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Linda J. Ellanna
1940–1997

and

Aleksandr I. Pika
1951–1995

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Chapter 17

The Ju/'hoansi San under Two States

Impacts of the South West African Administration and the Government of the Republic of Namibia

Megan Biesele and Robert K. Hitchcock

Introduction

Hunter-gatherers have faced numerous challenges in the twentieth century. They have struggled for survival in the face of expansion of state systems, multinational corporations, and individuals who were anxious to exploit their lands, labor, and resources (Burch and Ellanna 1994; Burger 1987; Leacock and Lee 1982). In many cases, foragers and former foragers were subjected to discriminatory policies that denied them access to employment, educational opportunities, and land. This was particularly true in those states that practiced apartheid ("apartness") or separate development. Under national legislation, people of color in various southern African countries such as Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe were not allowed to live where they wished or travel from one area to another without express permission of the state. High-paying jobs and productive land were reserved for Europeans, while African members of the population were often relegated to native reserves where economic and educational opportunities were few (Bixler 1992; Green et al. 1981; Gordon 1992).

Those peoples who were subjected to these inequitable policies and practices expended tremendous energies in resisting the mistreatment (Mermelstein 1987). Part of this resistance took the form of organizing efforts at the grassroots, regional, national, and international levels. The formation of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa in

1912 and the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) in what is now Namibia in 1960 underscored the desire of local people to chart their own course and to seek more equitable treatment from the governments of the states where they lived.

This chapter outlines the growth of a grassroots movement among the Ju/'hoan San called the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative (NNFC). Dedicated to securing land tenure and development in Nyae Nyae, formerly Eastern Bushmanland (now Otjozondjupa) in Namibia, for its two thousand or so members, this cooperative has had substantial success in areas ranging from communal land rights to educational and linguistic self-determination. Issues of political enfranchisement and self-awareness, sovereignty and self-determination, and creative cultural survival of an egalitarian society are examined here in the light of apartheid-era politics and the policies of the postapartheid Namibian government.

Established in 1986, four years prior to Namibia's independence, in tandem with concerned nongovernment organization (NGO) activity and an increasingly convergent world agenda on multiculturalism and indigenous peoples' rights, the NNFC's major theme has been community self-education through community communication programs. Changing circumstances and changing realizations have dictated flexibility of leadership and communication modes since the organization began. The development of a cooperative grassroots movement is a relatively new phenomenon among the San (Bushmen, Basarwa) of southern Africa (Hitchcock 1996; Hitchcock and Holm 1993). It has meant the rapid spread of confidence and competence with which to tackle contemporary challenges of ethnicity and identity. Ju/'hoan voices have now been brought directly into the global dialogue on cultural survival of indigenous peoples. These voices, far from demanding only mainstream rights, form a fresh chorus of locally informed, environmentally and socially responsible suggestions and possibilities.

The San of Namibia

The San peoples of Namibia are receiving special attention in many areas of human rights from the new government of Namibia (Biesele 1994; Hitchcock 1996; Republic of Namibia 1991; 1992). Long before independence in March 1990, the leaders of SWAPO were aware that they would be inheriting a difficult legacy in minority rights from the previous apartheid government. Dr. Kaire Mbuende, now Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, noted in a preindependence SWAPO position paper that the San were particularly disadvantaged among Namibian societies due to the violence with which apartheid had

transformed them. Since coming to power, President Sam Nujoma and his government have pursued vigorous affirmative action policies toward the San peoples in an attempt to redress offenses (Republic of Namibia 1991; 1992).

However, practical considerations like the fragmentation and dispersal of most San communities due to land dispossession have made affirmative action very difficult to implement. One exception is the Ju/'hoansi San of the Nyae Nyae region in northeastern Namibia. Ironically, the apartheid practice of setting aside blocks of land for specific ethnic groups actually protected a portion of the ancestral land of the Ju/'hoansi, who were able to remain on that land in relatively intact communities (L. Marshall 1976). Many of the more positive human rights statements that can be made about San in Namibia today apply only to this group. The Ju/'hoansi are aware of their historically privileged status (due to geographical isolation and other factors) and have taken an exemplary role with regard to other San in the country.

Until recently, little research had been done on the conditions of life among the dispossessed San, many of whom work as ill-paid laborers on European or African farms, or live as squatters in rural or urban slums. Knowing what to do about the human rights of these people would be much easier if systematic surveying work was carried out in areas like Gobabis and Aminius, Tsintsabis, the Grootfontein farm district, etc. For now, the well-documented situation of the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi, living in their original communities around the administrative center at Tjum!kui (Tsumkwe), provides baseline information (and an example for the future) on the human rights status of the Namibian San minority.

Issues regarding human rights may be divided into the following categories: land rights, political rights, economic rights, and cultural rights. The discussion below provides an update in these areas for the San minority in general and the Ju/'hoansi in particular. The difficulty of generalizing about the Namibian San is underscored by the fact that at least half a dozen San languages are used in different San communities (Gordon 1992; J. Marshall 1989). At an international conference held in Windhoek in June 1992 to bring together San peoples, government officials, and NGOs involved in San welfare, nine groups from Namibia participated. They were from Drimiopsis, M'kata, Omatako, Okongo, Tsintsabis, Bagani, Mangetti Block, Rundu, Corridor #17, and Tjum!kui (Nyae Nyae). Yet even this sizable group failed to represent many other San who live in dispersed small groups on the farms and in and around the communities of other groups in Namibia, something that the representatives at the meeting took note of in their discussions (Republic of Namibia 1992).

