

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN COMMUNITIES IN DSWA/SWA/NAMIBIA

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**Abstract:** The Republic of Namibia has an extremely complex composition of its population. Bantu nations, Khoisan groups, mixed communities and people of European origin create a political problem of how all those society segments can be represented in the national decision making process in a just and satisfactory way.

During the precolonial time period, the individual tribes and groups had their own chiefs or *kapteins* along with the respective aristocracy or elected representation (*Volksraad* in the case of the Rehoboth Basters). The German colonial rule between 1884 and 1915 united all national and racial groups for the first time, but the African communities remained outside of the gradually constituted white self-administration as a subordinated element. During the South African rule under the League of Nations Mandated Territory regime 1915/1921-1945 the first political representations of Africans were being organized on the ground level. After World War II the controversy between the Union of South Africa (Republic of South Africa since 1961) and the UNO Trusteeship Council led to an effort to seek a solution according to the apartheid politics: the whites from South West Africa were represented directly in both South African parliament chambers. Meanwhile several *homelands* for the native population were projected in conformity with the Odendaal Plan. Under pressure from the international community, only three *homelands* were really proclaimed out of 11 planned. The UNO initiative and the SWAPO armed resistance made it impossible to recognize results of the last elections organized in 1980 within the racial/tribal framework as well as the all-races Transitional Government of National Unity established in 1985. During the last years under the South African administration, traditional chiefs assumed their authority in all African communities. Based on the free and UNO supervised one-person-one-vote 1989 elections the independent Namibia came to existence in 1990. However, all

democratic rights and the bicameral parliament the upper chamber of which respects the equality of each from 13 regions do not guarantee a fully fair representation of all ethnic groups. The merging of the Euro-American democratic system of power with the complicated national/tribal/clan reality is still to be calibrated in the future.

**Key words:** *History of Namibia, South West Africa - Namibia, representation of Africans, ethnicity, political system.*

Numerous communities<sup>1</sup> with relatively small number of members were and remain dispersed over the large area of 824,269 square km of the contemporary Republic of Namibia (Bradnová 1993: 532). It is generally accepted that Namibia's proclamation of independence on 21 March 1990 was considered a positive turning point in the democratic transition all over Africa, which influenced the dismantling of Apartheid in South Africa, and prevented, at the same time, the whites escaping from Africa as had occurred before in Angola and Mozambique. Since independence, however, the vast African country with 2,2 million inhabitants has been solving the problem how to secure the democratic representation of blacks and whites, big nation groups and small minorities within the artificial colonial boundaries of the modern state. A satisfactory solution has not been achieved until now. During the last two centuries particular conditions of the population movements on the semi-desert soil created singular political patterns depending on the momentous world order. As Namibia differs substantially from comparable African countries it is useful to investigate the question of the effectiveness of the political representation of individual society segments. The answers are important not only for Namibian politics, but also for the general feeling of national identity, and for the everyday co-operation and cohesion of the new African nations.

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1 The "community" is a part of an ethnic group with a special identity defined by its unique racial, linguistic, religious, usage and other characteristics.

## Too many and too petty for the Germans

After the original inhabitants belonging to small bands of San (Bushmen), some Khoikhoi clans of Nama and Damara people<sup>2</sup> as well as Bantu groups of Hereros, Ovambos<sup>3</sup> and Kavangos came to the country under the leadership of their traditional chiefs. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the first Orlams/Oorlams or Afrikaners (of mixed Khoikhoi-Madagascar or Indonesian slaves origin) appeared in half-breeds of Khoikhoi and Madagascar or Indonesia slaves called Orlams/Oorlams or Afrikaners<sup>4</sup> appeared on the southern part of today's Namibia. Due to the previous influence of white Boers these Afrikaners spoke the local Dutch language (Afrikaans) and elected their *kapteins*. As a consequence of the large *mfecane* migrations the later Caprivi Strip was occupied by the (Ma)Kololo, (Ma)Fwe, (Ma)Yeyi and similar tribes closely related to the Lozi nation. The arid barren land forced the nomadic communities to split into small groups. Along 11 Damara clans, the Khoikhoi (Hottentots) were divided into communities called Kai//khaun, Fransman-Nama (!Kharakhoen), Bondelswarts (!Gami-#Nun), Hawoben/Veldschoendrager, Swartbooi, |Hai|Khauan (Berseba Orlams or Khauas-Nama), Bethania Nama, Topnaar-Nama, Keetmanshoop-Nama (Kharo-!oan) and Witbooi-Nama (/Khowesen). Related Mbanderu (Ovambanderu), Himba (Ovahimba) and Tjimba (Ovatjimba) clans separated from the Hereros.<sup>5</sup> The Ovambos in the northern part of the country built up chiefdoms of Ondonga (Aandongga), Kwambi (Aakwambi), Ongandjera (Aangandjera), Kwaluudhi (Aakwaluudhi), Mbalantu (Aambalantu), Kolonkadhi (Aakolonkadhi) and Kwanyama (Ovakwanyama), but more Ovambo clans and groups took a liking to the region situated at the contemporary Angola-Namibia border. The northeastern Kavango people lived in five chiefdoms called Kwangali, Shambyu, Gciriku, Mbunza and Mbukushu.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the 1860s some 90 families of "Basters" (!Gora), descendants of white Boers and African women, looked for a new land; this group of some 300 members speaking Dutch (Afrikaans) came to the central part of the country to settle down in the place called Rehoboth in

