

THE EMERGENCE OF KOMMANDO POLITICS

IN NAMALAND, SOUTHERN NAMIBIA

1800-1870

by

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University of Cape Town, for the Degree  
of Master of Arts.

Cape Town, 1982

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Must I eat the black  
Namib soil  
I who am a man of  
the Namib?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## PREFACE

The present research was inspired by a variety of sources. Many of course were of an academic nature. However, my personal feelings for Namibia and Namibians proved an important factor in designing and sustaining this thesis.

The time period I am dealing with presents its particular problems to any researcher. Outstanding among these was the gothic handwriting of German missionaries - a long forgotten script that I learnt to read and write in my first two years of schooling. Although my memories were fragmented, the old training proved useful, and some correspondence with my parents in this handwriting soon enabled me to decipher the records.

In the body of the thesis, all quotes from German or Dutch records were translated into English by the author.

A note on my source materials is important here.

As far as Namibia is concerned, there might be little in the way of historiography but there is a large collection of source materials whose value, for this thesis, varies according to the period in

which they were written. Apart from substantial literature of settler/soldier reminiscences mainly printed in the "Heimatkalender" over the last 60 years (which is of greater value for the colonial period rather than pre-colonial times) there is a wealth of ethnological data collected in the post World War I period or later, often dealing with Nama and Herero. Works like Vedder's "The Nama" or "Die Bergdama", Lebzelter's research of the early 1930s, Schapera, Hoernlé and Schulze-Ewerth, all published in the 1930s, are among the more prominent in this respect.

Due to their structural-functionalist approach, these works are not historical. Yet they cannot be easily discarded by the historian because they contain a wealth of ethnological data. Thus, although some use has been made of them, I have made a conscious effort not to extrapolate the evidence in studies in my reconstruction of historical processes taking place a hundred years earlier. My concentration has been fully on those ethnological data I could find in the early records themselves.

There is a third set of data that also had to be discarded, and that is the accounts, articles and reports containing details about customs and relationships

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There is a third set of data that also had to be discarded, and that is the accounts, articles and reports containing details about customs and relationships

of the different tribes. These were written in the German colonial period by members of the Schutztruppe, missionaries, and were compiled by the colonial administration. Here, whatever is said about customs, rituals of "the natives" and about the relationship between the different groups, cannot be taken as true for the period 50 years earlier. The political, social and economic transformations of the 19th century prior to colonial occupation were very deep and far-reaching as far as Namas, Orlams and Damaras were concerned and possibly for Herero-speakers as well. This whole dimension of change, which is at the heart of this thesis, gets lost in the timeless narrative of most of this material.

Data referring to the pre-colonial period is found mainly in the missionary records of the Rhenish Mission Society. This is of some significance for research into pre-colonial Namibian history. Firstly, it sets certain limits to the kind of questions that may be answered. Secondly, to work almost exclusively from missionary records, <sup>means that</sup> our view of the importance of missionaries in these areas might be distorted. However, we must not forget that the missionary sources are not only a condition of research today, but are also indicative of the type of historical reality we have to deal with. To have only missionary records and none of politicians, merchants, settlers, etc.,

possibly means that missionaries were agents of social forces which otherwise are expressed by politicians or settlers. This seems to be true in the present case; as I hope to show, the importance given to missionaries is not a distortion which slipped in due to one-sided records. These missionary records are very extensive. Yet, the quality of this material is flawed because missionaries often had no reliable sources of information for themselves and thus relied on rumours.

Secondly, it is available in South Africa and Namibia in extracts only, microfilms being largely unavailable. In addition to this, the manuscript extracts compiled by H. Vedder and E. Meier in 1928, comprising some 40 volumes, cannot be treated as authentic primary material. Rather they appear to be notes and summaries of source materials which were used by Dr. Vedder for his history book. This becomes clear from comparisons of Vedder's extracts with unabridged extracts published by Dr. E. Moritz in 1915 as well as parts of diaries reproduced 'in full' in the mission journal. This was, for instance, often the case with missionary Kleinschmidt's journal.

This rather depressing situation is well-balanced, however, by very extensive extracts done in 1915 by E. Moritz

as well as in the printed mission journal and the "Jahresbericht" (Annual Report ). Furthermore, the Rhenish Mission Society Archives in Windhoek contain rich source materials on the period even if these only concern the official side of missionary involvements like station reports and conference minutes.

Good use could also be made of the microfilm collection of the London Missionary Society records in the Cape Archives, because both Brothers Albrecht and J. Schmelen were sent out by that society. The records are by no means complete. Many Schmelen records were lost during the civil war situation which developed in the 1820s around Bethany, and the letters of the Brothers Albrecht are not always with the London Missionary Society material as many were also sent to their Rotterdam mission society.

Two particularly important private collections were also consulted, the Carl Hugo Hahn Papers and the Andersson Papers. The Hahn collection contains his diaries until 1860, although accounts of his time in Windhoek with Jonker Afrikaner are missing. This is the only case where unabridged diaries were available to me. I was able to make good use of the records of this rather politically-minded missionary. The Andersson Papers were among the most interesting and rewarding source materials I looked at. Charles John Andersson was involved in Nama- and Damaraland as an

explorer, hunter, trader and politician for almost 20 years. The collection contains diaries, notes, letters and correspondence, ethnological observations, special accounts of certain events which he prepared to send away, and innumerable sketches. (These I could not use because they were microfilmed). J.A. Davies of the Pretoria Archives compiled an excellent typescript list of the Andersson Papers which provided an invaluable index to the full 5 microfilms.

Indispensable for any pre-colonial history are the Wesleyan Missionary Society records as this society was involved in Namaland until 1852. Some of these are available in the Cory Library, Grahamstown, and were kindly made available to me by photocopying. In addition, the published works of the Wesleyan missionaries proved extremely useful.

Finally, mention must be made of various scattered items in the Cape Archives. Some of these were very useful but the actual involvement of the Cape Government with the territories north of the Orange River only began in the 1870s with the visit of the Special Commissioner Palgrave. Although highly interesting, these materials are rather peripheral to this work and are, therefore, used to support my concluding remarks only. The lists of the London Missionary Society and Wesleyan

Missionary Society manuscripts and published materials pertaining to South Africa by Gower and Hinchliffe are an excellent help. Similarly, the bibliography by Strohmeier and Moritz proved very useful as an overall research guide.

