes. You (the HSK) said you went into the matter, [but] I don't know how... In 1961 there were just 15 holes. Now there are 31. Many of these were bored by me and my people, but Hoveka uses them."⁸¹⁸ At his separate meeting, Gerson Hoveka argued that the boreholes were paid for out of the reserve's total grazing fees and not from just

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ NAN AHE 6/N1/15/4 v.1, "Meeting," 13 Nov. 1978.

Nguvauva's section.⁸¹⁹ He contended, "If the boreholes were [paid for by] just one headman, it would be wrong because then they would just belong to him."⁸²⁰ Water, identity, and wider politics were just as entwined as ever in SWA by the late 1970s.

Conclusion

By the close of the 1970s, all of the fraught emotion, ethnic and political factionalism, and development schemes of the past three decades began to wind down and change direction in the 1980s. As the international community began to make its first real moves towards securing Namibia's independence, South Africa desperately sought to manipulate the process and retain as much input and power as possible. Although much had transpired and changed since the NP government came to power in 1948, much remained more or less the same. Hereros and Mbanderus had split, reorganized, and reconciled during the Cold War much as they had before and continue to do in the present. These changing intra-ethnic factions and politics demonstrate the extreme fluidity and contingency within seemingly well-defined ethnic groups and identities like "Herero" and "Mbanderu."

For South Africa, the 1980s were the end of an era, as Namibia would finally gain independence in 1990. The HBSK, Mr. Van Vuuren, was recalled to South Africa in 1980, not to be replaced; he was the last of the HBSKs.⁸²¹ A few months later, the first HBSK, Bruwer Blignaut, passed away in a Johannesburg nursing home.⁸²² The reign of the HBSKs, which had focused so heavily on Odendaal

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ Ibid.

⁸²¹ NAN AHE 66/N1/15/5b, Director Political Development to Secty Political Development, WDH, "Konferensie van Hoofkommissaris: 1981," 3 Oct. 1980.

⁸²² NAN A557/3, *Windhoek Observer*, "Council Pays Tribute to Bruwer," 30 Jan. 1982.

development and entrenching apartheid in SWA, was over by the early eighties. Bantu Affairs and Waterways had been excised from and then returned to the SWA Administration. Despite all of the money and frustration poured into water development for Hereroland, changes were barely perceptible. In Hereroland West (formerly Waterberg East), there were only about 132 working boreholes by 1980.⁸²³ Some smaller pipelines had been laid to move water from successful boreholes into the interior in order to nibble into Hereroland's interior, but borehole water was unsuitable for human use and tanker trucks delivered drinking water from post to post.⁸²⁴

The Eastern National Water Carrier, which was completed in 1985, greatly alleviated these problems. As previously mentioned the diversion to Hereroland was unusual but clearly served state interests at the time. The diversion was also approved during the period of negotiations between the government and Kapuuu. It is also possible that the promise of the pipeline was a part of these compromises. The apartheid government exchanged water development for cooperation in the past, and it is not inconceivable that the diversion featured in the parley with Kapuuu. Nevertheless, the practical implementation of the pipeline revealed deep-seated racial divisions over water access. Dr. J.W. Brandt, NP representative to the white legislative assembly, contended that by diverting the water the government was "stealing water from the farmers" downstream of Hereroland.⁸²⁵

These kinds of tensions continued to plague SWA throughout the 1980s. Dirk Mudge and other moderates worked for some kind of solution between apartheid and

⁸²³ NAN AHE 19/N1/15/6 v.1, Superintendent of Works to HSK, "Verslag van Werksaamhede van Afdeling Watervoorsiening: Hereroland-Wes," 19 Feb. 1980.