2 The fundamental study and description was given by Schapera (1934).

3 For early history see Williams (1991).

4 More on the Dutch/Afrikaans language and population: Stals (2001).

5 Many founding works made by missionaries remain important, e. g. Vedder (1997).

6 For the first ethnological overview see Hahn (1928).

1870.<sup>7</sup> Other groups of the mixed “Dorslandtrekkers” of similar origin from Transvaal went through the country several times commencing the 1870s.<sup>8</sup> Between 1885 and 1887, these “Pilgrims from the Thirsty Land” established their own Upingtonia Republic (or Lijdensrust/Lydensrust),<sup>9</sup> a weak state of short duration with the center in Grootfontein. In the extreme East some groups of the Tswana people were roving. Continual migrations of herdsmen provoked wars, some clans were exterminated, other clans grew stronger; Orlam Afrikaner chiefs, particularly Jan Jonker Afrikaner (1863-1889),<sup>10</sup> created a germ of the statehood in the region surrounding their main base called Windhoek. In general, the African population was scarce and scanty.

Such conditions were advantageous for the German conquest. The majority of African clans and tribes were deeply influenced by the German Rhenish<sup>11</sup> and Finnish Lutheran or by the English Wesleyan missionaries since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As soon as the territory between Orange and Kunene rivers was proclaimed the German protectorate (*Schutzgebiet*) in September 1884, the private colony of the German tradesman Alfred Lüderitz was quickly transformed into the state colony called the German South West Africa (*Deutsch Südwestafrika*). In May 1885, the German commissioner Ernst Heinrich Göring started to build the colonial administration and the colony was established in conformity with the German colonial Law (*Schutzgebietsgesetz*) passed 17 April 1886. The administration system, however, arose slowly. The military and civil commander (*Landeshauptmann*) was supported by the German troops (*Schutztruppe*) composed exclusively of white soldiers. His office was subordinated to the Colonial Department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Kolonialabteilung im Auswärtigen Amt*) from 1890. In 1895, the vast country was divided into a Northern and a Southern district, then into 3 military districts: Ovamboland, Hereroland and Namaland with centers in Windhoek, Otjimbingwe and Keetmanshoop. By 1914 the number of districts (*Bezirkshauptmannschaften*) had increased to 16. The *Landeshauptmann* was given the title of governor (*Gouverneur*) on

7 See Britz et al. (1999).

8 Also the minor communities are mentioned by Gauerke (1978). All historical details were gathered in chronological order by Klaus Dierks on [www.klausdiers.com/Geschichte](http://www.klausdiers.com/Geschichte).

9 Among a few works dedicated to this theme the following is to be recommended: Marais and Du Toit (2006).

10 For details consult [www.klausdierks.com/Biographies](http://www.klausdierks.com/Biographies).

11 The educational role of German missionaries was stressed by Parnezgrau (1998).

18 April 1898. The country was considered a part of Germany, that is why the German penal law (*Strafgesetzbuch*) was introduced without taking the African traditions and beliefs into account.

The Africans were mere objects of the administration system. Their chiefs were respected only as helpers and cooperators of the German administrators. On 18 December 1899 governor Theodor Leutwein<sup>12</sup> introduced the usual forms of the local self-administration for the white German townships. The 1900 amendment to the *Schutzgebietsgesetz* declared full civil and political rights only for the white minority. As late as 1903 marriages of white men with African women were legalized, but only under pressure from the Colonial Department. During the wars with Hereros and Namas in 1904-1907 main opposing tribes were massacred,<sup>13</sup> and later the colonial administration did not count on the African partnership any more. When Hermanus van Wyk died in 1905, a *Basterraad* (Baster Council) was imposed to the proud community of Basters in Rehoboth instead of their traditional *kaptein* and *Volksraad* (council). From 1907 every African older than 7 years had to wear a metallic mark (*Eingeborenen-Passmarke*) for identifying himself as a subordinated labor force unit.

Within the districts, German colonists came together to form a consultative assembly (*Bezirksbeiräte*). On 28 January 1908 they were granted self-determination. The local representations (*Kommunalverbände*) in 12 centers composed of 4-8 delegates elected higher district representations (*Bezirksverbände*) with 4-6 elected members (Töttemeyer 2002: 505–506). Each district sent one representative to the Country Council (*Landesrat*). Beside that autonomous system of the whites, the African population maintained the tribal or clan structure without taking part in the colonial administration and in the decision making of their own country.

Under the pressure of colonization and European weapons several communities and/or their chieftain authorities disappeared during the German rule period. With the death of Jan Jonker Afrikaner in 1889 the Afrikaners ceased to exist as a compact group. Other groups were exterminated or temporarily deprived of any leadership: Khauas-Nama (Khauan) from 1896, Khaikhaun/Gai-Khaun community (*Roote*

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12 An important source: Leutwein (1912).

13 See Katjavivi (1988); Erichsen and Olusoga (2010).

*Nasie, Red Nation*)<sup>14</sup> and Swartboois from 1905, Namas from Bethanien (!Aman) from 1906.