## GLOSSARY

- Cattle Damaras - Herero-speakers. The term fell into disuse from mid-19th century onwards.
- Great Namaqualand - Namaland. Originally used to distinguish northern territories beyond the Orange River.
- Judge - Council member in the kommando group. See also 'raadsman'. Commonly applied in the German sources.
- Kaptein - Kommando leader
- Konferenz - Annual meeting of all Rhenish missionaries working in Nama- and Damaraland.
- Raad - Council. Major governing body of the kommando group.
- Raadsmen - Council members

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AH	Afrikanischer Heimatkalender
Am.Anthrop.	American Anthropologist
AP	Andersson Papers
BBNA	Cape of Good Hope Blue Books on Native Affairs
BRMG	Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft
CA	Cape Archives Depot, Cape Town
CO	Colonial office, Cape of Good Hope
GH	Government House
HP	Hahn Papers
JBRMG	Jahresberichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft (Annual reports of the Rhenish Mission Society)
KP	Konferenzprotokoll (Conference minutes)
KPB	Beilage zum Konferenzprotokoll (appendices to conference minutes)
LMS	London Missionary Society
Quellen	Quellen zur Geschichte Südwestafrikas
RLMS	Annual Report of the London Missionary Society
RMS	Archives of the Rhenish Mission Society
SAPL	South African Public Library, Cape Town
TLMS	Transactions of the London Missionary Society
WA	Windhoek State Archives
WMN	Wesleyan Missionary Notices

LIST OF KAPTEINS IN NAMALAND

Klaas Afrikaner		
Jager Afrikaner		
Titus Afrikaner		
Jonker Afrikaner (+ 1861)		
Jan Jonker Afrikaner	.....	Afrikaners
Piet Haibib	.....	#Aonin
Paul Goliath		
Jakob Isaak	.....	Berseba people
Jakobus Boois		
David Christian	.....	Bethany people
Jan Boois		
Jakobus Boois	.....	Jan Booi's Orlams
Willem Fransmann		
Piet Kopper (+ 1863)		
Simon Kopper	.....	Fransmann'sche Hottentots
Gamma Tsawoeb		
Oasib (also called Cornelius) (+ 1867)		
Barnabas	.....	Gai-//khaun

Amraal Lambert (+ 1864)

Andries Lambert ..... Gobabis people

Tsaugammab

Willem Swartbooi (+ ca. 1884)

Abraham Swartbooi ..... Rehobothers

Hendrik Hendriks

Hendrik Zes or Nanib (+ 1865) ..... Veldskoendraers

Kido Witbooi (also David)

Moses Witbooi ..... Witboois

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORETICAL  
AND EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

To begin with, I shall look more closely at previous studies of the pre-colonial period in order to clarify the context of my work. I shall also present some of the major issues which have informed my research and which I hope to elucidate in the following chapters.

1.1 CRITIQUE OF HISTORIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

1.1.1 Rainer Claus

Events and processes covering the period 1800 - 1870 in Namaland and Damaraland can be looked at from such diverse perspectives that sometimes there is little overlap in the empirical data dealt with. R. Claus, for example, in a recent study of Namibian peoples' reactions to colonialism, relies on very rigid anthropological concepts of the 'Herero tribe'.<sup>1</sup> However, he finds that he cannot deal with 'the Nama' in the same way because they were very scattered. He goes on to say that attempts at unity under Jonker, and later under Hendrik Witbooi, were not successful, but does not explain their failure.

---

1. Rainer Claus: Reaktionen auf Kolonialismus and Imperialismus. Untersuchung der Völker Namibias. Berlin 1977,  
29.

## REFERENCES

MAP 1

GENERAL REFERENCE MAP OF NAMIBIA 1900-1979



South West Africa/Namibia, 1979  
General, Windhoek

South West Africa. Map illustrated by  
H. Vedder: South West Africa i

Karte des Rheinischen Mission.  
n.d., in: Mitteilungen aus den  
31, 1918

Karte Südwestafrikas, in: Pete

South West Africa 1855. (Cape A

Karte Südwestafrikas, in: Pete

Original Map of Great Namaqualand  
from his own observations and  
October 1879 (Windhoek State A

Übersicht der Entdeckungsreise  
Mitteilungen, 1867

Originalkarte der im Auftrage  
in den Jahren 1888-89 Deutsch  
Reise von Dr. Georg Gürich. (

Südwestafrika. Bearbeitet von  
1912. (Rheinisch Mission Socie

German South West Africa, 19  
African Library)

Maps of South West Africa by  
captain J. Alexander's route  
(Windhoek State Archives, A.

Besitzstandskarte von Deutsch  
1909. (Windhoek, State Archi

Concluding his discussion, he remarks that "the rate of warlike activity among the Nama was very high".<sup>2</sup> This misses the importance of social and economic factors as determinants of raiding and "warlike activities".

### 1.1.2 Heinrich Vedder

In terms of empirical depth, and the range of data collected, H. Vedder's work is of a different order. His 650-page history of the pre-colonial period has remained the standard textbook and has not been surpassed as narrative history.<sup>3</sup> H. Vedder's work might have been a breakthrough in the 1920s and 1930s but his perspective is now dated, mainly due to the concepts and attitudes governing it. His ethnographical and historical studies have centred on the role and responsibility of the white race as the carrier of Christian Western civilisation, in which the German settlers of Namibia had a special place.

Central to his interpretation of the pre-colonial period are the manifold conflicts characterising the history of 19th century Namibia. As with many writers before and after him<sup>4</sup> he regarded differences in 'race' or

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2. *ibid.*, 20,21.

3. Heinrich Vedder: South West Africa in Early Times, London 1938.

4. See for example, Rohden, Ludwig von: Geschichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft, Barmen 1868; a list of such works is in Heinrich Loth: Die Christliche Mission in Südwest-Afrika. Zur destruktiven Rolle der Rheinischen Mission beim Prozess der Staatsbildung in SWA (1842-1863), 10, ftn. 9.