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ NAN A557/45, *Windhoek Observer*, "We are not Stealing Farmers' Assets," 30 Mar. 1985.

the inevitable domination of SWAPO demanded by the UN and Western Contact Group. SWAPO and the South African government, now under P.W. Botha, continued the bloody battle along the Angolan border. The *Windhoek Observer*, which now considered Mudge as nothing but a spineless South African stooge described his mediated approach as “laudable,” but noted

The bulk of South West African People have lost heart in these endless talks, this endless succession of new political blueprints which turn out to be just another political manoeuvre. For, at the root of these plans is South Africa. She develops the idea, directs the course of it, and then decides whether or not it should have a demise, whereafter she blames SWA for her helpless leaders and lack of an objective. She has no shame in doing so...⁸²⁶

A year later, Mudge criticised the UN and Western Contact group for making SWA “a test range for experiments with possible solutions for their own much bigger political problems.” This was an apt assessment in many ways. In addition to the deeply-rooted historical factors that fuelled the Border War, the Cold War was a critical factor in SWA’s independence. It is noteworthy that independence only became a real possibility in 1988 with Gorbachev’s liberalization and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Betting on the winner as always, Munjuku Nguvauva joined SWAPO in 1988. Shortly before the ceasefire in preparation for independence, Cuban fighters in Angola bombed the dam and pumping station at Calueque, which had been so essential to South Africa’s water development plans in SWA under the Odendaal Plan. It remains unrepaired. Namibia finally achieved independence in 1990.

⁸²⁶NAN A557/13, *Windhoek Observer*, “Root of Evil,” 28 Apr. 1984.

CONCLUSION: LINES IN THE SAND

This dissertation has explored the mutual entanglement of disputes over water development with Herero identity politics and apartheid state formation between 1950 and 1980. By examining the political ecology of rural Hereroland, this project has demonstrated the importance of local politics surrounding critical resource access and allocation to the production of apartheid power in southern Africa and the process of global decolonization mediated by the UN during the Cold War. As the trajectory of post-war local OvaHerero politics illustrates, local politics are rarely local and debates over water resources and development are rarely concerned with water or development alone. Instead, local water and identity politics facilitated discussions and debates about much broader issues of power and entailed much deeper ramifications than simply securing rights to a borehole or electing this or that person as headman.

Water development became a critical physical and discursive medium for both the apartheid state and rural Hereros to pursue a variety of often competing objectives: to debate and claim power over what it meant to be a Herero or Mbanderu, whether apartheid or independence would prevail, and what that future would look like. The South African government attempted to use development to consolidate its control over SWA and the larger southern African region while simultaneously seeking to win international approval for these policies by masking them as decolonization. SWA's critical lack of water provided the state an entry point into SWA (as well as Angola via the Calueque Dam) and justified its presence in the territory. How, South Africa argued, could SWA possibly hope to become a viable independent state without proper water supplies for industrial, agricultural, and

household usage? Moreover, how could relatively impoverished, untrained, and inexperienced Africans possibly competently complete these kinds of water development projects? The state reasoned that only South African engineering expertise and compassionate financing could provide SWA the proper foundation for independence. That these kinds of projects would take decades, tie SWA's infrastructure inextricably to that of South Africa, and place SWA permanently in South Africa's debt was simply an added benefit.

Physical water development in preparation for "independence" was closely tied up with "political development" in the homelands – the establishment of Traditional Authorities. By using water development to control Herero responses to apartheid incursions, the state attempted to manage who could be considered a chief or headman in Herero society and what kind of power and prestige they might possess. While the state clearly saw these positions as puppet offices with some status attached, questions of Paramount Chiefship took on a much greater significance in Herero society. Debates over chiefship invoked deep-seated questions over identity, legitimate authority, and the future of both Herero society and SWA. And it was this socio-political importance, whether people such as Kapuuo wished to admit it or not, that gave the state so much leverage by combining water access with an official office. Water was not only denied or provided to forcibly relocate people, punish dissidents, and reward those who were also cooperative, but to divide and rule. The combination of physical and political development became an extremely effective means for the apartheid state to manipulate intra-Herero politics, fracturing society into Hereros and Mbanderus, Big Groups and Small Groups, and "Royal Houses." Water development and Traditional Authorities went hand in hand on the road to SWA's Bantustanization.