The Ju/'hoansi (Ju/Wasi) San with whom this chapter deals are sometimes referred to as !Kung (see Barnard 1992: 39–41; Lee 1979:

37–38; L. Marshall 1976: 15–18). Numerically, they are the second largest San group in Namibia, with an estimated population of 7,000; the largest group, the Hai//om, have an estimated population of 11,000 (Axel Thoma, Thomas Widlok, personal communications). The Ju/'hoansi are found in various districts of eastern and northern Namibia, including Tsumeb, Grootfontein, Otjozondjupa (formerly, Eastern Bushmanland), and the Gobabis farming area in Omaheke region.

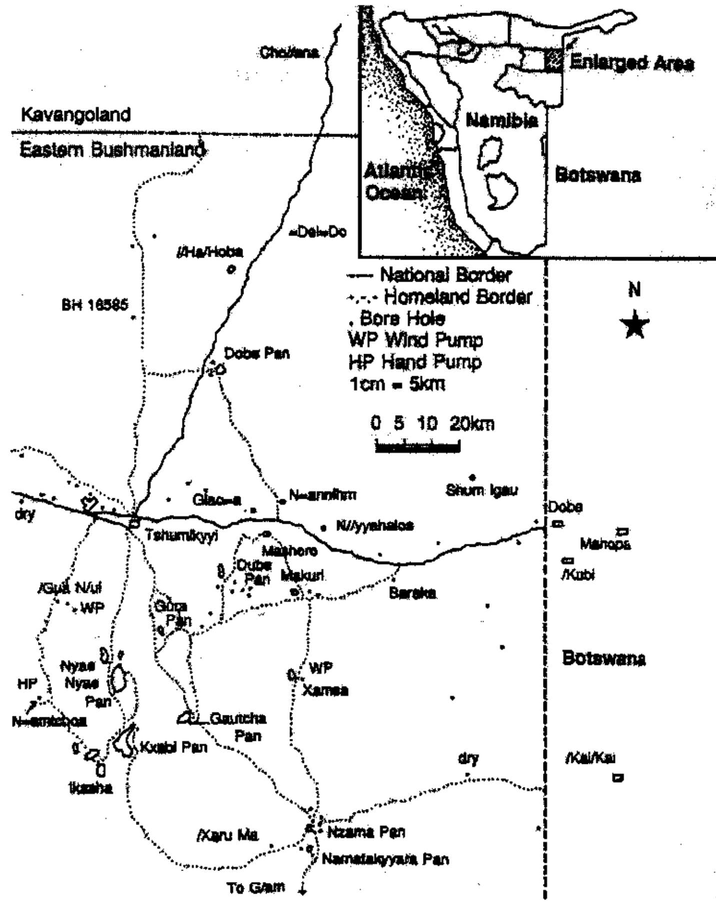
The primary focus of this essay is on the Nyae Nyae region in what is now the Otjozondjupa region of Namibia (see Figure 17.1). In 1991, according to the Namibian national census, the population of Eastern Otjozondjupa was 1,493. As of 1997, there were some 1,500 Ju/'hoansi living in thirty-seven dispersed communities in this region, which today covers an area of 6,300 square kilometers. Most of the Ju/'hoansi in this region survive through employing a diversified set of subsistence and income-generating strategies, including foraging, food production, reliance on income from craft sales and salaries, and, in some cases, pensions from the Namibian government.

The land tenure situation of San peoples in Namibia has been very precarious for many decades. The great majority of San groups were completely dispossessed by incoming settlers—both European and African—or deprived of their traditional foraging grounds by the previous government's Directorate of Nature Conservation (Gordon 1992; Hitchcock 1992; J. Marshall 1989). Many, such as the Khoe of West Caprivi and the Hai//om of Oshikati and Kunene regions, were peremptorily resettled out of game reserve areas into new areas where they did not know the wild food resources and had little or no access to land on which to make an independent living (Hitchcock and Murphree 1995; Widlok, this volume). The Ju/'hoansi were faced with similar pressures at various times in their history, but they were able to hold onto a fraction of their old land by defeating during the 1980s a nature conservation plan to create a game reserve for tourists in their area (J. Marshall 1989).

Until the National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question held in Windhoek in June–July 1991, the major preoccupation of the NNFC was establishing the security of their land tenure. They did this in various ways: They asked anthropologists, missionaries, and government workers to speak on their behalf to the government of South West Africa and later the government of the Republic of Namibia. They sought to dig wells and take over boreholes that had been drilled in their area in the hopes that this would give them de facto land use rights in the vicinity of the water points.

In the early 1980s, groups of Ju/'hoansi began to leave the administrative center at Tjum!kui and reestablish themselves on their traditional territories, or, as they are known to the Ju/'hoansi, their *n!oresi* (sing.

Figure 17.1 Ju/'hoan Settlements in the Nyae Nyae Region, Namibia



Source: Bixler (1992).

n!ore). This decentralization trend picked up steam after 1982–83, when three groups moved out to their *n!oresi* (Marshall and Ritchie 1984). By the mid-1990s, there were some thirty-seven Ju/'hoan groups living in areas to which they had long-standing customary rights (Biesele 1994; Jones 1996; Wyckoff-Baird 1996).

