

BERSEBA COMMUNITY AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

PRESENTATION BY CHIEF S.GOLIATH

TO

THE LAND REFORM CONFERENCE

WINDHOEK

25 JUNE TO 1 JULY 1991

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The struggle for freedom and independence in Namibia has primarily revolved around the question of land. Independence and freedom without land will therefore be meaningless to the 90% plus landless Namibians. In such a situation peace and stability will remain only a dream. Both the German and South African colonial illegal Administrations have acquired vast tracts of land from the indigenous peoples without their consent. Under the pretext of PROTECTION land was stolen. Here von Froncois and others played a major role. We, however, need only to look at the reaction of Captain Hendrik Witbooi to see how this so-called protection was viewed: "What is protection and from what are we to be protected? From what dangers and difficulty and trouble is one chief protected by another?" (From Die Dagboek van Hendrik Witbooi Kaptein van die Witbooi-Hottentotte 1884 - 1905).

Despite this attitude of the captains forceful seizure of land by the Germans took place. Rejection of PROTECTION meant seizure of land.

The following is an indication of land ownership as it was at the end of 1903.

1. African Natives	31 400 000 ha
2. Concession Companies	29 175 500 ha
3. The Government (Crownland)	19 250 000 ha
4. The Settlers	3 684 500 ha

Of the Native-owned land the ownership is said to have been as follows:

1. Hereros of Hereroland 10 million ha (Area south of Etosha Pan)
2. Nama tribal area 10 million ha (area south of Windhoek)
3. Area of Ovamboland 10 million ha (area north of Etosha Pan).

The extend of theft becomes clear when we look at the situation as it is today - For the purpose of our discussion we take todays socalled Namaland as an example: The total area of land owned by the Nama traditional groups now is divided as follows:

1. Berseba	728106 ha
2. Gibeon	766354 ha
3. Soromaas	192747 ha
4. Tses	490560 ha
5. Hoachanas	14253 ha
6. Farms Bought	62499 ha

TOTAL 2 425 915 ha.

According to history the Bondels owned land stretching from the "Orange River northward to the present position of Keetmanshoop", but today they own only 185649 ha (Bondels reserve 171126 ha and Warmbad reserve 14523 ha).

2. PROBLEMS CONFRONTING COMMUNAL FARMERS

From what we have shown above it is clear that the communal farmer is faced with enormous problems:

- No meaningful economic progress can be made because of lack of land;
- Changing from subsistence farming to commercial farming remains only a dream;
- Overgrazing leads to creation of deserts;
- Growth of plants is adversely affected.

3. PROPOSALS

In view of the situation as stated above the BERSEBA TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY wish to make the following proposals:

- 3.1 The following areas should be set aside for the exclusive use of the landless 90% plus Namibians:
 - 3.1.1 The area along the Orange River
 - 3.1.2 Banks of the Fish River south of Mariental and Hardap which are not presently occupied.
 - 3.1.3 All townlands throughout Namibia (The hiring out of these lands to the Commercial farmers should not be continued as from January 1992).
- 3.2 The present commercial farm owners should be allowed to own only one farm and any additional farm should be regarded as aluxury and taxed heavily.
- 3.3 Where the concept of willing seller willing buyer is applied purchasing should be done only in relation to the infra-structure brought about by the farmer.
- 3.4 Government assistance should be considered a matter of urgency for present farm owners who will retain only one farm, communal farmers and those to be allocated land through subsidies and loans to enhance maximum development and productivity.

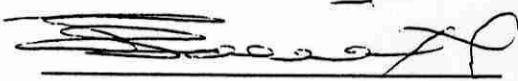
3.5 Training should be given to those newly acquiring land in respect of farm management and productivity.

3.6 In present communal areas programmes should be launched through which tree planting will be encouraged to fight soil erosion. Building of ground dams and the making of contours could be part of this programmes.

4. CONCLUSION

It is our believe that the pricture above gives a clear indication of what happened from the biginning of this century until today. Changes must come to be seen. Now is the time for AFFIRMATIVE ACTION to come into action. We realize that it is a difficult task, but it has to be carried out. The land must come back to its original owners.

THANK YOU



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BERSEBA