Rural Herero communities and actors employed water and development as weapons against the state and one another. Herero leaders like Kutako and Kapuuo ably translated apartheid policies, which state officials tried so hard to label as development, into oppression at the international level. These international campaigns, based largely on local politics, seriously damaged South Africa's international relations and the extent to which the state could intervene in SWA. On one hand, the apartheid state knew that it possessed some leverage because the West needed South Africa as a Cold War ally in Africa. On the other hand, South Africa dearly wanted acceptance and growing anti-apartheid opposition from all quarters prevented the state from taking terribly risky actions in SWA. Herero petitions ensured that there was always an international finger on the local pulse.

By combining these international campaigns with local resistance – including boycotts of state services, destruction of development works, and retaliation against Herero and Mbanderu government supporters – the Herero Big Group also forced the state to negotiate on the ground. The Traditional Authorities Act was never effectively implemented in Hereroland because of Herero opposition and the tendency of “traditional authorities” like Nguvauva to have their own agendas, which differed from that of the state. Yet, these debates over physical and political development became a measuring stick of a person's identity and an integral dimension of pre-existing and highly fraught identity politics. Whether a person was a “true” Herero or Mbanderu depended on his or her stance towards development. Development emerged as a critical means of debating the rightful leader of both Herero and Mbanderu society and the definitions and parameters of Herero and Mbanderu identity.

Ultimately, these debates over water and development were strategies, negotiations, and competitions for claiming sovereignty over life and land in SWA. The question of land claims and land restitution remained central throughout the course of apartheid Hereroland's tortuous identity and development politics. For example, Mbanderu politics pivoted on the struggle to control Post 3 in Epukiro as a prerequisite to legitimate headmanship. Likewise, the Herero Big Group's enduring faith centered on its belief that the UN would restore Herero lands. When the UN betrayed the Hereros in the early seventies, Kapuuo began to work with the apartheid government, at least in part, to attempt to prevent Herero people from further forced relocation. As Kapuuo insisted, land claims and the loss of land through colonial violence is what separated Hereros from Ovambos and ideologically invalidated SWAPO's claims in the liberation struggle. The history of land theft and consequent restitution claims continue to form the basis of Herero and Mbanderu identities in the present, and they remain as politically charged as ever.

This dissertation's focus on highly local politics is not intended simply to understand an unexplored corner of Herero and Namibian history. Rather, it seeks to understand how highly local politics can and do profoundly impact larger regional and global historical processes. Hereroland was not simply a microcosm of apartheid and anti-colonial politics, but also the locus of extremely powerful action. Local Herero identity politics based on enduring land claims and water development politics often prevented the apartheid state from employing excessive brute force to enforce separate development policies. Instead, SWA's internationally contested status and local politics made the state highly vulnerable and forced it constantly to modulate its tactics, embarking on the seemingly contradictory path of annexation and decolonization. Development physically and rhetorically reconciled these opposing

objectives. If apartheid were to be implemented in SWA, it was imperative that it be presented as development and independence. Herero politicians had to be courted or subtly silenced. International observers had to be fooled into thinking separate development was beneficial and a step towards decolonization. Development permitted the state to straddle this divide for nearly forty years.

However, local politics surrounding ethnic identity and apartheid water development in Hereroland also developed a global resonance that superseded the issue of the South African state. Rural Herero politics forced the UN, at a very early stage, to decide if it would actually stand behind the principles laid out in the Atlantic Charter. Local Herero politics forced the UN to confront the issue of whether and how to intervene in the affairs of member states, even if those states contended that the UN had no jurisdiction to do so. It was the concerted and sustained action of rural Herero leaders that ultimately forced the ICJ to rule that the UN could receive petitions and hear testimony from colonized peoples. Because SWA served as South Africa's vulnerable back door, rural Herero petitions to the UN regarding SWA were a critical dimension of the larger anti-apartheid struggle. By taking local politics international, rural Herero leaders ensured that the questions of decolonization and apartheid remained on the UN's agenda through the Cold War, despite Western incentives to continue supporting the apartheid regime.