'culture' as the basis of these conflicts. Thus, we have a historic periodisation of 'Namaland against Hereroland' (1840s) and then 'Hereroland against Namaland' (1860s). 'The Herero war of freedom' and 'the Orlam war' were further subdivided.<sup>5</sup> This 'tribal' sub-division led to a view of history in which the German colonial masters appear as last-minute saviours, the initiators of the colonial pax.

Elsewhere I have argued in greater detail the extent to which his treatment of the pre-colonial period supported colonial settler myths, especially as far as the 'Bergdamara' were concerned.<sup>6</sup> Significantly, in his history he was using the same combination of strictly racist assumptions and implicit glorification of German colonialism<sup>7</sup> that was prevalent in pre-World War 11 German politics. L. Engel, in a recent study, has provided the most lucid conclusions about the development of a military-nationalist feeling among the Germans of the territory in the first half of the 20th century, stressing the integrative role of Vedder's work in these processes.<sup>8</sup> This is the context

---

5. H. Vedder: Early Times, list of contents.

6. Brigitte Lau: 'Thank God the Germans came': Vedder and Namibian Historiography', Africa Seminar: Collected Papers, vol. 2, 1981, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.

7. Ibid.

8. Lothar Engel: Kolonialismus und Nationalismus im deutschen Protestantismus in Namibia, 1907-1945, Frankfurt/Main 1976, 292-311, 479-482.

in which Vedder's historical work has to be considered.

It can be easily established that conflicts in the pre-colonial period did not happen along 'ethnic' or 'cultural' lines but always cut across such differences. I will look more closely at these issues in chapter 9 and will merely note here that the 'original Nama group under Willem Swartbooi allied itself with Kamaherero, a powerful Herero chief, in the conflicts of the 1860s. Also, in the 'Orlam war' the Orlam Kapteins and their followers fought against an alliance of the Afrikaners, Oasib and his people, Nanib of the Veldskoendraers, people under Jan Booi and others. Clearly, conflict has to be understood in terms other than those of Dr. Vedder.

### 1.1.3 Winifred Nachtwei

A further group of writers has attempted to interpret the pre-colonial period from a historical materialist perspective but have at times applied an overly structuralist approach and have reduced the data to very schematic categories. Apart from Werner's research essay on the Herero mode of production<sup>9</sup> only Heinrich Loth<sup>10</sup> has

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9. Wolfgang Werner: 'An exploratory investigation into the mode of production of the Herero in pre-colonial Namibia to ca 1870', B.Soc.Sc. Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1980.

10. H. Loth: Mission, 1963.

focussed on the pre-colonial period. Others have dealt with it briefly. Nachtwei,<sup>11</sup> for example, starts with the modes of production of the various pre-colonial 'tribal societies'. He indicates that the 'tribes' were in a state of transition from a primitive classless society to the beginnings of class society.<sup>12</sup> This highly formal and mechanistic conceptualisation does not make it possible to offer any explanation for conflict, impoverishment and disintegration among the various groups in Namaland other than "scarcity of pastures and water places" due to "European population pressure."<sup>13</sup> However, since by the 1860s there were less than 200 Europeans resident in those vast expanses, this is hardly credible. Therefore, his contention that colonial expansion started indirectly with the Orlam migrations and directly with penetration by hunters, traders and missionaries, remains unsubstantiated.

Nachtwei presents the missionaries as a major dynamic force. He maintains that although lacking any conception of general social and economic forces at work, the individual missionaries came to be the initiators of most of the economic and political action. Among other things, he blames them for weakening the political power of the 'tribes' by dividing them, thus facilitating colonial conquest. But how and why did so few isolated foreign

---

11. Winifred Nachtwei: Namibia. Von der antikolonialen Revolte zum nationalen Befreiungskampf. Mannheim 1976.

12. Ibid., 26

13. Ibid.

individuals come to play such vital roles and acquire such a degree of political power? By presenting the missionaries in this light, he obscures the material foundations of historical processes. The complexity of the role and class position of missionaries will be demonstrated in chapter 6.

#### 1.1.4 Heinrich Loth

Heinrich Loth's pioneering volume on the role of the Rheinisch Mission Society<sup>14</sup> in many ways is similar to Nachtwei's study but deserves special mention because of the excellent empirical research that went into it and the wealth of material presented; in many ways it served as a stepping stone for this thesis.

Loth's most interesting innovation is his assumption that no basic structural differences existed between Orlam, Nama and Herero groups. Certainly as far as Namas and Orlams are concerned, there are no major empirical observations to be made from 1842 onwards which would suggest otherwise. He demonstrates that the basis of conflict and destruction in 19th century Namibia cannot be found in 'ethnic' let alone 'racial' differences. Furthermore Loth's approach introduces a certain dialectic into questions dealing

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14. H. Loth: Mission.

with the pre-colonial period. This dialectic has been maintained by other writers such as R. Moorsom and W. Werner<sup>15</sup> and is also a feature of this thesis, namely a changing focus on relationships within groups as well as between groups. His consistent consideration of broad processes of 'social differentiation' among Orlam, Nama and Herero-speaking groups is a new approach to Namibian historiography which allows for deeper insights than had been previously achieved. His contention that Herero/Nama and Orlam groups had reached a 'stage' of 'nomadic early feudalism' in their development by the 1840s, is unconvincing because of lack of evidence.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, his constant awareness of processes of class formation and class-based action among Kapteins and chiefs is particularly useful for the period when Germans made the first 'protection treaties' with Kapteins. He shows convincingly how class structures were exploited by missionaries who intensified the various divisions within communities such as among the Witboois and the people of Hoachanas.<sup>17</sup>

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15. W. Werner: 'Investigation'; Richard Moorsom: 'Colonisation and Proletarianisation: An Exploratory Investigation of the Formation of the Working Class in Namibia under German and South African Rule to 1945', MA Sussex 1973.
16. Brigitte Lau: 'A critique of the historical sources and historiography relating to the 'Damaras' in pre-colonial Namibia', BA Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1979.
17. H. Loth: Mission, 96-118.

