

The repatriation of 1928

Eventually the relationship with the Portuguese authorities soured. The Boers taught the Portuguese cattle breeding, driving ox-wagons and man-ship. The Portuguese then imagined that they could get along without the Boers, and wanted to get rid of them. The Swedish traveller Peter Möller realised this as early as 1895-1896,¹⁵⁰ a mere fifteen years after the Boers had settled at Humpata, and more than thirty years before most of the Afrikaners left Angola in 1928.

They decided to leave Angola after almost fifty years and move to the then South West Africa. There were many reasons for this, amongst others the fact that they were never granted full citizenship rights in Angola, could not obtain ownership of their farms, were not permitted to have Afrikaans schools, felt that their religion was under threat, and could no longer make a living from farming, hunting and transport riding.¹⁵¹ As early as 1895-1896, Peter Möller named most of these factors as the reasons why Boers in Angola would leave the country at some stage.¹⁵²

The repatriation was made possible by large-scale financial and logistical state aid by the Union government under General J.B.M. Hertzog. From 22 August 1928 (when the first group crossed the Kunene at Swartbooisdrif) to 27 February 1929, a total of 1922 people (about 373 families) were repatriated to South West Africa in the "Great Trek from Angola".¹⁵³ (See Figures 1-4.) Furthermore, a number of persons were taken to South West Africa and South Africa by ship in 1928 and 1929. According to the trek certificates that were originally issued, 420 families initially intended moving: 152 from Mombolo and Bié, 119 from Humpata, 74 from the Sandveld, 47 from Cubal and Caconda, and 28 from Que.¹⁵⁴ Eventually 131 families from Mombolo and Bié, 116 families from Humpata, 72 families from the Sandveld, 27 families from Cubal and 28 families from Que did move.¹⁵⁵ In all 373 families therefore left Angola.¹⁵⁶ Not all those who were issued with trek certificates actually moved. Furthermore, many Afrikaners in the north of Angola were not issued with trek certificates - presumably because they did not know about the proposed exodus.¹⁵⁷

In the Himba chronology the year 1928-1929 is named *Ozomburu* (Boers), *Ovahona* ("masters", the Ovahimba name for important people, including the Boers) or *Ovahona ovatenga* (the first year of the masters). The last Boers of this repatriation left Angola in 1930-1931. This year was called *Ovahona osenina* (the last (trek) of the masters).¹⁵⁸