Development served as the medium binding together disputes over identity, land restitution, race, authority, and sovereignty. Development permitted different coalitions of actors to negotiate tensions between tradition and modernity in an effort to control the unfolding of SWA's future. Each and every debate over development in SWA ultimately served as a vehicle for various stake-holders to contest sovereignty. Development became the line in the Kalahari sand on so many fronts. Development

determined whether Kapuuo and Nguvauva could become legitimate Paramount Chiefs, whether Mbanderus were Hereros, and who counted as an Mbanderu or Herero. Development also emerged as the line in the sand as to whether or not South Africa had the right to control SWA and whether their presence in the territory was legitimate. Development became a debate about whether and to what extent the UN could, would, or should intervene in SWA. Development transformed into a line in the sand concerning the rights of local communities, states, and the international community. Development became the medium of dialogue about SWA's future and a means of controlling it. Rather than disputes over water, chiefship, tradition, or rhetoric, development transformed into a competition for power and a debate about sovereignty.

What, then, were the ultimate effects of all of this strife and scheming over development? One is tempted to say that nothing came of it at all. Hereroland today looks more or less the same as it did in 1948, although there have been some cosmetic changes. The architecture is perhaps a little different, as many of the houses, schools, clinics, and shops are relics of the apartheid-era, but there are still plenty of pontocks constructed from corrugated iron and old oil drums. In the bigger towns, one can also find the predictable chain stores like Jet, Akermans, and Shoprite along with an ATM or two. Gasoline powered generators and satellite dishes are fairly common. And everybody, absolutely everybody, has a cell phone – airtime is, however, a much scarcer commodity.

But on the whole, many Herero people still live in the segregated, apartheid-era townships or on isolated homesteads raising livestock on the rural lands variously called reserves, homelands, and now “communal areas.” They still obtain water from the nearest borehole - sometimes in the yard, sometimes further away. Serious

droughts continue to dominate the local economy and permeate conversation. Jobs remain scarce and life continues to be difficult for many. Indeed, most of my interviews disintegrated into criticisms of modern life; people would not or could not distinguish between apartheid and independence. Development, it seems, was just a mirage.

From this perspective, it is easy to fall into the trap of wondering whether apartheid really mattered at all in the historical scheme of things. Reducing Herero history and identity to the Genocide becomes understandable. That is the moment Herero people can pinpoint when things started to go wrong. It provides a history and an identity to which people can attach themselves. It binds them together in a common cause in an otherwise highly uncertain and difficult world. Moreover, it is a history with hope. It promises, despite all international signals to the contrary, restitution, development, and a brighter future. Apartheid, it would seem, had little impact.

A cursory impression of Herero people would seem to bear out the overarching importance of a history of Genocide to unify people. When asked about Herero society, Herero people inevitably told me that the Hereros in Namibia and Botswana, the Himba people of the Kaokoveld, and the Mbanderus were “all one people.” I call this “The Happy Herero Family” myth. Within five minutes of talking, however, people almost always begin to discuss whether this or that community was “truly” Herero or whether this or that community wrongfully believed themselves to be “better” Hereros. Moreover, not everyone buys into this Happy Herero Family paradigm. In 2010, for example, an Mbanderu taxi driver harangued me for only researching Herero history. He was slightly mollified when I told him I was also researching Mbanderu history, and he proceeded to explain the ins

and outs of contemporary intra-ethnic identity politics before dropping me off at my destination. It is precisely this pattern of describing the Happy Herero Family and immediately ripping it to shreds that troubles the seamless historical narrative and hurtles one headlong into the apartheid era and all of its messiness.

Contemporary debates within OvaHerero politics and Namibian politics more broadly cannot be understood without understanding the history of the apartheid era. For example, the feud between Hovekas and Nguvauvas remains quite active, as does the dissention between those who supported Kapuuo and those who supported the Preservation Society. The politics surrounding the Genocide reparations lawsuit and centennial commemoration are, in many ways, also products of apartheid era development politics. The potential reparation funds are to be used for development in “Hereroland.” But this raises age old questions about what constitutes Hereroland, who counts as Herero, and who is to make the decisions about these things. These debates about who and what are Herero stem from the divisive manipulation of apartheid development politics.