However, his interpretation has certain apparent weaknesses. Loth realises that items like guns, wagons and horses played an increasingly important role in the pre-colonial history. He presents the missionaries as the principal agents of this 'European influence' (as he calls it). He shows how the missionaries, by controlling access to trade routes and even trade items, acquired a remarkable position of political power which in his opinion was no less than the "complete indirect domination of the tribe" (as in the case of Bethany, Berseba, Rehoboth).<sup>18</sup> This he supports with a battery of empirical data. Yet not all Orlam and Herero groups had a missionary. If missionaries became so powerful, surely their absence must also be significant? This question will be considered later.

From this point in his argument, Loth allows the story to unfold: the missionaries, endowed with these powers, destroyed attempts at centralisation and progress within the early feudal mode of production of the Hereros, Namas and Orlams, because they took sides against the Afrikaners under Jonker. In later years, after the Afrikaner power was broken, missionaries were still effectively involved in weakening the powers of resistance of the various groups to colonial conquest, and of the new attempts at centralisation led by Hendrik Witbooi. Loth therefore sees the missionaries not as bearers of 'civilisation' but as destroyers of social/political progress for the sake of

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18. Ibid., 29-31

colonial domination.

However, there are certain serious contradictions and gaps in this interpretation. The high level of formal abstraction running through his argument detracts from its validity. As with Nachtwei, there is no true explanation as to how isolated individuals should have acquired such power. Why did 'the European element' become so important? Who first brought it into the country? Not the missionaries but the Orlam groups. Thus, there is a crucial difference between Orlam and Nama groups in historical terms that both Loth and Nachtwei overlook. Orlam groups emerged out of a different social, economic and political context. Loth confirms that these groups had already 'overcome' the social stage of kinship organisation<sup>19</sup> but does not see the special and ongoing dynamic behind this. And of course if they had 'overcome' this stage, what was the situation of the other Namas and Herero-speakers? Had they also 'overcome' it?

The neglect of these issues has certain consequences. For example Loth does not account for the hegemony of the Afrikaners under Jonker. Yet it was precisely this position of political domination by one group that the missionaries attempted to undermine. What was at the base of this position of political domination, and how

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19. Ibid., 19

was it reproduced? How could it be destroyed? What was the Afrikaners' relationship to the 'subjected' Herero-speakers? Here we have an area of interaction and conflict, obviously at the centre of political and social-economic change, that was not produced by missionaries but had a dynamic of its own. Why could other Orlam groups not use similar positions of dominance? Also, Jonker's alliance with Herero-chiefs is inadequately explained as "pure avarice" on their part.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, we must not regard it as an alliance of the Herero-Nama 'peoples' but rather of the chiefs, at time possibly against the wishes of their followers.

The weakest point of Loth's interpretation becomes apparent only with the events after 1870.<sup>21</sup> In 1870 there was a 'peace' conference which finally consolidated the Afrikaners' loss of, and actual exclusion from, a position of political power. Thus under leadership of Hugo Hahn who had tried to work against the Afrikaners ever since 1844, the missionaries triumphed, and here Loth's interpretation is most applicable.

For the following 30 years, however, the pattern of conflict characterising much of the 19th century continued without the political involvement of the missionaries.

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20. Ibid., 44/45, ftn. 15.

21. Ibid., 85-118.

Loth tried to argue around this by stating that until 1883 Nama/Orlam and Herero conflict had been sustained by competition between the 'British element' (traders and Cape colonial officials) on the Orlam>Nama side and the German mission society on the Herero side.<sup>22</sup> Such a dichotomy is not supported by the evidence. Thus, Andersson and Green who were important among British traders in the area, were the main material supporters of Kamaherero and his group in the conflicts of the 1860s. Similarly, the Cape Government's Special Commissioner Palgrave worked closely together with Herero groups and not with Nama/Orlams. After the 1870s, with the decline of missionary importance, the commercial and political roles performed by missionaries were increasingly taken over by traders, Cape government agents and later, by German colonial administrators. Yet despite the changes in the composition of the European presence, the nature of existing conflicts between Nama, Orlam and Herero remained unaltered.

The eradication of the differences between Nama and Orlam: are crucial issues for the historiography of the first half of the 19th century. Awareness of the difference between Namas and Orlams on the one hand and Herero-speakers on the other hand is crucial for any understanding of the period leading into the 20th century.

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22. Ibid., 102.

Thus, among the unanswered questions arising out of Loth's work are: the nature of Orlam groups; the overall differences in social/political organisation that continued to persist among various groups and their relations with each other; and <sup>the</sup> nature and basis of the Afrikaner's hegemony and their relation to different groups of Herero-speakers. Considering these issues, we should be able to situate the role of the missionaries within the context of existing political and economic forces. This may lead towards a re-interpretation of the years after 1870.

#### 1.1.5 Richard Moorsom

While Loth's sound and detailed empirical work gave rise to specific questions with which to approach the source material, R. Moorsom's chapter on the pre-colonial period was stimulating on a conceptual level. Although I do not wish to underestimate the empirical value of his research it seems to me that in the first chapter of his study<sup>23</sup> he was more concerned with hypotheses and a theoretical framework that would not only help to understand the pre-colonial period, but also be consistent with his actual topic, namely class formation processes until 1945. His hypotheses and arguments are very challenging because they are creative, coherent, and supported by material evidence.

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23. R. Moorsom: 'Proletarianisation', chs. 1 and 2.

In this chapter Moorsom is operating with two basic concepts that are, in a way, mutually exclusive and contradictory. The one is 'social formation', the other 'underdevelopment'. Situated in between these two are the Orlam groups, no longer a 'social formation' of any kind, nor 'underdeveloped', yet, as Moorsom argues, they are the agents of underdevelopment. His remarks about the Orlam groups present a pioneering breakthrough in their attempt to understand the pre-colonial period. He sees them as agents of mercantile capital, thus constituting the forefront of capitalist penetration of the country. His emphasis is on Orlam-groups as victims of social distinte<sub>w</sub>gration through the expansion of the Dutch settlement at the Cape. He shows that they did not have the social relations to organise a productive base that could sustain them from within.