In the decentralized settlements, the Ju/'hoansi supported themselves through a mixed economic system involving some hunting and gathering, livestock-raising, crop production, sales of crafts, and, in some cases, wage-paying jobs (Biesele et al. 1993; J. Marshall 1989). In 1992, there were over forty people employed by the NNFC and the Nyae Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia (NNDFN), the nongovernment organization that provides technical support to the NNFC (Hitchcock 1992). Some individuals worked for the Department of Veterinary Services and the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT), now the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). Four out of five households (80 percent) had livestock, and over 90 percent of the households engaged in crop production. Botelle et al. (1994: 141) maintain that Ju/'hoan households in the Nyae Nyae region are generally better off economically than many other Namibian San households.

The status of Ju/'hoan women, who contributed a significant proportion of the daily food supply and did a great deal of the household work, was high (Lee 1979; L. Marshall 1976). The elderly, both female and male, were respected for their knowledge and experience, and older people played important roles in Ju/'hoan society, doing numerous domestic tasks, taking care of children, and passing on knowledge to younger generations.

The Ju/'hoansi exhibit some significant features in terms of population and health. In the 1960s, the Ju/'hoansi had one of the world's slowest rates of population growth (Howell 1979; Lee 1979). The number of children born to women was between four and five. The average number of children who survived was slightly over two, meaning Ju/'hoan fertility was holding the population at the replacement rate. Infant mortality rates were moderate. The reproductive health of women was relatively good, though there were cases of venereal disease and infertility (Howell 1979).

Hunting-gathering Ju/'hoansi had very low serum cholesterol, low blood pressures that do not increase with age, and little in the way of heart disease. Ju/'hoansi were very active, going on forays for foraging and visiting purposes, carrying infants, and engaging in extensive work activities both in their camps and in the bush. Their nutritional status was relatively good, was high in vitamins and nutrients, and was diverse, with as many as 150 species of plants and over 40 species of animals consumed (Lee 1979). There were periods when people went hungry, especially during the late dry season, and undernutrition was a problem that the Ju/'hoansi had to contend with (Wilmsen 1989).

Over the past two decades, the Ju/'hoansi have undergone major social, economic, and demographic changes that have followed the shift from nomadic foraging to sedentary crop and animal raising. Population growth rates have risen to the point where some Ju/'hoan groups are increasing at a rate of 2.5 percent per annum (which would cause the population to double in twenty-eight years). Some of the hypotheses proposed for the increased growth rates range from changes in patterns of breast-feeding and female activity levels to dietary and physiological shifts. Ju/'hoansi are taller and heavier now than they used to be. Diets today are higher in carbohydrates and refined sugars, and there are indications that adult-onset diabetes is on the increase among Ju/'hoansi, a process not dissimilar to that among Native American populations after the establishment of reservations and the provision of government food. Cardiovascular disease is more common today than it was in the past among the Ju/'hoansi and other San (Trefor Jenkins, personal communication, 1985).

It is useful to compare data on living standards of San in Namibia generally and those in Eastern Otjozondjupa specifically over time. Table 17.1 provides information on San demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in Namibia as a whole in the early 1980s with data on Eastern Bushmanland under the South West African Administration in 1981 and in Eastern Otjozondjupa under the government of the Republic of Namibia in 1998 (for additional information on the latter, see also Wiessner 1998). It can be seen that the Ju/'hoan death rate has declined, although this may change with an increase in HIV/AIDS and other diseases. An increased life span is an example of some of the positive factors Ju/'hoansi have experienced since they have changed their nomadic life for a settled one.

Because of the higher calories diet, the reduced physical demands of settled life, and the availability of Western-style health care, more Ju/'hoan elders are living into their seventh and sometimes eighth decade of life. A large number of elders may prove to be particularly important for this transitional population. Older people remember the former nomadic life and have a better knowledge of the diversity of plants and animals and the different areas of the Kalahari in which they were found. As the Ju/'hoansi and other populations become more aware of the fragility of the environment, the knowledge that only elders have of a lifestyle that was in harmony with nature will become more valuable as time passes.

The Ju/'hoansi may be suffering more from the "diseases of development"—cancer and heart problems (Nurse et al. 1985; for further information see Howell 1979)—but this situation is offset by the fact that they now have greater access to health services. There is a clinic in Tjum!kui, and mobile medical assistance has been provided periodically by government and private entities and/or local people's organizations. The Ministry of Health is now in charge of that set of activities. Health education

Table 17.1 Comparative Data on Living Standards of San in Namibia Generally and Eastern Otjozondjupa Specifically

	Namibia[1]	Eastern Bushmanland, 1981[2]	Eastern Otjozondjupa, 1998[3]
San population	2,245	2,800 (1,826 Ju/'hoansi)	2,059 Ju/'hoansi
Crude birth rate (CBR)	45.0 (1982)	32.6	38.0
Crude death rate (CDR)	34.4 (1982)	33.7	18.0
Tjum!kui population	552	716 (922 army)	225 Ju/'hoansi
Income per capita	R64/month or R768/year	R19/month, R280 year	N$12/month, N$144/year
Economy	salaries, rations	salaries, rations	salaries, pensions, food production, foraging, craft sales
Employed men	343	188	42
Unemployed men	787	269	378
Employed women	0	0	8

1. François Marais (1981).
2. Marshall and Ritchie (1984).
3. Nyae Nyae Development Foundation (1990–98).

programs, covering such topics as preventative health, family planning, women's reproductive health, and nutritional surveillance are on the increase. The HIV/AIDS rate among Ju/'hoansi is much lower than in the general population of Namibia, which is estimated by some analysts to be as high as 20 to 30 percent. As a result, efforts are being made to promote wide-ranging AIDS education in Eastern Otjozondjupa as well as elsewhere in Namibia. Overall, the socioeconomic and health situation of the Ju/'hoansi is higher than is the case for other San in Namibia.