Moreover, this need to distinguish Herero identity in modern Namibia is largely a result of apartheid state efforts to splinter African resistance in the sixties and seventies, as well as the UN’s decision to recognize SWAPO at the expense of other African parties. Although SWAPO emerged triumphant, the question remains of what might have happened if Kutako had not petitioned the UN against incorporation in the late 1940s. Even though it does not fit into the narrative of “The Struggle,” local Herero resistance was integral to Namibia’s eventual independence. Nevertheless, the rift created between Hereros and SWAPO during apartheid remains largely unrepaired. Many Hereros continue to believe that SWAPO assassinated Kapuuo, and as most Hereros continue to support NUDO, there are consequently few

Hereros in the SWAPO government. With the government serving as the largest employer in Namibia and the prevalence of nepotism and job reservation for “Struggle Kids” (the children of largely elite Ovambo expatriates born in exile during the Struggle), many Hereros find themselves marginalized in the political economy of independent Namibia.

Contemporary development issues serve as the physical reminder of this ongoing inter-ethnic factionalism. Development in Hereroland mainly consists of maintaining apartheid-era developments. The government has undertaken relatively little infrastructural development in the twenty years since independence.

Contemporary Herero reparations politics and the apparent impossibility of developing an overarching Namibian national identity stems from politics and processes intensified by, if not born of, apartheid. It was the apartheid government that encouraged and exacerbated the inter- and intra-ethnic factionalism that prevails in Namibia today. It was the apartheid state who set the precedent of using underdevelopment against out-groups and unabashedly employing state power, prestige, and resources to benefit its own constituents.

Despite its small population of just two million souls, Namibia is an extremely complicated place. Ethno - linguistic tensions, overlain with racial and class divisions, continue to plague the country. Reminders of overlapping and conflicting colonial and post-colonial histories are everywhere present; Windhoek, for example, looks like a German town, yet Afrikaans remains its lingua franca and its streets are named for SWAPO freedom fighters. Despite a growing and strong middle class, it is a place where gaps between rich and poor continue to grow at alarming rates and out-migration is becoming a serious problem. For all the strides Namibia has made in the twenty years since its independence, it remains a desert country. Resource allocation –

financial, physical, and political – continues to function as a highly contested arena in which identities and histories comprise the key components. Contemporary identity and development politics in Namibia are not new; they are old lines drawn a little bit deeper in the sand.

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AP 4/1/12	Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Occurrences in the Windhoek Location on the Night of the 10 th to 11 th December, 1959, and into the Direct Causes which Led to those Occurrences (1960)
AP 4/3/1a	Explanatory Memorandum on the Water Amendment Bill, 1978
AP 4/3/1b	Explanatory Memorandum on the Irrigation Districts Adjustment Amendment Bill, 1978
AP 4/3/1c	Explanatory Memorandum Explaining the Background and Objects of the Development of Self-Government for Native Nations in South-West Africa Bill, 1978

- AP 4/3/1 d Decisions by the Government on the Recommendations of the
Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs
- AP 4/3/1 e Memorandum: Decisions by the Government on the Financial and
Administrative Relations between Republic and South West Africa

Bantu Administration (BAC)

- BAC 2 HN1/1/4 Chiefs & Headmen – Main File
- BAC 4 HN1/1/7/4 Chiefs & Headmen – Tribal Boundaries – Aminuis:
(Korridor)
- BAC 6 HN1/5/2 v.1-3 Bantu Administration – Information and Publicity –
Main File
- BAC 36 HN1/12/2 Ethnology & Customs – Main File
- BAC 36 HN1/15/2 v.1-7 Native Affairs – Area Administration – Main File
- BAC 38 HN1/15/2/1 District Administration – Aminuis
- BAC38 HN1/15/2/19 District Administration –Tses
- BAC 38 HN1/15/2/5 District Administration – Epukiro
- BAC 39 HN1/15/2/19 District Administration – Tses
- BAC 39 HN1/15/2/8/1 District Administration – Okahandja
- BAC 41 HN1/15/4/1 Quarterly Meetings
- BAC 41 HN1/15/4/3 Quarterly Meetings – Ovitoto
- BAC 41 HN1/15/4/4 Quarterly Meetings – Aminuis
- BAC 42 HN1/15/4/5 Quarterly Meetings - Otjituo
- BAC 42 HN1/15/4/6 Quarterly Meetings – Epukiro
- BAC 45 HN1/15/4/18 Quarterly Meetings – Waterberg East
- BAC 45 HN1/15/4/24 Quarterly Meetings – Eastern