## **The League of Nations mandated territory in favour of the Union of South Africa**

As a part of the Great War<sup>15</sup> South African troops won the campaign of 1914-1915 by defeating the German *Schutztruppe* and by occupying the territory.<sup>16</sup> The Africans, however, were considered unripe to take part in the country administration led by the military commander Percival Scott Beves and then by the representative of the South African protectorate Edmund Howard Lacam Gorges (1915-1920) under martial law. Colonel Stanley Archibald Pritchard was appointed officer in charge of Native Affairs. As early as 1915 the Rehoboth Basters applied to the winners for independence, but their land was only declared a *homeland*. Nevertheless, some chiefs had their posts recognized like Traugott Maharero (Hereros) or Edward Fredericks (Bethanien-Nama). All native communities were supposed to stay within their small delimited reservations. For those cases where chiefs of such small communities were confirmed like Christopher Katjimune (Hereros from Omaruru) or Gerhard Zeraua (Hereros from Otjohorongu). Any opposition was suppressed immediately: the warlike Kwanyama chief Mandume ya Ndemufayo (Hayes 1993: 89-113)<sup>17</sup> was defeated and decapitated in February 1917 by a South African platoon. Then, the Kwanyama kingship was abolished. In 1919 Herero foremen wrote to Sydney Charles Buxton, British general governor of South Africa, that they “wanted to be free finally.” (Krüger and Henrichsen 1998: 158–156). They received no answer.

According to Article 119 of the Versailles Peace Treaty Germany had to hand over all colonies to the Entente powers.<sup>18</sup> South West Africa became a League of Nations Mandated Territory administered by its South African “beneficiary”, a part of the British Empire, in the exceptional “Mandate C” regime. New rulers considered this Mandate

14 See Budack (1970).

15 For further reading: Farwell (1986).

16 For details concerning the German troops see Haupt (2001).

17 Popular myths concerning this African warrior struggling against the Portuguese, Germans and South Africans were gathered and explained by Hayes (1993).

18 For justifying the colonial redistribution the German massacres of Hereros and Namas in 1904-1907 in South West Africa were the most important reason. See Silvester and Gewalt (2003).

C statute<sup>19</sup> as an offer to administer the territory as de facto the fifth province of the Union of South Africa. Thus, all African groups, communities and nations living in the Mandate were subject to the political system existing in South Africa. That white rule system was applied in South West Africa by means of the ordinance No 25/1920 prohibiting the “vagrancy”, i. e. migrations of nomadic African herdsmen, and the ordinance No 34/1920 on “masters and servants” according to which the African “servants” were not allowed to abandon their “master” without his consent (Bader 1997: 108). According to the “Land Settlement Programme” the confiscated German farms were allotted to new white owners.<sup>20</sup>

On 1 January 1921, the military administration terminated and Gysbert Reitz Hofmeyer assumed the highest political post of the South African civil administrator of the Mandate territory.<sup>21</sup> In 1922, one ordinance prohibited *squatting*, i. e. arbitrary use of idle land by Africans, and all natives started to be controlled whether they wear their identification *passes*.<sup>22</sup> Such provisions provoked the UNIA<sup>23</sup> leader Hosea Kutako<sup>24</sup> to apply to the League of Nations for handing over the country to the “black” elite. The government’s taxation policy provoked a bloody uprising of Bondelswarts in April-May 1922,<sup>25</sup> even the pacific Sans rioted in July 1922, the chief of the Kwambi tribe Iipungu ya Tshilongo distributed weapons among his subordinates to prevent

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19 The Article 2 of the Mandate had the following wording: “The Mandatory shall have full power of administration over the territory subject to the present Mandate, as an integral portion of the Union of South Africa, and may apply the laws of the Union of South Africa to the territory subject to such local modifications as circumstances may require.” (Thornberry 2004: 7).

20 S. M. Bennett Nswana, a South African black politician who founded the first Namibian political party SWANC (South West Africa National Congress) in September 1922, stressed that “if any one takes a deeper view of the black problem in South Africa he will find that beneath the question of land tenure lies that of political rights.” See “Native Voters Association.” *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 7 April 1923.

21 A useful monograph for the Mandate period is: Braum (ed.) (1976).

22 This was legalized by the *Natives Proclamation* in South Africa in 1923 which was fully applied in Windhoek as late as in February 1925.

23 The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was founded in the city of Lüderitz in 1920 to promote ideas of Marcus Garvey.

24 Petrus Hosea Komombumbi Kutako (1870/1874-1970) was the Herero chief at that time instead of exiled Samuel Maharero. By founding the *otjiserandu* (*Truppenspieler*) association after Maharero’s death in 1923, Kutako created a conscience of the Herero national identity. As a leading black politician Hosea Kutako struggled for better conditions of the black majority. That is why he is regarded as the father of modern Namibian nationalism.

25 A monograph of that small war was written by Freislich (1964).

his territory from being taken by the whites. The community of Basters asked the South African government to allow the proclamation of an independent *Rehoboth Gebied*, which was rejected. As an answer, the government prepared a military campaign of infantry and air force in April 1925 for suppressing the autonomous policy of the *Basterraad*; under martial law 44 foremen of the alleged Baster uprising were condemned to death, which only was prevented by an intervention of the League of Nations later on. The authorities also abolished the function of the Baster *kaptein*.

In order to calm down the unsatisfied natives the administration established Native Advisory Boards in town/city districts and Boards of Headmen in tribal territories in 1924. The authority of such headmen was applicable only on their limited territory and supervised by a white resident commissioner appointed for the respective region. This confirmed the official racial segregation policy. In conformity with the Constitution Act dated 5 August 1925, the Legislative Assembly of South West Africa was erected as a small local parliament; however, only 6092 whites in the whole country had the right of vote. The South African Colour Bar Law<sup>26</sup> also applied to South West African territory. According to Law No 38 from 1928, the South African Administrator became the paramount chief of all natives with the right of installing and uninstalling tribal and local chiefs.