Their productive base was rather to be found outside of their own ranks, namely in the acquisition of cattle belonging to others. This goes very far towards identifying a major element in the conflict between Nama/Orlam and Herero groups. However, he fails to integrate this understanding with his other findings. There is first of all the highly schematic and rigid concept of 'social formation' which, as I noted before, does not seem adequate for any of the pre-colonial data in these areas. Certainly the Orlam groups themselves, crucial as

their migration obviously was, do not appear to be part of any of the 'social formations' which Moorsom analyses. While it is true that the postulation of one Namibian social formation in the 1840s or '50s does not seem possible, it is equally impossible to detect three of four different 'social formations' for the same period.

Apart from the inherent difficulties of the concept of 'social formation',<sup>24</sup> most of the 19th century material provides no evidence for detecting whole groups of people who were sufficiently distant from others in any sphere to constitute a distinct 'social formation'. A possible exception is the Ovambo-speakers whose basic framework of social/economic interaction remained largely separate from the people further south for most of the pre-colonial and even colonial period. No distinguishing feature of a 'Nama social formation' can be found. It was not language (shared by Orlams and Hau-khoi), not 'culture' (shared by Hau-khoi and also Orlams) and least of all territory. Similarly, what Moorsom calls the 'Herero social formation' is equally difficult to establish. Although this thesis does not focus on Herero-speakers, their interaction with Orlam and Nama groups becomes of crucial importance from the time of the Orlam migration into, and invasion of, the Orange River at the beginning of the 19th century.

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24. For a discussion of the term as used by historians, see Marks and Atmore (eds): 'Introduction', Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, London, 1980, 38, ftn. 9.

Moorsom's use of the term 'social formation' is too reminiscent of the old 'tribe' to be useful: it is certainly too schematic and rigid to account for the changes which took place. This is borne out by his own treatment of these questions. Thus, the 'social formations' which he describes (as if they were somewhat outside of history) disappear from the 1860s onwards. He noted that there was a "substantial break-down of tribal relations in the South in the 1860s and 1880s".<sup>25</sup> However, we do not know what he means by "tribal relations". He then proceeds to use terms like "southern remnants" and "northern tribes" without defining them. Nor does he explain the differentiation between 'north' and 'south'. The static use of the concept of 'social formation' as Moorsom employs it here, thus does not appear to have any explanatory value.

Moorsom's use of the notion of 'underdevelopment', on the other hand, is very useful as it gives analytical depth to his account of the processes whereby Nama peoples living north of the Orange River were incorporated into the expanding world economy. The conditions of this incorporation, and the changes in political and social relations engendered by it, are the content of 'underdevelopment'.

Moorsom argues that it was underdevelopment, introduced by the Orlam groups, that eventually led to the "breakdown of tribal relations" and to the emergence of "war-bands",

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25. R. Moorsom: Proletarianisation', 37.

with leaders establishing their authority outside of 'tribal structures'. He argues that in pre-colonial Namibia mercantile interests emanating from the Cape intervened in the processes of production so that 'tribal relations' and material self-sufficiency were undermined. Thus he sees the major cause of underdevelopment as unequal exchange. As far as 'the south' is concerned, I have not found any evidence to contradict these contentions. Nonetheless this conception is not without serious difficulties, both on an empirical and on a theoretical level.

A major flaw in his interpretation is that he does not consider why merchant capital and unequal exchange should not have effected 'the north' and 'the south' in the same way. Why did Herero groups not become 'underdeveloped'? Here the influence of colonial historiography is evident, as he tends to imply that the Herero were inherently able to cope better because their level of "necessary consumption" of trade items did not rise above the rate of reproduction of their cattle. (His assertion that the areas controlled by Herero-speakers were better suited to cattle-raising does not really undo this impression.) Misuse of the term 'underdevelopment' denies him a <sup>plausible</sup> explanation why groups of Herero-speakers prospered through their contact with the Cape nexus.

Thus, in the 1870s and 1880s, when Nama/Orlam groups became more and more impoverished,<sup>26</sup> various Herero chiefs and their followers appear to have accumulated more cattle wealth than ever before.<sup>27</sup> Until the crushing of the Herero by German colonialism it was a major complaint by settler farmers that the colonial economy did not 'work' because Herero monopolised the best pastures and controlled the market almost entirely.<sup>28</sup>

Certainly these are issues that demand thorough qualification of Moorsom's conceptual framework. However, there are other difficulties. It seems that the notion of underdevelopment in this context should be examined further.

## 1.2 THE RELATION BETWEEN MERCHANT CAPITAL AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

When merchant capital and underdevelopment theorists like I. Wallerstein, A.G. Frank and W. Rodney analysed the accumulation of capital on a world scale,<sup>29</sup>

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26. It seems to me that this is what 'impoverishment' means; not a particularly low level of consumption but being increasingly unable to pay for what you need.

27. See below, conclusion

28. See Carl Schlettwein: Der Farmer in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Wismar 1907, 39-41; also Helmut Bley: South West Africa under German Rule, London 1971, 124.

29. I. Wallerstein: The Modern World System, New York 1974; A.G. Frank: Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, New York 1969; S. Amin: Accumulation on a World Scale, 2 vols., New York 1976, W. Rodney: How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, London 1972; P. Baran: The Political Economy of Growth, New York 1951. It must be stressed here that these works indicate specific stages in a debate that went on for almost twenty years; they are not representative of the debate as a whole.

their focus was on relations of exchange, and of underdevelopment through unequal exchange. E. Laclau's work was an early reminder that the determining relations of any social formation were those of production, and not exchange<sup>30</sup>. This notion received considerable clarification with Kay's analysis of the nature of merchant capital.<sup>31</sup> Both writers attempted to change the emphasis from how exchange with capitalist countries affected other countries to an analysis of the relations of production existing in a Third World Country. This enabled an understanding of relations with capitalism to be centred firmly within the Third World formations.

Brenner added theoretical depth to these attempts by arguing that notions of development/underdevelopment must not only be applied to the context of relations of production but to the extraction of relative or absolute surplus value. Thus a strong case was put forward to centre our analysis on the class struggles in the social formation concerned, even if exchange relations with capitalist countries remained an essential element.<sup>32</sup>

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30. E. Laclau: 'Capitalism and Feudalism in Latin America', New Left Review, 67, 1971.