BAC 46 HN1/15/5	District Administration – Conferences
BAC 46 HN1/15/5/1 v.1-7	Annual Meetings – Hereros
BAC 52 HN1/15/6/4	Reports on Administration – Aminuis
BAC 59 HN1/15/6/4	Reports on Administration – Eastern
BAC 59 HN1/15/6/5, v.1-2	Reports on Administration – Epukiro
BAC 60 HN1/15/6/13	Reports on Administration– Otjimbingue
BAC 60 HN1/15/6/14	Reports on Administration – Otjituo
BAC 60 HN1/15/6/15	Reports on Administration– Otjohorongo
BAC61 HN1/15/6/16	Reports on Administration – Ovitoto
BAC 61 Hn1/15/6/19	Reports on Administration– Tses
BAC 61 HN1/15/6/21	Reports on Administration – Waterberg East
BAC 62 HN1/15/6/27	Reports on Administration – HBSK
BAC 78 HN 2/11/2 v.2	Settlement & Rehabilitation – Main File
BAC 78 HN2/11/3	Niedersetting van Afsonderlike Gebiede –Tses
BAC 78 HN2/11/3/8	Niedersetting van Afsonderlike Gebiede – Otjinene
BAC 78 HN2/11/9/6	Niedersetting van Afsonderlike Gebiede – Aminuis
BAC 78 HN2/12/2	Rural Townships & Village Settlements – Main File
BAC 100 HN5/1/2, v.1-3	Water Supplies in Reserves – Main File
BAC 103 HN5/1/3/12, v.1-2	Water Supplies – Aminuis
BAC 104 HN5/1/3/13	Water Supplies – Waterberg
BAC 104 HN5/1/3/17	Water Supplies – Tses
BAC 133 HN9/8/2	Advisory & Township Boards – Main File
BAC 142 HN9/9/2	Native Affairs – Housing – Main File
BAC 142 HN9/9/3/1	Housing Schemes – Otjiwarongo
BAC 142 HN9/9/3/2	Housing Schemes – Tsumeb

BAC 142 HN9/9/3/4, v.1-3	Housing – Windhoek
BAC 147 HN9/11/3/4, v.1-2	Urban Legislation & Regulations – Windhoek
BAC 155 HN9/15/3/7 v.1-6	Locations – Windhoek
BAC 176 HN10/1/2/4	Reserve Board – Aminuis
BAC177 HN10/1/2/10	Reserve Boards – Otjimbingue
BAC 177 HN10/1/2/11	Reserve Boards – Waterberg
BAC177 HN10/1/2/17	Reserve Boards – Tses

Local Authorities (LOC)

LOC 26 2/7/3	Meeting Minutes – Gobabis
LOC 27 2/7/4	Meeting Minutes – Grootfontein
LOC 39 2/7/11	Meeting Minutes – Omaruru
LOC 41 2/7/12	Meeting Minutes – Otjiwarongo
LOC 108 2/10/1	Local Authorities – Water Supply Schemes - General File
LOC 108 2/10/3	Water Supply Scheme – Gobabis
LOC 109 2/10/4	Water Supply Scheme – Grootfontein
LOC 114 2/10/10	Water Supply Scheme– Okahandja
LOC 115 2/10/11	Water Supply Scheme– Omaruru
LOC 115 2/10/12	Water Supply Scheme– Otjiwarongo
LOC 356 2/80/1	Native Locations – General File
LOC 356 2/80/17	Native Locations – Windhoek