In 1930 the League of Nations declared that the Union of South Africa has no right of sovereignty over the South West African territory. A Swiss member of the Permanent Mandate Commission William Rappard did not mention the impossibility of African political participation, however, he criticized that the administration spends only 10 per cent of the education budget for 90 per cent of the country's African population (Pienaar 1987: 130). Problems went on. Under the threat of an air raid and the use of machine guns, the rebellion of the Kwambi tribe was suppressed in 1932, the chief Iipumbu ya Tshilongo being deposed (Hartmann 1998: 263–288). Even the request of the Windhoek Ovambos to homage the chief Mandume was not settled favorably in 1937. At the end of this decade conflicts between the administration and German adherents of the European Nazi movement put to one side the question of the political representation of the African population.

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26 See Dubow (1989).



As soon as World War II was over, Hosea Kutako with friends founded the Herero Chiefs' Council hoping that the victory of democratic forces would enable the desire of his people to be fulfilled. Instead the League of Nations the new United Nations Organization was to decide the future of the country and its inhabitants of all colours. In order to avoid a clear proclamation of the United Nations Trust Territory to be administered by the UN Trusteeship Council, the South Africans arranged a referendum over the complicated question which ended with a strange result: 208.850 votes for the merging of South West Africa with the Union of South Africa, 33.520 against and 56.700 absent (Troup 1950: 108).

In October 1946, the UNO General Assembly received a report on the South African administration of South West Africa. However, the Union of South Africa, although a founding member of the UNO, did not recognize an automatic transfer of the League of Nations rights to the UNO Trusteeship Council (Diener and Graefe 1999: 21). The conflict increased on 14 December 1946, when ONU rejected the South African proposal to join South West Africa to other parts of South Africa as the fifth province of the Union. During disputes and controversies of international lawyers the South African administration continued; thus, the victory of the D. F. Malan's National Party in South African elections in May 1948 proved to be fatal for the occupied South West Africa. The new official policy of the territorial and civic racial segregation (*aparte ontwikkeling* or *apartheid*) would be introduced into South West Africa, too.

### **Apartheid, Odendaal Report and SWAPO resistance**

In 1949, the South African National Party set forth Law No. 23 called *South West Africa Affairs Amendment Act*. This new South West Africa's de facto constitution did not mention the Mandate or Trusteeship regime, but it strengthened the county's political links to South Africa. The white minority of South West Africa was given the right to send 6 deputies to the House of Representatives and 4 to the Senate of the South African Parliament.<sup>27</sup> Instead of the previous 12 elected and 6

<sup>27</sup> Between 1910 and 1961, the Parliament of the Union of South Africa was bicameral and consisted of the King (represented by the Governor-General), the Senate and the House of Assembly (*Volksraad* in Afrikaans). From 1930 white women were granted the franchise, from 1937 black voters were separated from the other races; in the Senate they were represented by four elected

appointed representatives all 18 representatives of the country's Legislative Council would be elected in the 18 districts. The administrator of South West Africa was responsible to the South African government. By that way the country became a de facto part of the Union. Besides, the Pretoria government informed the ONU that no reports on the administration of South West Africa would be sent to the Trusteeship Council any more.

At the end of August 1950 the local National Party (NPSWA) won the election for the Legislative Council; at the same time, the first 6 MP's and 4 Senators from South West Africa started working in the South African parliament. A conference of South West African missionaries held in September and October supported the policy of "separate development." In January 1951 Johannes von Moltke elected to represent the Karas region delivered the first speech of a South West African representative in the South African parliament.

The *Provision on Urban Territories* No. 56 from 1951 established communal self-governments (Töttemeyer 2002: 507), but the town/city quarters or places were divided according to the racial composition of the local population; for the black quarters reliable Africans were appointed and then controlled by their white superiors. Hosea Kutako wanted to present complaints at the UNO, but the government refused to issue a passport for him and his colleagues.

Inspired by the ANC the former miner Herman Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo founded the *Ovambo People Congress* (OPC) in Cape Town in August 1957, re-named *Ovambo People's Organization* (OPO) in 1958. The same lack of national identity and tribalism were evident when other African organizations came into existence striving to oppose the South African supremacy like the *Damara Tribe Executive Committee* (DTEC) in 1958 or the *Rehoboth Taxpayers' Association* (RTA) in 1959. Racial principles prevailed in the newly founded *South West Africa Coloureds' Organization* (SWACO). Out of the reach of political agitation, the first protest against apartheid arose among the black population in Windhoek forced to move into the black ghetto nicknamed Katutura ("the place we don't want to go to"). The mass boycott of means of transport, restaurants and cinemas on 8 December

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senators, and in the House of Assembly by three "native representative" members of Parliament elected in separate black constituencies. From 1957, Coloured voters were separated from the whites. Representation of black voters was ended in 1960.

expressed the indignation of the blacks who had to give up their *Old Location* quarter in favour of whites. On 10 December 1959 the police shot dead 11 persons, 2 of the injured died later on, 54 more injured spread the hatred of the white rule.<sup>28</sup>

The proverbial “Wind of change” during the “Africa Year” 1960 altered the major part of the continent. Following the “Sharpeville massacre” of 21 March 1960 the Union of South Africa abandoned the British Commonwealth on 31 May 1961 as the fully independent, but generally boycotted Republic of South Africa (RSA). In the meantime, the exiled Ovambos transformed OPO into the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO) on 19 April 1960. The communication between RSA and UNO grew more and more difficult.<sup>29</sup> Despite this, UNO required a political solution for South West Africa not in the form of state independence, but only as the renewal of the Trusteeship Territory regime.