31. G. Kay: Development and Underdevelopment, London, 1975, chapters 4 and 5.

32. R. Brenner: 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', New Left Review, 104, 1977.

In this context a new body of work emerged with the conceptualisation of the 'articulation of modes<sup>of</sup> production' which paralleled work being done by French economic anthropologists.<sup>33</sup> Here, even the terminology development/underdevelopment was supplanted by terms focussing on relations of production and reproduction, class struggles and alliances, and how these were 'articulated' at various levels at a point in history with the capitalist mode.<sup>34</sup>

All these attempts allow us to periodise merchant capital penetrat and to conceptualise 'underdevelopment' or commoditisation processes in circumstances other than formal political domination. Let us consider Taylor's summary of these questions.<sup>35</sup>

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33. Claude Meillassoux: "The economy" in agricultural self-sustaining societies: A preliminary analysis', in: D. Seddon(ed): Relations of production. Marxist Approaches to Economic Anthropology, London 1978; Meillassoux: 'From production to reproduction: A Marxist Approach to economic anthropology', Economy and Society, 1, 1972; E. Terray: Marxism and 'Primitive' Societies, New York 1972; P.P. Rey: 'The Lineage Mode of Production', Critique of Anthropology, 3 1975; P.P. Rey: Colonialisme, neo-colonialisme et transition au capitalisme, Paris 1971.
34. J. Taylor: From Modernisation to Modes of Production, London, 1979, chs. 10 and 11.
35. Ibid., 192-193.

Firstly, there was capitalist penetration of Third World formations under the dominance of merchant capital before the Industrial Revolution. Here merchant capital operated independently of productive relations. Merchant capital per se did not control production and therefore remained dependent for its profits on those people who did. Thus, the conservative nature of merchant capital became apparent; no matter what changes were called for, merchant capital in itself was not able to effect a full transition from one mode to the other. In the same vein, surplus labour time was drawn away from directly productive activities and became increasingly allocated to activities centred on the sphere of exchange, as in road, railway, and harbour building and <sup>the</sup> purchasing of wagons. Where merchant capital penetrated with the support of political control by the nation-state, as with 16th and 17th century Dutch colonialism in the West Indies, it began to rule over production. However, this tended to intensify pre-existing, non-capitalist relations of surplus extraction, and thus obstructed processes of separation of direct producers from the means of production.

Yet, when merchant capital began to be subsumed by industrial capital, thus becoming an instance in the capitalist circuit, control was established over the reproductive

processes of social formations. The capitalist mode, according to Marx, has the tendency "to transform all possible production into commodity production; the main means by which it does this is precisely by drawing this production into its circulation process ... The interaction of industrial capital everywhere promotes this transformation ... Whatever the origin of the commodities that go into the circulation process of industrial capital ... they confront industrial capital straight away in its form of commodity capital, they themselves having the form of commodity-dealing or merchant's capital; and this by its very nature embraces commodities from all modes of production."<sup>36</sup>

Thus, merchant capital began to subjugate production in non-capitalist formations to the needs of expanded reproduction of the capitalist mode, even without direct colonial domination. As was indicated in the preceding paragraphs, this was only possible in the age of commodity exchange, i.e. when merchant capital had become an instant in the full-fledged capitalist circuit.

It seems to me that these considerations are extremely useful in creating a new approach to the dynamic of 'underdevelopment' of Orlam/Namas as Moorsom saw it. The

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36. Karl Marx: Capital II, Penguin Books, 1978, 190.

expansion of merchant capital into areas north of the Orange River in the epoch of its subsumption under industrial capital, caused commoditisation to become 'locked' into the social reproduction of Orlam groups. This ever increasing dependence upon the world capitalist economy, in its local form as the Cape trading nexus, engendered the 'development of underdevelopment' by dissolving and transforming previous social relations of production.

This conceptualisation of underdevelopment enables us to determine how the Nama 'tribes' became underdeveloped through a mixture of conquest and alliance with Orlam groups. This means that we must look as closely as possible at the changing social relations that structured the forms of production of Orlam groups. It also means that we should begin to analyse the whole area of relations between the various groups; focus on their interaction as they became incorporated into the exchange nexus of the Cape; and abandon the analysis of clearly defined and bounded units like 'tribe' and 'social formation'. The power base of the Afrikaners and how it was reproduced and finally undermined emerges again, as in the critique of Loth, as a major issue. This approach will also enable us to look more closely at what is meant by a "breakdown of tribal relations", what happened to the cattle-breeding skills of Nama-speaking pastoralists, and the advantage of separating 'northern tribes' and 'southern remnants' for the post-1870s.

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT2.1 DIFFICULTIES OF CLASSIFICATION

An attempt to talk about the people of Namibia involves not only the presentation of actual data but far-reaching decisions about concepts, categories, and premises as analytical tools. Past historians have often not been aware of this (and nor have modern administrators) but have simply stated that they were dealing with different "tribes" or "nations".<sup>1</sup> In terms of the various groupings which emerged in Namaland in the 19th century, this is entirely inadequate.

My subject matter in this study of the transformation of society in Namaland is an attempt to show <sup>has</sup> any clear-cut "tribes" geared towards the reproduction of kinship structures ceased to exist and were breaking up when Namaland was incorporated into the exchange nexus emanating from the Cape of Good Hope. However, people persisted in interacting in terms of various groups rather than individuals. Although a larger framework of interaction was created, viz., Namaland, people continued to "belong" to individual Kapteins. The depth of these question, (i.e. how a group identity consciousness is reached and maintained

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1. This extends to the present day. Bochert in a recent study arrives at the understanding, in a rather brief and unequivocal way, that all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, "the Witboois can best be regarded as a tribe - that is an independent unit interacting with other tribes". C. Bochert: 'The Witboois and the Germans in SWA. A study of their interaction between 1863 and 1905', M.A., Durban, 1980.

by men and women) can not be plumbed here. Yet I hope to make it quite clear that the decision to speak and think about tribes in Namaland, is based on myth and prejudice. By the time the colonial conquest began the penetration of *merchan* *capital* was far advanced and had led to new social and political forms; 'traditional' ways of living had been transformed and the dynamics of the various groups living in Namaland were being determined by the production of commodities for exchange <sup>rather than</sup> for consumption. Thus a process of transition to capitalism was well on its way. It seems necessary to elaborate on the terminology that is required here, even though it might not be immediately obvious what is to be gained by supplanting 'tribe' with terms like 'groups' or 'communities' or 'Amraal's people'.