SWA Executive Committee - Odendaal Liaison Committee (LUKS)

- LUKS 1/1 Memorandum aan Uitvorende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 30 Junie en 1 Julie 1964)
- LUKS 1/2 Memorandum aan Uitvorende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 3 en 4 Augustus 1964)
- LUKS 1/3 Memorandum aan Uitvorende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 4 September 1964)
- LUKS 1/4 Vorderingsverslag insake Werksaamhede van Skakelkomitee vir Tydperk 30 Junie -30 Oktober 1964
- LUKS 2/5 Memorandum aan Uitvoerende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 30 November 1964)
- LUKS 2/6 Memorandum aan Uitvoerende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 24 Februarie 1965)
- LUKS 2/7 Memorandum aan Uitvoerende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 17 Augustus 1965)
- LUKS 2/8 Memorandum aan Uitvoerende Komitee insake Notule en Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek op 9 Junie 1966)

LUKS 3/9 Memorandum aan Uitvoerende Komitee insake Notule en
Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek
op 31 Oktober 1966)

LUKS 3/10 Memorandum aan Uitvoerende Komitee insake Notule en
Aanbevelings van die Skakelkomitee (Vergadering gehou te Windhoek
op 9 Augustus 1968)

Native Affairs (NAW)

NAW 1/3/1916/1 Native Headmen – Windhoek

NAW 26 Native Headmen

NAW 26/30/122 Removal of Hereros from Gebiet

NAW 26/30/173 Scheidthof

NAW 26/30/508 Dam at Otjirundu

NAW 26/30 Removal of Natives to Reserves

NAW 26/30/23 Epukiro Native Reserve

NAW 26/30 Reserve Report for 1922

NAW 26/68 Aminuis Native Reserve

NAW 29/1/1 Windhoek Location Advisory Board

NAW 29/2/1/1 Windhoek Advisory Board Minutes

NAW 30/2/1/10 Windhoek Advisory Board – General File

NAW 30/2/1/12 Proposed Removal of Windhoek Location

South Africa Police (SAP)

SAP 8 2/11/4 SAP Cooperation with Bantu Affairs

SAP 10 2/11/5 Non-White Areas

SAP 30 2/26/4	Gobabis
SAP 52 4/1/7	Otjinene
SAP 52 4/1/7b	Okakarara
SAP 182 2/61/2/36	Tses

South West Africa Administration (SWAA)

SWAA A50/223	Annual Herero Tribal Meeting, 1953
SWAA 403 A50	Native Affairs – Main File
SWAA 426 A50/46	Ethnological Research
SWAA 431 A50/51, v. 1-3	Herero Affairs – Herero Politics
SWAA 432 A50/59, v. 1-11	Native Affairs – Truppenspieler
SWAA 437 A50/74	Mandate Status of Natives
SWAA 457 A50/100	Aminuis Corridor
SWAA 461 A50/122/1	Herero Delegation – Visit to South Africa
SWAA 462 A50/131, v.1-3	Non-European Housing
SWAA 475 A50/188	Rain Data from Annual Reports
SWAA 492 A50/254	Dams in Native Reserves
SWAA 601 A66/6	Drought Relief Measures
SWAA 1124 A158/7, v.1-6	Epukiro and Gobabis
SWAA 1127 A158/9, v.1-5	Epukiro – Water Supplies
SWAA 1132 A158/12, v.1-4	Otjituo – Water Supplies
SWAA1145 A158/22, v. 1-5	Otjohorongongo – Water Supplies
SWAA 1147 A158/23, v.1-7	Waterberg East – General File
SWAA 1163 A158/31, v.1-4	Ovitoto – Water Supplies
SWAA 1169 A158/41, v.1-5	Aminuis – Water Supplies

SWAA 1209 A158/176	Consolidation of Herero Reserves
SWAA 1428 A217/9, v.1-2	Tses – Water Supplies
SWAA 1968 A413/1	Drought Commission Report
SWAA 1972 A413/16	Drought Relief Measures in Native Areas
SWAA 1982 A427/72	UN Visit to SWA/Namibia
SWAA 2184 A476/4	Otjiwarongo