Hendrik Verwoerd, South African prime minister, entrusted the Transvaal administrator Frans Hendrik Odendaal to “ascertain the social, economic and political situation in South West Africa.” From September 1962, the Odendaal group of experts studied how to satisfy white and black communities in the country within the ruling apartheid concept. At the end of January 1964 the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs 1962-1963* was published as a proposal of the definitive political organization of the country with 526.000 registered inhabitants. The natives were to develop their specific traditions, languages and religions in 11 homelands (bantustans). The biggest *Hereroland* with 5900 km<sup>3</sup> was planned for 35.354 Hereros, *Ovamboland* with 5607 km<sup>3</sup> for 239.363 members of various Ovambo tribes, *Kaokoveld* with the area of 4898 km<sup>3</sup> was destined for 9234 subjects belonging to different northwestern population groups, the neighboring *Damaraland* with 4173 km<sup>3</sup> was determined for 44.353 Damaras, the northeastern *Okavango* homeland with 4170 km<sup>3</sup> should grant the specific development to 27.871 of several Kavango ethnic groups, *Bushmanland* with 2393 km<sup>3</sup> would be a homeland for 11.762 Sans, *Namaland* with 2168 sq. km for 34.806 southern Namas, *Rehoboth-Gebied* with 1386 km<sup>3</sup> for 11.257 Basters, *Caprivi* with 1153

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28 Only after the proclamation of Namibia’s independence was it possible to publish details: Jafta and Ridgway and Kautja and Oliphant and Kapofi (1995; 1st ed. 1991).

29 See Goldblatt (1961).

km<sup>3</sup> for 15.840 relatives of the Lozi nation and other tribes living in the northeastern Caprivi Strip. Even the 2632 members of the Tswana minority were not forgotten, their small homeland *Tswana* with 155.4 km<sup>3</sup> was situated in the extreme eastern part of the country at the desert Bechuanaland/Botswana border. The registered 12.707 “coloureds” were given no homeland due to the presupposition that they would live in the limited city suburbs. According to the Report, the 92 per cent majority of Africans received only 39 per cent of the country. Their homelands were to be subordinated to the South African Ministry of Bantu Administration,<sup>30</sup> which could or would not allow the self-administration of the respective homeland. Only national parks Etosha, Skeleton Coast, Namib<sup>31</sup> desert and the southwestern coastal *Sperrgebiet* were excluded from the racial scheme. The main portion of territory was reserved for whites as a fundamental part of the fifth South African province.

The Odendaal Report embarrassed some white farmers because 3.406.181 hectares of their land had to be bought up for consolidating the planned homelands (Kube 2002: 295–296). All African leaders of some standing like Clemens Kapuu on behalf of Hereros rejected the particularization of the country. However, some African groups agreed to the delimitation of their guaranteed tribal areas. Establishing new political parties (CANU for Fwe, UNIPP for Namas etc.) corresponding to the tribal membership confirmed the country’s problem of national identity. For the UNO, the Odendaal Plan was unacceptable in the same period when Zambia and Malawi independence enlarged free Africa, and then the liberation war in three Portuguese continental colonies - including Angola at the northern border of South West Africa - grew stronger.

It was not clear when and how the Odendaal Plan would be put into practice. In the meantime the South African administration engaged the South West Africa natives in the process of low level decision making in conformity with the *Provision for the village administration*

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30 Between 1958 and 1966 Michel Daniel Christiaan de Wet Nel was the South African “Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, and Bantu Education.”

31 The unconquerable Namib desert (*Namib* in the *khoekhoegowab* language means “a place where is nothing”, i. e. desert) became a symbol of the future free country. When looking for a better denomination than “South West Africa” the Africans proposed originally the word *Kalanami* (contraction from Kalahari + Namib deserts), but the Ovambo SWAPO co-founder Mburumba Kerina coined, in 1963, the name *Namibia* adopted later on by the international community.

*councils from 1963, Provision on establishing the local administration in the settlement areas of coloureds from 1965 and Provision on consultative bodies in the settlement areas of coloureds from 1966.* International and domestic conditions were worsening. After the first armed conflict of the South Africa Defense Force with the SWAPO guerrilla at Omugulugwombashe on 26 August 1966 a wave of detentions<sup>32</sup> and persecution began. The UNO Resolution No. 2145 (114 votes in favour, 2 against: RSA and Portugal, 3 abstentions) declared on 17 October 1966 that the UNO direct administration of South West Africa should replace the existing rule because South Africa did not fulfil its duties. In 1966 UNO established the function of the UNO High Commissioner for Namibia.<sup>33</sup> But, the Pretoria government refused to hand over the country to the Committee for South West Africa composed of representatives of 14 UNO member states.

During the Cold War, the anti-communist South Africa was being secretly supported by western powers. That is why for the UNO leaders situation was also quite ambiguous. The UNO General Secretary Kurt Waldheim visited South West Africa in March 1972 to talk to African adherents and adversaries of a contingent independence. Then, he declared that “it would be political suicide if the UNO urges a central government on all tribes now.” Besides, he declined the new name *Namibia* for the country arguing that “the Namib desert covers only a part of the territory.” Despite such an evasive proclamation, SWAPO was given observer status at the UN Trusteeship Council in September 1972.