Recent years have seen many attempts to come to grips with a heritage of anthropological classification and concepts informed by the colonial experience which no longer seem to be adequate. Classifications appear to have been harshly imposed and often do violence to the data.<sup>2</sup> My material suggests that this is even more so for certain regions and times than had been previously recognised.

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2. See for example C. Schrire: 'The Evolutionary Implications of Modern Hunter-Gatherers. With Special Reference to Three Centuries of Bushmen Farming', Rutgers University 1978; unpubl. paper presented at University of Cape Town Archaeological Conference, June 1979; R. Elphick: Kraal and Castle, Yale, 1977; Oxford History of South Africa, M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds), Oxford 1969; S. Marks and A. Atmore: 'Introduction', S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds); Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, London 1980.

In 19th century Namibia, especially the southern part, kinship ideologies were rapidly losing their power and homesteads disintegrating. Under the influx of the most diverse people and pressures from the south and south-east of the Orange River, groups formed and re-formed. The "Griquas", or the "Korannas" are cases in point. A recent study, while not really concerned with these questions, still suggests that the Korannas were "to some extent at least, an amalgamation of previously diverse elements"<sup>3</sup> and M. Legassick's work on the emergence of the Griqua people"<sup>4</sup> shows very succinctly that concepts of "tribe" or "society" are quite inadequate to deal with the formation and dissolution of these "polities".<sup>5</sup> Studies analysing

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3. T. Strauss: War Along the Orange, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1979.
  4. See M. Legassick: 'The Northern Frontier to 1820: The emergence of the Griqua people', R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds): The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1820, London 1979.
  5. As appears from work which has been done recently in this regard, these terms seem entirely inadequate even where more clear-cut social units are concerned; see for example Mafeje, A.: 'The Ideology of Tribalism', Journal of Modern African Studies, 92, 1971; M. Godelier: 'The concept of 'tribe': a crisis involving merely a concept or the empirical foundations of anthropology itself?', M. Godelier: Perspectives in Anthropology, Cambridge 1977.

the past of very numerous 'werfts' and collections of people termed 'Bushmen' by European contemporaries, have yet to be attempted.<sup>6</sup>

All this is not to deny that at some stage in their history the people of Namaland lived in fairly well-defined groups each with a specific name, were organised in lineages and clans with certain rights of seniority, and were involved in pre-capitalist forms of production. As I will demonstrate, this way of life broke up during and after the Orlam migrations. Therefore we cannot deal with certain Nama 'tribes' in the 1800s and apply the same name to what is essentially a completely different type of community 60 years later. This is even more true for the groups of people who migrated into the territory from the 1800s onwards. Although they did have a Nama 'tribal' name of their own the use of such a name in tracing the history of Namaland is questionable. The one name not only conceals all changes but also suggests a continuity, stability and structural similarity with other Southern African 'tribes' or social formations (like Amakhosa,

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6. Apart from isolated pieces of work by John Wright and C. Schrire this is a whole field which so far has not been touched upon to the best of my knowledge. See C. Schrire, op.cit., John Wright: 'San History and Non-San Historians', University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Collected Seminar Papers No 22.

Amazulu etc.) that is essentially misleading. Some writers have abandoned the notion of 'tribe' and merely replaced it with random categories which are equally inadequate.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, people in Namaland did identify themselves as members of specific groups. This continued to be a feature of Namaland long after the 1870s; in fact, some of these early groups still exist today. Therefore, as designations and terms must be used, this means that a certain arbitrariness must prevail. Hopefully my terminology will succeed in creating some new sensitivity towards established and worn-out classifications without unduly confusing the issues.

## 2.2 THE THREE MAJOR HISTORICAL AREAS

Namibia today consists of three major regions historically known as Great Namaqualand (Namaland), Damaraland and Ovamboland. One might add sandy tracts of desert in the east and west and some areas separating Damaland from Ovamboland which were at some stage called 'Bushmanland'.<sup>8</sup>

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8. My notes on geography are mainly informed by Wellington: South West Africa and Its Human Issues, Oxford 1967; F. Jaeger: Geographische Landschaften Südwestafrikas, Windhoek 1965. See also map 1.

7. See for example Lynn Wadley who argued recently that 'Bergdama' groups were "hybridised" and would do whatever suited them best at various times: grow tobacco, make pipes, herd other people's cattle, etc. L. Wadley: 'Big Elephant Shelter and its Role in the Holocene Pre-history of Central South Africa', Cimbebasia 3 (1) 1979, 53.

The colonial boundaries, established in 1884, created here as elsewhere an artificial overall unity; yet by the time of their establishment, people of diverse origins and cultural backgrounds had begun to interact in a common social/political frame of reference in the area comprising modern Namibia. Distinct pre-capitalist social formations had either ceased to exist altogether or had been fundamentally transformed.

#### 2.2.1 Namaland

When the colonial frontier of the Cape was breached by trekboers in the 18th century, fugitive slaves and other emigrants from the Cape Colony settled in the area beyond the northern colonial border. This area came to be known as 'little Namaqualand'. By the time this term was established, all the people dwelling in those parts had become part of a trade nexus emanating from the Cape. Without goods obtained from the Cape, their very existence was threatened.<sup>9</sup> Through these exchange relationships, the 'colonial frontier' was extended continually, not only northwards, but also eastwards and north-eastwards. The change to British rule in the Cape as well as revolutionary changes in the British

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9. See Legassick's treatment of this question in: 'The Emergence', Elphick and Giliomee (eds.): The Shaping, also J.S. Marais: The Cape Coloured People, Johannesburg, 1973, Chapters 1 and 2.

economy itself sparked off new impulses and created new pressures for a further extension of the nexus of social relationships based at the Cape.<sup>10</sup> The action taken by a mere handful of pioneers now came to be considered necessary by whole groups of people: namely, to cross the Orange River from the north of the Cape Colony and settle on the other side.