Un-Catalogued Sources (TEMP)

TEMP 219	Unregistered Odendaal Files
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Division of Waterways (WAT)

WAT 47 WW64, v. 1-2	Water Affairs – Executive Committee
WAT 131 WW81, v. 1-3	Water Supplies in Native Reserves – General File

National Archives of South Africa - Pretoria (SAB)

Bantu Affairs & Development (BAO)

BAO 2/1792/T9/1/1/3/13	Herero – Tuisland
BAO 5/175/F54/23/18	Herero – Tuisland
BAO 5/247/F54/1217	Kapteins en Hoofmanne – Gobabis
BAO 5/449/F54/1996/2	Kapteins en Hoofmanne – Okakarara
BAO 5/449/F54/1996/3	Kapteins en Hoofmanne – Aminuis Res. & Hereroland-Oos
BAO 5/497/F56/17/11	Hereroland: Politieke Strominge en Persoonlikhede
BAO 5/497/F56/17/6	Hereroland: Proklamasies en Regulasies

BAO 8/309/X53/1936	Bantoe-Owerhede Hereroland
BAO 8/315/X54/1996/2	Kapteins en Hoofmanne – Okakarara
BAO 8/315/X56/17	Hereroland – Hoofleer
BAO 8/402/X117	Odendaalkommissie
BAO 10/415/N117	Notules en Aanbevelings van Skakelkomitee
BAO 4877/F54/1281	Kapteins en Hoofmanne – SWA
BAO 6813/N117	Suidwes-Afrika Aangeleenthede: Afskrifte van Korrespondensie vir Skakelbeampte
BAO 10784/H66/1936, v. 1-3	Watervoorsiening: Hereroland
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BAO 11997/N160/2/1	Kommissies van Ondersoek: Kommissie vir S.W.A.
BAO H66/3/1281	Pomptoestelle – SWA

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BTS 1/18/25	South West Africa: Advisory Council: Minutes of Meetings
BTS 1/18/59, v. 1-3	Incorporation of S.W.A in the Union of S.A.
BTS 14/15/2	S.A. Native Policy: Allegation by the Reverend Michael Scott
BTS 14/18	S.W.A. – Native Reserves in

Native Affairs Department (NTS)

NTS 4579/417/313/1	Segregation – South West Africa
NTS 6618/1115/313/T	Windhoek, SWA – Townships
NTS 9809/1179/400	Appellations of Indigenous Races: South West Africa
NTS 10387/6/438/14/3	Uitrusting van Boorgatte en Putte – Fransfontein, SWA
NTS 10387/7/438/14/3/11	Uitrusting van Boorgatte en Putte – Otjohorong, SWA
NTS 10387/7/438/4/1	Dams – Otjohorong Reserve
NTS 10395/1/439	SWA – Kapteins en Hoofmanne

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PM 1/1/194/PM/91/7/1913	Use of Water of Orange River by Residents of G.S.W.A
PM 72/EM/2/70/1	Kommissie van Ondersoek na die Gebeure in die Windhoek-Lokasie op 10 tot 11 Desember 1959
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RMG 2.514	Omaruru
RMG 2.521	Otjiwarongo
RMG 2.536	Otjimbingue
RMG 2.606	AMEC
RMG 2.607	Oruano
RMG 2.660	German Colonialism
RMG 3.298	Siegfried Groth – Apartheid 1960-1968
RMG 3.520	Siegfried Groth – Odendaal Plan – Materielsammlung
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M.K. & Z.K. – Tses 18 December 2009

S.S. – Tses, 18 December 2009

A.T. – Tses, 18 December 2009

A.T. – Tses, 18 December 2009

E.U. – Berseba, 18 December 2009

O.K. & N.K. – Tses, 19 December 2009

D.V. – Tsumeb, 17 February 2010

T. K. – Grootfontein, 18 February 2010

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