

Emerging Cosmopolitans in Namibia

Dag Henrichsen¹

¹Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Basel, Switzerland

dh@baslerafrika.ch

Namibia's liberation history is commonly framed in narrow concepts of national resistance politics whilst South African colonial rule in Namibia is regarded as having conceived of rigid policies of racialisation and ethnitisation. This paper takes a fresh look at the life experiences and political endeavors of migrant workers, church communities, shop owners and politicians active in the early nationalist movements in order to determine aspects of cosmopolitanism beyond the confines of nationalism and colonial rule. In this, the intense mobility of people, ideas and goods between the colonial territory and the Empire's metropolises such as Cape Town or Johannesburg forms a crucial structural framework as does the engagement of Namibians with and within those metropolises outside the Empire's direct realm, whether Lusaka, Geneva, London or New York.