The South African administration did not give up. In March 1973 the Multi-National (i. e. multi-racial) Advisory Council for South West Africa was established. However, Clemens Kapuuo rejected that body because of its “ethnic” foundation. Until that time only two homelands including their tribal councils were constituted according to the Odendaal Plan: Ovamboland and Kavangoland. At the beginning of

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32 The guerrilla fighters seized on their base sit in court immediately in the so-called *Terrorism Trial – The State vs Tuhadeleni and Others*. The SWAPO co-founder Herman Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo was arrested in September 1966, and condemned, in January 1968, to 20 years in prison. Nelson Mandela met him on the Robben Island jail in 1971 (Mandela 2010: 430-431).

33 UNO High Commissioners for Namibia were Anton Vratuša from Yugoslavia (1966-1967), Konstantinos Stavropoulos from Greece (1967-1969), Agha Abdul Hamid from Pakistan (1969-1973), Seán McBride from Ireland (1973-1977), Martti Ahtisaari from Finland (1977-1982), Brajesh Mitra from India (1982-1987) and Bernt Carlsson from Sweden (1987-1988).

August 1973 the first elections for the Legislative Council took place in Ovamboland. SWAPO and its supporters organized a massive boycott so that only about 3 per cent voters appeared at the ballot-boxes. The Kavangoland elections were a totally different case, 66,2 per cent of voters enabled the local council to be instituted. Some governmental favourable measures changed the opinion of Ovambos; 76 per cent of voters took part in the repeated election in Ovamboland in January 1975. But the third and last homeland was established in Caprivi, the other presupposed homelands failed.

In the Old Gymnasium (*Alte Turnhalle*) in Windhoek the Constituent Assembly known as the “Turnhalle Conference” met on 1 September 1975. It was a positive and good turnout for the representation of all the Namibian population components. Three quarters of 181 delegates were democratically elected, one quarter were traditional chiefs. Whites of all three nationalities, representatives of “coloureds” as well as of all important African groups Lozi, Kavango, Ovambo, San, Herero, Damara, Tswana, Basters were present. Although no visible results could be published, this initiative showed the possibilities of an internal solution of the country status still under the South African administration.

Meanwhile the SWAPO was undergoing a deep crisis inside the organization, the Caprivi Strip became a homeland called Lozi on 1 April 1976. In May 1976 also the Rehoboth *Gebied* were granted the autonomous status with the right of electing a *kaptein* of the Baster community. The fifth meeting of the Turnhalle conference proposed three steps to independence, but ONU expressed its “support to the armed struggle led by SWAPO” by means of the Resolution No. 386 dated 20 December 1976. The Turnhalle Conference adopted a new denomination of the country *South West Africa - Namibia*. An autonomous army SWATF (South West Africa Territorial Force) was allowed to be built from July 1977 and the highest South African custodian Marthinus T. Steyn came with a new title of *Administrator-General* for stressing the new approach to the country’s possible autonomy. At the same time, South West Africa ceased to be represented in the Parliament of South Africa.

By creating the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) in November 1977 all important political streams of whites and blacks united.

Despite this, more and more new and small political parties arose. Even SWAPO was splitting and its fraction called SWAPO-D refused the armed struggle organized from Angolan bases. The South African prime minister Balthasar Vorster announced that the general election would be organized in December 1978. In order to prevent that UNO adopted the Resolution No 435 on 29 September 1978. According to this decision a body called *United Nations Transitional Assistance Group* (UNTAG) was entrusted to grant a general cease-fire and to prepare all necessary steps for the democratic election and immediate independence. To cope with this task, 5000 UNO soldiers, 1200 civil employees and 360 policemen were being recruited.

### **Which representation? – from 1978 election to independence**

The South African authorities began to respect more and more the African populations in South West Africa – Namibia. Traditional chiefs assumed abandoned functions. Japhet Malenga Munkundi took up the leadership of the Ongandjera tribe after 23 years as a non-existing tribal chief.<sup>34</sup> In 1977 the *kaptein* Ben Africa headed the Rehoboth Basters after 52 years of officially non recognized community leadership. Kuaima Riruako renewed Herero chieftain tradition in 1978 after more than 70 years. Even the small Tswana community from the Gobabis region, where the establishment of a homeland never succeeded, acclaimed their headman Constance Letang Kgosiemanga in 1979.

Ignoring the UNO plans, the Administrator-General organized a well prepared election process for 443 441 voters on 4-8 December 1978. Based on the decision of 326 264 valid votes, DTA led by Dirk Mudge (white)<sup>35</sup> and Peter Kalangula (black)<sup>36</sup> won 41 seats from 50. The democratic principle one citizen - one vote was perfectly fulfilled, but the lawfulness of the election was obstructed by the absence of SWAPO, SWAPO-D and the NNF coalition (8 moderate nationalist parties). As the election had no UNO backing it was not recognized

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34 For the regional chief changes and traditions see Töttemeyer (1978).

35 The white Namibian patriot Dirk Frederik Mudge (farmer, born 1928) was a member of the National Party, later he sided with the DTA.

36 Peter Tanyangenge Kalangula (born 1926) as a deacon of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa wanted a separate Anglican diocese in Ovamboland. In 1973, he was nominated to the Ovamboland Legislative Council.

by the international community. That is why the newly constituted National Assembly agreed on 22 December 1978 that the election process would be repeated under the UNO supervision.