Changes over Time in Northeastern Namibia

According to Marshall and Ritchie (1984: 6), the year 1970 marked a major turning point in the history of the Ju/'hoansi, as it was the year that the recommendations of the South West African government's Odendaal

Commission of 1964 were put into effect. This commission was aimed at establishing apartheid-style homelands for various ethnic groups in Namibia. Large portions of the traditional territory of the Ju/'hoansi, which they themselves estimated at around 70,000 square kilometers, was given to other groups, especially to Herero and Kavango. The Herero are a stock-keeping people who lived to the south and east of the Ju/'hoansi and who have had long-standing interactions with them, including having the Ju/'hoansi assist in herding their livestock in exchange for milk and sometimes clothing and tobacco (Biesele et al. 1989; Lee 1979; Wilmsen 1989). Some Herero brought cattle into what is now Eastern Otjozondjupa in the 1950s but were forced out by the South West African government (L. Marshall 1976: 13). Subsequent attempts were made by Herero to establish themselves in Ju/'hoan land, in part because of the grazing potential and the fact that it lacked *mogau* (*Dichapetalum cymosum*), a plant poisonous to cattle. Efforts were made by the Ju/Wa Farmers Union (JFU), established in 1986, to convince the Hereros to leave the area. This was not an easy task because some of the Ju/'hoansi had close links with Herero and were able to benefit from their presence.

Bushmanland had been declared formally as a homeland in 1976 under Proclamation 208 of South West Africa. This same proclamation called for the establishment of a Bushman Advisory Council, the membership of which was to be made up of individuals elected by San groups (Ritchie 1987: 67). The members of this council were supposed to serve as liaisons between San and the administration. In fact, according to Ju/'hoan informants, the individual who was their representative tended to take the side of the government and mainly told them what the government wanted them to do.

Changes that occurred in Bushmanland over time included the increased sedentarization of the Ju/'hoansi, nearly all of whom eventually moved into the settlement of Tjum!kui after it was established in 1960. By the late 1970s, Tjum!kui was considered "the place of death" by the Ju/'hoansi because of the high rates of conflict, spouse abuse, and infant mortality there (Marshall and Ritchie 1984; Ritchie 1987). In 1978, Bushmen Battalion 36 was established in Bushmanland when the South African Defense Force (SADF) began to recruit Ju/'hoansi into the army in earnest. The militarization of the Ju/'hoansi had profound impacts, with Ju/'hoansi soldiers receiving substantial salaries for what was decidedly high-risk work. The money that they earned was sometimes spent on their families, but it was also used for the purchase of alcohol and luxury goods (Marshall and Ritchie 1984).

By the time John Marshall and Claire Ritchie arrived in Tjum!kui in July 1980, there were major social cleavages among the Ju/'hoansi that had developed because of the destabilizing presence of the military, inequitable access to resources, and high population densities in Tjum!kui (J. Marshall

1989; Marshall and Ritchie 1984; Ritchie 1987). Many Ju/'hoansi were impoverished, unhealthy, malnourished, and despondent. It was for this reason that so many Ju/'hoansi wished to leave Tjum!kui and to resume their former lifestyles. As it turned out, the amounts of land that they had available to them were reduced substantially by the establishment of the Kaudum Game Reserve in the north and Hereroland to the south as well as the resettling of !Kung, Khwe, and Vasekela San from Angola and the Caprivi Strip in Western Bushmanland (Hitchcock 1992; J. Marshall 1989).

The lengthy struggle of the South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) and its allies against the South African Defense Force (SADF), which was seen as an occupation force in a country held illegally by South Africa from the time of the defeat of Germany in World War I, combined with international pressures exerted on the governments of South West Africa and South Africa, led eventually to a United Nations-assisted peace and independence process. Though under UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group) the San peoples were positive targets of the information campaign regarding the first Namibian election, their dispersal and generally low school attendance and literacy rates made it hard for them to be informed about their political rights. Some farmers in isolated areas who employ San laborers did not try to help them become better informed, preferring that they remained in ignorance so that they would not agitate for better wages or other benefits. The Ju/'hoansi sought to engage directly in the political process in order to gain greater recognition of their land and resource rights and to have a greater say in political decision-making and policy formulation.

The Ju/Wa Farmers Union, later called the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative, experienced several major advances in political awareness by its membership. One of these was the first genuine election of a chairperson. Tsamkxao ≠Oma had been the chairman since the organization began in 1986, but he was in a way chairman by default, as few Ju/'hoansi at that time were bold enough to be politically articulate. /'Angn!ao /'Un's election in early 1991, then, was a real turning point for the NNFC. Observers, indeed, remarked at that time that the NNFC had taken on a life of its own (apart from its friends and NGO partner). Public statements made by the new chairman around that time reveal the growing sense of empowerment in the NNFC, as indicated in the following quotation:

> We have understood that if two people who have an interest in one area do not speak to each other but just think they each have the authority, it will work to our disadvantage. But if we work as cooperating neighbors, one coming from this direction and one from another, we will listen well to each other. So let's proceed calmly and say what we really want to have happen in our area, say all the things we want to have and to create there, because it is right that we should have the authority over our own place.... We must make straight the direction we are going.... Our land has long ago been spoilt and made small. What spoilt it was the previous government, and now we're caught in the middle of a problem.... If we eventually have many cattle they will trample the grass and ruin the bush foods so we won't be able to find anything to eat, nor will our children. We have to plan together to have our gathering places and our hunting places. No-one should be closed off from his food by someone else; everyone should have free access to the wild foods he knows are his.... To accomplish this today we need a young person who can read and write so we can hold fast to what we have, sending papers to Windhoek.... We need an office, and a bank that is ours also.... It's our living, and that is a very big thing. These days we have to work with our own heads, because in the past it was someone else's head that got us into trouble. (/'Angn!ao /'Un)

