

The Tseib people

The Tseib people only came into existence as a distinct group around 1850. Although closely related to the Red Nation (Kai//khaun), Tseib and his following not only set themselves up independently⁸⁶ but specifically used the new commando group dependence on horses to increase their power. Moreover, in the 1860s, they turned on their one-time senior, //Oaseb. Tseib's settlement at Zwartmorast (≠Nu≠goaes, renamed Keetmanshoop in 1866) grew slowly into a sizeable town and commercial centre. The written sources suggest that Tseib attracted new followers and could establish himself at Zwartmorast solely due to extracting "huge fees" and rentals from other groups for letting their horses graze at Zwartmorast during the dangerous season.⁸⁷

As Knudsen noted, the site was not good for cattle but perfectly safe for horses all year round. Reportedly, one of the leaders of the new group, Tseib's brother, was adamant not to merge with Tibot's and Goliath's group, but wanted "to look for their own teacher, in order to form their own people" (sic).⁸⁸ Although they had regular contacts with missionaries from Berseba and Bethany, this only happened formally in 1866.⁸⁹

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Tseib, Jonathan, Kharo-loan Captain (Keetmanshoop Nama)
[Zeib, Jonathan - alternative spelling]

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Jonathan Tseib was the Captain of the Keetmanshoop Nama (Kharo-loan). The Kharo-loan left the Kai||khaun (Red Nation) in 1850. In 1859/60 Tseib was one of the Namaland Chiefs who was an adversary to Jonker Afrikaner of the Orlam Afrikaners.

The political constellation as it consolidated itself in the late 1850s can be described as follows:

The chiefs ||Oaseb of the Kai||khaun, Amraal Lambert or #Gai|nub of the Kai|khauan, Piet Koper !Gamab of the Fransman Nama or !Khara-khoen, Hendrik Henricks or !Nanib gaib #Arisemab of the ||Hawoben and Jacobus Boois from Bethany supported Jonker Afrikaner, while Willem Swartbooi or !Huseb #Haobemab from Rehoboth, the chiefs from Bethany (David Christian Frederiks) and Berseba and later Kido Witbooi or #A-||êib from Gibeon, assisted by Captain Tseib from Keetmanshoop, represented the anti-Jonker coalition.

The Rhenish missionaries and European traders greatly added to these polarisations of different Namibian groups.

The intent was to destroy Jonker's nascent state structures in order to weaken any local political power that might have resisted the missionaries' objectives and later colonial annexation.

Jonker's slogan: "Africa to Africans, but Namaland and Hereroland to us" was a challenge which was not acceptable to the missionaries.

In 1904 Tseib did not participate in the German-Nama War 1903-1913.
(Klaus Dierks)