When the National Assembly started working on 21 May 1979, SWAPO and NNF designated this body as illegal although one of its first decisions was the abolition of the racial discrimination.<sup>37</sup> At that time, SWAPO was successful in gaining world favour. The war grew stronger.<sup>38</sup> In 1979 the SADF registered more than 900 conflicts with the SWAPO, the number of South African soldiers increased from 15.000 to 80.000 between 1974 and 1980 (Thornberry 2004: 19). The administration offered new institutions: based on the law from April 1980, the National Assembly elected Dirk Mudge president of the newly created Council of Ministers. One representative of each from eleven ethnic communities worked in this factual country government. Commencing 1 July 1980 the “government service” of 15 administration authorities (popularly called “ministries”) was introduced. The new Law AG 8 stipulated three levels of executive power to be in force from September 1980: the highest level was to be the central government around the general administrator, the second one, governments of 11 ethnic communities and local administrations should work at the lowest level. The Law AG 8 respected African traditions by presupposing a special legal system to be chosen by any individual ethnic group. In August 1980, the project of homelands was scrapped.

On 11-13 November 1980 elections for 9 ethnic governments (whites, Caprivi, Damara, Herero, Kavango, coloureds, Nama, Tswana, Ovambo) were organized; Basters refused to ballot because of their valid *Volksraad* and *kaptein* in function (Kube 2002: 303–304). The San as a nomad group directly subordinated to the central government did not come to ballot-boxes. Such a complicated model more divided than united the Namibian population. Therefore, 53,6 per cent non-white voters boycotted this attempt to solve the political system on the ethnic or racial basis.

In the meantime, the war in Angola continued<sup>39</sup> and new political parties and movements came into existence in Namibia. US diplo-

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37 For the nationalist standpoint see Kerina (1981).

38 A thorough study was made by Dobell (1998).

39 See Steenkamp (1989).



macy<sup>40</sup> emphasized the complex solution of regional problems, i. e. negotiation with Cuba, Angola's MPLA and UNITA, South Africa and SWAPO, as a sole way to Namibia's independence. In the shadow of the so-called *Cuban Linkage* further government reforms in Namibia were of no use.<sup>41</sup> After a conflict with the general administrator Danie Hough, Dirk Mudge, the white prime minister, resigned on 18 January 1983. On the next day Hough dissolved the National Assembly and assumed the full executive and legislative power. The conference held on 11-13 May 1984 in Lusaka under the auspices of the Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda brought no result. Under US pressure the South African president Pieter W. Botha announced the new government in Namibia to be formed.<sup>42</sup> On 17 June 1985 the *Transitional Government of National Unity* (TGNU) assumed the majority of executive powers (Fritz 1991: 90). However, SWAPO and other nationalist parties rejected to co-operate with that body.<sup>43</sup>

The South African government declared its intention to realize the UNO Resolution 435 starting 1 August 1986 if Cuban troops commence withdrawing from Angola. In the Windhoek's black quarter of Katutura the first public manifestation of SWAPO took place on 30 November 1986. With the Soviet *perestroika* the willingness of terminating the wars in South African region increased. But, it was the bloody battle of Cuito Cuanavale<sup>44</sup> which accelerated the final solution. Its principles were signed in New York on 20 July 1988 as a pattern for the final Geneva Agreement dated 5 August 1988 (USIP 2002). Based on this, the SADF units abandoned Angola at the end of August 1988, meanwhile Cuban troops started withdrawing in January 1989. The *United Nations Transition Assistance Group* (UNTAG) was deploying its officers and observers from February 1989. The useless SWAPO offensive in April 1989 could not hinder the peace process.<sup>45</sup> New parties and

40 A broader bipolar context of the Namibia problem was stressed by Menar (1983). For the similar view see Sitte (1983). From the US point of view the complexity of the regional peace process was presented in: Crocker (1993).

41 International circumstances are important for Ya-Otto (1982).

42 On the endeavour of the South African administration in seeking a political solution, see Du Pisani (1985).

43 From the SWAPO side, causes and ideology of the external and internal nationalism are presented in: Katjavivi (1988).

44 The crucial armed conflict can be studied from different points of view: Ricardo Luis (1989); George (2005); Polack (2013). South African standpoint prevails in the respective part of Mills and Williams (2006).

45 A critical view of the SWAPO action appears in Leys, Colin and Saul, John S. (1995).

coalitions were formed to take part in the first elections realized for whites, blacks and coloreds on 7 November 1989 without using the ethnic/race clue. 701 483 registered voters (95 per cent) gave 41 seats in the Constituent Assembly from 72 to SWAPO (in Ovamboland 92,2, per cent), DTA won 21 seats thanks to 28 per cent of votes (66,4 per cent in Hereroland), deputies from more than 5 parties could take part in the first meeting of the Assembly on 21 November 1989 in the historical building of *Turnhalle* in the Windhoek's Bahnhofstraße. On 21 December the designed prime minister Sam Nujoma presented his government, on 16 February 1990 the SWAPO leader Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma was elected president of Namibia and independence was proclaimed on 21 March 1990.