Like a drone note in the developing rhetoric, the abuses of the preindependence regime continued to surface in public talk through these years. But during this period the NNDFN and the NNFC experienced substantial achievements made possible by the normalizing political environment in Namibia since independence on 21 March 1990. Among these achievements were the establishment and implementation of an ambitious wild resources survey and an opinion polling process for land use planning carried out by the NNDFN, NNFC, and the Namibian government's Ministry of Wildlife and Nature Conservation in 1991. A new training center, which was funded, built, and began operation in the early 1990s at Baraka, Nyae Nyae, acted as a base for agricultural and vocational training, health education, and adult literacy programs as well as housing the staff of the NNFC and NNDFN.

The NNFC blossomed as the voice of the people in both local and national forums, and came to be recognized as the "local traditional authority" in matters of settlement and land tenure in the Nyae Nyae region (Biesele 1994). At the National Conference on Land Tenure and the Land Question, the NNFC, assisted by the NNDFN, made presentations that led to the formal recognition by the Namibian Ministry of Lands of their traditional *n!ore* system as the basis for land allocation in the future. There was also an informal assurance to the NNFC by then Minister of Lands, Resettlement, and Rehabilitation (MLRR) Marco Hausiku that the *n!ore* system would provide the basis for land allocation in the Nyae Nyae area in the future, and that in other San areas, though they might have different systems, similar attention would be paid to traditional land use patterns (Republic of Namibia 1991).

Several questions were put by the NNFC delegates to the Lands Ministry, to President Nujoma, and to the leader of SWAPO, Moses Garoeb, after the Land Conference, regarding the implementation of resolutions. These questions touched on how the government would assure that the "special protection" promised by the conference for San land rights would not be co-opted in future on grounds of economic expediency. In other

words, the Ju/'hoansi stressed that legislation is crucial, and that communal land rights must be as secure as those for any other landholders in Namibia.

Questions were also raised about what actual protection (ordinances, police action, etc.) would be given to local communities in the event of land encroachment by people who, for instance, have much larger herds of cattle, and about what measures were to be taken to ensure the San adequate representation on Land Boards once these are established. At this writing, no definite answers have been received. A "Technical Committee" was set up after the Land Conference to investigate the implementation of conference resolutions. This committee dealt primarily with commercial and not with communal lands. Thus, the legal status of Nyae Nyae, as of all other communal lands in Namibia, remains precarious in spite of the fact that a Communal Lands Bill was drafted in 1994–95. Noting the difficulties in communal land issues, a number of nongovernment organizations established a Working Committee on Land Reform, and held a "People's Land Conference" in Mariental, Namibia, on 4–8 September 1994, which made recommendations to the Namibian government for greater protection of people residing in communal areas of the country. This was especially important given the fact that land-hungry people were moving into many communal areas of Namibia in the 1990s, and serious land use conflicts were on the increase.

One important practical precedent regarding illegal settlement on communal lands was set, however, shortly after the 1991 Land Conference. President Nujoma said during a visit to Nyae Nyae that anyone wishing to settle in a communal land must receive the permission not only of the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement, and Rehabilitation but also of the traditional leaders in the area. The NNFC had the opportunity to test whether the government would back up this assurance late in 1991 when settlers from nearby Hereroland came to three Ju/'hoan communities without permission and began to water their cattle from community boreholes. After a full process of consultation with the illegal settlers, the NNFC was able to escort them peacefully back to the Herero border with the promised, but not necessary, backup of the local police and the regional commissioner. Minister Hausiku affirmed in *The Namibian* newspaper in 1991 that this action was legal and had the support of his Ministry.

It must be said, however, that this slim assurance, as yet unwritten anywhere in legislation, represents only a shadow of the security of tenure that the Ju/'hoansi feel they need in regard to land. The more fragmented San communities, representing the great majority of the San population, lack land access and tenure assurances even more. Information-sharing on political rights has been better organized in the Nyae Nyae area due to the grassroots organizing efforts and the presence of an active community-based organization there (Biesele 1994; J. Marshall 1989; Marshall and Ritchie 1984). But even in Nyae Nyae prior to the first elections, disinformation campaigns by warring political parties threatened the establishment of informed political enfranchisement.

A significant event in the early 1990s period was the acceptance by the Namibian Ministry of Education of a Ju/'hoan (San) language minority literacy program under its new Basic Educational Reform Program. The NNDFN was subcontracted to the government to provide this educational service for the first four years of education for Nyae Nyae children. A community-based health education program, inaugurated by the NNFC in February 1991, has trained village health workers at all of the thirty-seven "outstation" or decentralized villages in the Nyae Nyae region. There has also been institutional capacity-building done by the NNFC, the NNDFN, and the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Project of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the government of Namibia, which has served to enhance the leadership and has helped to formalize the institutional structure of the Ju/'hoansi's community-based organization (Hitchcock and Murphree 1995; Wyckoff-Baird 1996).

Cultural continuity and educational language rights are a bright spot of hope in Namibia at this writing. What is now the Namibian Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) has made a substantial commitment to minority-language education for the first four years of school under its Basic Educational Reform Program. In this commitment it echoes sound educational policy over much of the developing world today, which holds that the best route to full literacy lies through learning literacy in the mother tongue, then generalizing this skill to English (or other national languages) after three or four years. The Ju/'hoan language is included in basic education reform as a pilot project, and its example will be used for educational programs in other San communities and language groups in other areas.

San school attendance rates have been the lowest in the nation, and current Namibian government policies aim to improve this situation quickly and substantially. Affirmative action hiring of a few San teachers has greatly improved the profile of national education in terms of attractiveness to San students and their parents. Literacy classes are being established in San communities as part of the national attempt to raise literacy rates, and San people of all ages have expressed interest in taking part.

Natural Resource Management among the Ju/'hoansi

The Ju/'hoansi have worked closely with the representatives of the NNDFN and various aid agencies in locating and mapping the boundaries of their territories and in coming up with rules for how the land and its resources

should be managed within these areas. They have also worked out methods for discussing issues facing local communities such as agricultural labor allocation, distribution of livestock, and maintenance of physical infrastructure. The participation of women in the leadership of the NNFC was encouraged, and a number of the members of the management committee were women. It should be stressed, however, that a number of Ju/'hoan women maintained in interviews that they were underrepresented in the NNFC management body, something that was a concern of the cooperative management since they were under a certain amount of pressure from funding agencies to ensure gender equity.

Both Ju/'hoansi women and men have stressed the importance of maintaining "the health of the land" in northeastern Namibia. A potential environmental problem predicted by Namibian government planners was that the livestock owned by Ju/'hoansi would begin to have negative effects on the range and the wildlife populations in Eastern Otjozondjupa. Thus far, this has not happened in most areas, in part because herd sizes were relatively small, ranging from 16 to 77 per community and totaling less than 400 for the Ju/'hoansi in the 6,300 square kilometer area. There was, however, the problem of Herero cattle being brought into the area through arrangements between individual Ju/'hoansi and Herero cattle owners. Usually these arrangements included the promise of the use of the animals for milk and sometimes payment of cash or provision of food and clothing. In 1997 it was estimated that there were some 500 cattle belonging to Herero in Eastern Otjozondjupa (Barbara Wyckoff-Baird, personal communication, 1997).

A concern expressed by some government nature conservation officials was that the subsistence hunting activities of the Ju/'hoansi posed a threat to the game in the Nyae Nyae region. Some species were definitely on the decline, including reedbuck and eland. There were other species, such as elephants, leopards, cheetah, and small cats that apparently were on the rise. Not surprisingly, these trends were considered a mixed blessing by the Ju/'hoansi. One the one hand, they liked having substantial numbers of game animals in the region, while on the other, they would prefer that those animals be ones that do not cause problems for them.

The problem facing the Ju/'hoansi and other local people under the South West African government was that they had no say whatsoever in matters concerning wildlife that have effects on their domestic animals and water points. Decisions on the conservation status of wild animals and the setting of wildlife quotas for hunting were made by the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation, and Tourism with no input from Ju/'hoansi or other local people. Wildlife resources were in the hands of the state, and the Ju/'hoansi had little, if any, say about how wildlife matters were handled. This was particularly problematic with respect to so-called "problem animals," those animals such as elephants that destroyed water points and gardens or predators such as lions, leopards, and hyenas that killed people's domestic animals. Complaints about problem animals were not responded to quickly by the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation, and Tourism, according to Ju/'hoan informants, and the result was that all too often the animal that was shot was not the one that caused the damage to the fields, water points, or livestock.

Under Namibian law, Ju/'hoansi were not allowed to shoot lions even if they had killed some of their cattle or chased people. They were quick to point out that those people who paid large amounts of money to come into the Nyae Nyae region with a safari company *were* allowed to hunt lions. The irony of this situation was vexing to the Ju/'hoansi, who claimed that they were being discriminated against. Lions were a common topic of discussion among people interviewed in the Nyae Nyae region (Hitchcock 1992; J. Marshall 1989). As the former head of the NNFC noted in one interview, "Lions are the dogs of Western conservation." The conflicts between people and wild animals were a major source of contention both under the government of South West Africa and under the Namibian government.

Another natural resource-related issue that the NNFC had to deal with, and which came up frequently during the course of the environmental survey of Eastern Otjozondjupa in January 1991, was the use of some of the boreholes in the Nyae Nyae region for game. Some communities noted that they disliked having water points for wildlife so close to them. Others said that they would not mind having boreholes set aside specifically for game as long as they were long distances from existing communities. A number of people said that they worried about the idea of the NNFC setting aside boreholes for game because they thought that this strategy could lead to limitations being placed on livestock and farming activities. Clearly, very careful thought had to be given by the NNFC to land use and natural resource planning and management issues in the Nyae Nyae region.

The NNFC discussed a number of different strategies for dealing with wild animals and other natural resources in the Nyae Nyae region. One way to deal with wildlife, according to some of the members of the NNFC, was to gain the right to establish quotas for the numbers and types of animals that could be exploited for themselves. Such a strategy required closer cooperation between the cooperative and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. It also necessitated greater understanding on both sides as to the reasoning behind decisions made about off-take rates and which animals should have limits placed on hunting. A second strategy was for the Ju/'hoansi themselves to monitor the wild animal numbers and distributions and on that basis make decisions themselves about which animals should be placed off limits in addition to the restrictions

set by the government. It was decided at one of the NNFC meetings, for example, that roans would be declared as prohibited animals so that the roan population would have the opportunity to expand. A third strategy that the NNFC opted for was to request that the government of Namibia not give a safari hunting concession license to the safari company that had long operated in the area; in late 1992, the government of Namibia agreed to withdraw the safari concession license of Anvo Safaris.