Due to the numbers of individual nation/tribal groups, the civic equality meant the predominance of Ovambos. Smaller communities (including the whites having, however, deputy ministers and strong economic influence) took previous measures of the last South African administration as a better guarantee of their specific development than the new democratic situation. In June 1990 the *kaptein* of the Rehoboth Basters<sup>46</sup> Hans Diergaardt demanded a full autonomy for his people threatening an armed conflict if the request was not satisfied (Bader 1997: 94). In August a bomb exploded at the headquarters of a journal that revealed the preparation of a plot by white extremists. The governmental *affirmative action*, i. e. preferring the blacks<sup>47</sup> to whites was visible in the area of bloated state administration, the *black empowerment*, i. e. economic preference of blacks, conflicted with the land tenure of white farmers. In 1992, the living standard of the black population remained low with the average income of 85 USD per capita, whereas 5 per cent of the white population enjoyed the annual income of 16.000 USD.

In 1991-1992, 31 lower territorial units were abolished. Instead of them 13 regions subdivided into 95 districts and 53 municipalities were established. The populous Ovamboland formed four regions called Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana and Oshikoto. The Law on local administration No 23 from 1992 defined the representation of cities

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46 For the history of this very special community see Britz and Lang and Limpricht (1999).

47 The appointment of 26 years old Sarah Kuugongelva as a head of the State Planning Commission in March 1995 was considered a scandalous error, but it fully tuned with the *affirmative action*.

(15 deputies) and towns (7 deputies at the highest).<sup>48</sup> This was a basis for the first regional and municipal elections held at the turn of November-December 1992: SWAPO won 9 out of 13 regions and 32 out of 48 municipalities. The white mayor of Windhoek Abraham Bernard May handed over his post to the black SWAPO candidate Matheus Shikongo. But, the *Local Authorities Act* gave localities complicated tasks which could hardly be fulfilled.

The most important task for calming disputes between different communities consisted in the establishment of the Upper House of the Parliament. In 1992, the first elections to the *National Council* were held. It was not so much important that SWAPO won 19 of the 26 seats. This second house was constructed for ensuring regional equity by delegating 2 deputies representing each region to the second house. The election for this chamber on the political party basis, however, weakened the intention of offering a fair representation to different ethnic groups living in non-Ovambo regions of Karas and Hardap (Namas), Khomas, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa (Hereros), Erongo (Damaras), Kavango (Kavangos) and Caprivi/Zambezi (Fwe, Yeyi and others).

Still before the independence, the new chiefs renewed the traditional highest authority of individual nationalities, tribes and clans. This process went on after 1990. Daniel Luipert started leading Swartboois in 1986, Petrus Simon Moses Kooper headed the “Red Nation” (Kaikhaun community) starting 1988, Herman Iipumbu became the first chief of Kwambi tribe in 1991 since 1932, Cornelius Mwetupunga Shelungu (1998-2005, after him Martha Mwadinomho ya Nelumbu) assumed the leadership of the Kwanyama nation which was vacant from 1917. Justus Garoëb became the “king” of Damaras in 1993, Jeremiah Jagger bridged the span of one century when assuming the leadership of the Afrikaner community in 1996. Some chiefs continued in the highest tribal/clan functions like Immanuel Kauluma Elifas (Ondonga since 1975), Stephanus Goliath (Berseba Orlams since 1976), Anna Katrina Christian (Bondelswarts since 1977), Daniel Sitendu Mipasi (*hompá* of the Kwangali tribe), Hendrik Witbooi (1978-2009) and Christian Rooi (since 2009, Witbooi-Nama), Kisco Liswani III (*munitenge* of the Subiya ethnic group since 1996), John Charles Alexander McNab (since 1999, *kaptein* of Basters) and George Simasiku (*mamili* of the

48 Töttemeyer. *Op. cit.*, p. 508.

Fwe ethnic group since 1999). Under their leadership the traditional communities and their languages and cultures are developing without restraints. It is only a question of time before proportional political representation for all such groups is demanded.

The first two Presidents represented the Ovambo majority, both Sam Nujoma and Hifikepunye<sup>49</sup> Pohamba took part in the armed resistance. To prove the equality of any parentage, the Damara armed struggle participant and minister in governments of the independent Namibia, Hage Geingob<sup>50</sup> is expected to be elected the state President for the term commencing in 2015.

The transition of the Republic of Namibia was the most important turning point in the modern history of Africa. The peaceful coexistence of three white linguistic groups and many black or mixed tribal and/or clan communities set right the previous radical mistakes which occurred in the Portuguese-speaking countries. The successful development of the state has caused many individual professional and other migrations within the large territory, thus the clan and/or tribe membership is becoming less important nowadays than before. All citizens have the same rights guaranteed. The English language adopted as the unique official language accentuates the unique citizenship, other languages remaining in local use without restrictions. All native communities have sufficient opportunities of asserting their rights at the regional and municipal levels.<sup>51</sup> Despite this, many problems<sup>52</sup> are enduring<sup>53</sup> and looking for a better and really fair political representation of individual Namibian ethnic groups and sub-ethnic/clan communities in the state decision making process remains an urgent task to be solved in a definitive way in the future.

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49 As the Christian names reveal the European influence, African names have been preferred since the independence. Hence Lucas “Hifikepunye” Pohamba, Herman “Andimba” Toivo Ya Toivo (the surname “Toivo” given by missionaries means “Hope” in the Finnish language), Gideon “Nahas” Angula, Gottfried “Hage” Geingob etc.

50 Gottfried Hage Geingob (born 1941) took degrees from the Temple University, Philadelphia, the Fordham University, New York (both in the U.S.), and the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. The prime minister between 1990 and 2002, he was newly appointed prime minister in 2012.

51 A good analysis and overview can be read in: Hopwood (2004).

52 For some of them see O’Lynn (2010).

53 New approaches were presented in studies gathered by Henning ed. (2004).

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