In spite of some of the successes of the NNFC's efforts to get ministry officials to recognize their concerns, there were still some tensions between the Ju/'hoansi and the government. Many Ju/'hoansi were unclear about the Namibian government hunting regulations, especially those outlined in the Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1986. It was not uncommon for people to be arrested for hunting from horseback with spears or to be apprehended and jailed for having killed a conserved animal. It was abundantly clear from discussions with people in the Nyae Nyae communities that there was a fair amount of antipathy toward the government's conservation officials (Hitchcock 1992; Hitchcock and Murphree 1995). This was particularly true in places where large numbers of men had been arrested for hunting violations. In one community, the entire adult male population had been arrested, causing tremendous social and economic disruption. In another case, a woman from Middle Pos was struck by a wildlife official when she complained about his dog destroying her garden.

Officials from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism sometimes failed to inform local people about the specific laws they were accused of having broken when they arrested them. When asked by the NNFC for copies of the laws, individuals from the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism and later the Ministry of Environment and Tourism refused to provide them. The NNFC has pressed the government of Namibia to provide the Ju/'hoansi with copies of the laws, and has asked that government personnel conduct workshops to explain the implications of those laws. In the past several years, as the NNFC has worked more closely with government officials, efforts have been made to meet these requests.

A significant event in the history of the Nyae Nyae Ju/'hoansi was the establishment of a community-based natural resource management program with assistance from various NGOs and donor agencies. In 1995, the Ju/'hoansi of the Nyae Nyae region formed a committee and applied for so-called conservancy status of the Eastern Otjozondjupa region. Under current legislation in Namibia, a conservancy is an area of land in which communities have control over natural resource management and utilization (Jones 1996). The request for the establishment of the conservancy over Eastern Otjozondjupa met with success, and in November 1997, the first conservancy on communal land (which makes up over 40 percent of

the country) was implemented. The NNFC is managing the area with the assistance of a group of community rangers, who serve not only as natural resource monitors but also as liaisons between local communities and the management committee of the NNFC. Some of the villages in the Eastern Otjozondjupa region have embarked on community-based tourism activities, and one of them, Makuri, has established a community campsite where tourists can stay (Ashley and Garland 1994). The money for such activities is distributed among community members who participate in the activities.

One of the advantages of having conservancy status is that the conservancy committee and the cooperative have greater control over who comes into their area. Nowadays, tourism and safari hunting companies are supposed to negotiate with the representative body of the Ju/'hoansi before they undertake tourism activities in the region. Regulations governing tourism have been drawn up by the Ju/'hoansi, and efforts have been made to let tourism companies and individual tourists know what they should and should not do when the visit the Eastern Otjozondjupa region, such as not swimming in the water tanks of local communities and cleaning up their campsites before they depart. Funds from tourism and from filmmaking have served to enhance the well-being of a fairly sizable number of Ju/'hoansi in Eastern Otjozondjupa.

Conclusion

The efforts of the Ju/'hoansi to speak out about natural resource management and land and human rights issues not only have served to enable them to gain recognition of those rights, but also have given representatives of the NNFC the confidence to work cooperatively with other groups from across the country in efforts to set up a working group aimed at enhancing their socioeconomic and political status. In January 1996, the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) was established in Namibia. This was done at the request of the Ju/'hoansi and other San in order to provide them with a platform to express their problems, needs, and concerns and to allow them to exchange information and ideas with other concerned individuals and groups—both San and non-San. The chairperson of the NNFC is also the head of WIMSA. One of the activities of WIMSA has been to lobby for the recognition of traditional San leaders in Namibia, something that helped provide the impetus for the Namibian government to name traditional San authorities in 1998.

The Nyae Nyae development program of the Ju/'hoansi has become the first pilot project in land use planning and community-based natural resource management in Namibia. Its efforts are serving as a model for similar kinds of work going on in the new South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho,

and Swaziland. It should be emphasized, however, that the process has by no means been easy. Rights in regard to regional politics, at least in the Nyae Nyae area, potentially could have been dealt a substantial blow with the 1992 announcement by the Delimitation Commission of Namibia that Tjum!kui was to be lumped with much of Hereroland in a newly created Otjozondjupa region. Though for population reasons the Nyae Nyae area could not have hoped for regional autonomy, the very different land use and leadership patterns included in the one region could prove to be problematic. San groups included in other new regions will also experience difficulty in establishing a local political voice. Not only are there very low numbers and large distances to contend with, but also language differences and the very salient differences in cultural style regarding making community voices heard through representative leadership.

The NNFC model of decision-making and resource management had its utility, but it was not easily transferable to other areas, and it had its own complexities. Tensions sometimes arose between people in the Ju/'hoan settlements and the NNFC over issues such as the presence of Herero livestock at local communities and the frequency of visits by the cooperative management to the various settlements. Complaints were made by some people that the cooperative management personnel were not as responsive to their needs as they should be. Some Ju/'hoansi were distinctly uncomfortable with the idea of representative government, saying that they should have the right to speak for themselves at meetings and to make decisions at the community rather than the regional level. It was only after they realized that the large meetings in which all of the people in the region took part were very hard to arrange logistically and were very costly in terms of time and effort that they began to support the idea of having a kind of government by committee.

The Ju/'hoansi are sometimes taken to be "fiercely egalitarian" by anthropologists and development workers, a characterization supported by the understanding that they have very particular kinship-based altruism and resource distribution patterns. Nevertheless, they were expected by the "development" world and the government of Namibia to make a quick transition to representational leadership and a regional political vision of sharing, once the obstacles of colonialism and apartheid were cleared away. Formerly, the Ju/'hoan *n!ore kxaosi*, the oldest male or female core-group siblings in whom stewardship of resources and habitation area was vested, maintained coordinating relationships with other *n!ore kxaosi* that involved balancing the acts of giving—and strategically withholding—key environmental accesses.

With independence in Namibia, both national and developmental expectations were that these leadership and resource management attitudes would vanish overnight and give way to smoothly functioning "democratic" structures and attitudes of commitment to the health of the region as a whole. The application of an international stereotype of leadership and community management in the Ju/'hoan area of Nyae Nyae was a long and subtle process. Briefly stated, its effects have been confusion of various sorts among the *n!ore kxaosi* and their communities, between newly elected leaders and their constituencies, and, perhaps most tellingly, between the struggling new "Ju/'hoan" polity and the space tenuously saved for it in the Namibian governmental arena. As a specific example, there was a potentially dangerous feud over land and power that was fostered between the extended families of two formerly cooperating *n!ore kxaosi* by the very process of selecting leaders for the NNFC and defining leadership roles. Worse, as the cooperative became in the eyes of the Namibian government the "local traditional authority" in the absence of a headman tradition, the political representation structure for the area as a whole was threatened by this same process.

It may have been unrealistic to anticipate that Ju/'hoan leadership would rally without conflict to a regional or even ethnic cause. New Ju/'hoan leaders have been expected to transcend both the long-tenured social attitudes of their relatives toward non-self-aggrandizement and their own traditional altruism patterns as they forged new public selves and organizational functions. Individuals have suffered mightily in this process, and communities' early faith in the new leaders was eroded by the vision of the widening gap between old and new social values.

Yet the pressure to conform to outside expectations of efficiency and altruism increases every day. The danger of "distortion by expectation" must be taken into account as we assess the well-intentioned mentoring processes now becoming widespread in development efforts among indigenous peoples (for a discussion of participation processes among indigenous peoples, see Davis and Soefestad 1995). Unconscious models as well as conscious ones can affect developing local political structures, and in some cases could spell disaster for peoples with internal governance still functioning. Fortunately, in the case of the Ju/'hoansi, this has not happened, in part because of the level-headed practical approach of the Ju/'hoan people to conflict management and social problem resolution.

There is no question that a politicization process has been going on among Namibian and other San peoples (Hitchcock 1996; Thoma and Piek 1996). It has been led to some extent by the example of the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative, since the NNFC has managed to gain a voice in local and national forums and to inform itself substantially about securing government services and funding. This process is in line with the contemporary realization by other world indigenous minorities that they can and must demand their political rights by becoming vocal on their own behalf (Burger 1987).

The politics of translation are also, as they should be, looming large for Ju/'hoansi today. There is a great mutual truth that is discovered over and over by indigenous peoples and their friends, but seems now to be growing ever surer. In the favorable human rights climate, at least at this moment in Namibia, we have "only to ask" Ju/'hoansi and other San people what they think. Enfranchisement of their own language's political voice and acceptance of their growing facility with the new national language, English, in both oral and written form, are finally moving them toward equality in discourse. This is a far cry indeed from apartheid and its distorted modes of communication.

Attention to better communication and to addressing the historically created conditions of unfairness that characterized the South West African administration under South Africa will have to take place on a massive scale. Nowhere are injustice and cultural blundering more apparent than in the tragic inability of the Roman-Dutch legal system still reigning in Namibia today to address the needs and sensibilities of Fourth World groups such as the Ju/'hoansi. Like former foragers everywhere in a world of agriculture and industry, San frequently run afoul of this system because it defines out of existence some of their very bases of survival. It is hoped that as their political and legal expertise increases, the Ju/'hoansi will be able to hold their own in the complex socioeconomic environment of southern Africa today.

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Chapter 18

Russia's Northern Indigenous Peoples

Are They Dying Out?

Dmitrii D. Bogoiavlenskii

The ethnic heterogeneity of the population of the former USSR has often been noted in the literature (Andreev et al. 1992; Bondarskaia 1977; Darskii and Andreev 1991). But the indigenous peoples of northern Russia stand out as an exception to this demographic diversity. Although they are not a homogeneous group, they are united by their small numbers,[1] their unique traditional economy (based on reindeer-herding, hunting, and fishing), the prevalence among them in the past (and even in some cases today) of a nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life, their limited socioeconomic development, and their cultural structure. All of the above allows us to refer to them as peoples of the Fourth World. One more aspect unites them: for over one hundred years the peoples of the North have been inseparable from the notion of being "almost extinct" (or "dying out").

In the second half of the nineteenth century, scholars came to the conclusion that the peoples of the North were dying out, based on materials gathered on some peoples, on some territories, and in some periods. They thought this loss of population resulted from the collision of aboriginal peoples with those from more technologically advanced societies. But Patkanov's precise 1911 calculation, based on extensive census materials, showed that there was no clear answer as to whether the indigenous population of the North was falling (Patkanov 1911). Moreover, based on the results of the 1926 census, Krasil'nikov declared that "the biggest part of the circumpolar peoples live in favorable conditions for natural increase,