It has not been possible for me to establish when the name Great Namaqualand came into use. Contacts across the Orange River seem to be much older than suggested by our earliest written records of Europeans living on that side.<sup>11</sup> The Brothers Albrecht, missionaries of the London Missionary Society spoke, as early as 1805, of the people residing on that side as 'Great Namaquas',<sup>12</sup>. By that time it was also known that north of the Great

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10. Anon.; 'Class Formation and Class Consciousness in Namibia: Some History of the Nama People and the Rehoboth Bastards', Namso News, 3, 1977; see also my theoretical considerations in Chapter 1.
11. Thus, the head of the Gai-//khaun was fully aware of the power of the Cape Governor in 1820 already, see CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 16.
12. CA LMS Journals, Albrechts, 30 August 1905. Le Vaillant spoke of the 'Greater Nimiquas' already in 1796 as quoted by K.H.F. Budack: 'Die Traditionelle Politische Struktur Der Khoe-Khoen In Südwestafrika', Ph.D., University of Pretoria, 1972, 22.

Namaquas lived the 'Tamaras'.<sup>13</sup> The migration of groups of people known as 'Orlam' from little Namaqualand and the Cape Colony into Namaland had two major effects. Firstly, with the establishment of Jonker Afrikaner in Windhoek, a rough borderline was drawn in the north along the Swakop River and 'Great Namaqualand' became a fairly well-defined territory, bounded by the Atlantic Ocean in the west and the Kalahari Desert in the east. Secondly, these Orlam groups 'colonised' the Nama 'tribes' living in this area, and soon they, too, became intimately linked to the trade nexus with the Cape and were absorbed into the incipient imperialist system.

### 2.2.2 Damaraland

Damaraland was also called Hereroland and roughly comprised the area north of Windhoek up to Otavi (around the 1870s it also included Windhoek). It appears that from the mid-18th century onwards, this whole area was mainly populated by quite diverse and largely unconnected groups of pastoral nomads speaking the Herero language. The processes by which Herero-speakers became incorporated into a larger system of economic

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13. CA LMS Journals Albrechts, March 1809 (no day given).

and social relationships dominated by Merchant capital will not be analysed here as it is not the focus of this work. Yet, it will be given attention as this is precisely the time when 'tribal' boundaries in Namaland were breaking down.

### 2.2.3 Ovamboland

Ovamboland in the far north will be quite outside the framework of this thesis, although, even here, a specific kind of involvement in the political situation further south led to changes that made them part of 'South West Africa' even before the formal colonial era.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.2.4 Geographical Distinctions, Past and Present

Geographical distinctions between these three historical landscapes exist as well. However, it seems to me that modern climatic and environmental conditions do not necessarily correspond to the situation existing 150 years ago. Today there are very large arid and semi-arid stretches of country extending from Oranjemund right up to the Skeleton Coast and Kaokoveld; particularly in

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14. See, for instance, R. Moorsom and G. Clarence-Smith: 'Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Ovamboland', Palmer and Parsons (eds.): The Roots of Rural Poverty, London, 1977; also Hahn's reports of his travels there in 1866 and 1870, see Quellen 25.

the south these are sometimes more than 100 km wide. The country from the Orange River up to Rehoboth is too dry for cattle ranching today and has become a major sheep farming area. Rainfall is very unsatisfactory as periods of intense rains often alternate with extended droughts.<sup>15</sup> It has been estimated that due to the unreliability of rainfall, farmers have to farm extensively and consequently the average farm in this area is today from 10 000 - 20 000 ha in extent.<sup>16</sup> The quality of the pasture is suited mainly to small stock, the carrying capacity being 7 ha for small stock and 20 ha per head of cattle.<sup>17</sup>

From Rehoboth to Otavi one finds bushy savannah with good grasses and sufficient water (even if not surface water) to make cattle ranching possible, and compared to the south, the carrying capacity of pastures is substantially higher.

In Ovamboland and the adjacent Kaokoveld, cattle and karakul farming is conducted together with a very limited agriculture along the Okavango River in the north-west.

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15. See J.H. Wellington: Issues, 32-38.

16. F. Jaeger: Geographische, 119.

17. J. Wellington: Issues, 57.

Taking a cursory glance at evidence from earlier sources, it appears that the extreme south did not provide suitable situations for agriculture, with the exception of rather numerous tobacco gardens. However, the land supported large communities of nomadic pastoralists who lived together with their very substantial herds near Warmbad and all along the Fish River.<sup>18</sup> Even Hoachanas in the 1850s could sustain 2 000 cattle for some months.<sup>19</sup> Otjimbingwe produced hundreds of bushels of wheat in the 1860s<sup>20</sup> while every mission station had its fountain and there were many others besides. Sometimes these ran freely and oozed away into the sand, at other times, little pools were formed carrying water all year through. Agriculture at Warmbad was abandoned, not so much because of lack of rainfall but because of the salt content of the soil.<sup>21</sup> Droughts did occur even then but so did heavy rainfalls in the winter months of June/July.<sup>22</sup>

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18. See, for instance, Barnabas Shaw: 'A short account of the Great Namaquas', WMN 3, 1821, 119; also CA LMS Journals, Albrechts 4 Feb. 1809; Quellen 5, 4 June 1854. Vollmer reported in 1862 that in the Upper Fish River there existed "some big ponds full of fish which are navigable all year through", Quellen 5, 18 Jan. 1862.
19. BRMG 1866, 59.
20. BRMG 1866, 38.
21. CA LMS Letters, Albrechts 8 Nov. 1807.
22. In June/July of 1836, "fine rains" were reported, see E. Cook: The Modern Missionary, Liverpool, 1849, 50. In 1837 he noted that rains had not fallen in July "as usual", *Ibid.*, 69. He also reported "heavy rains" in August, 1838, *Ibid.*, 81.

Ovamboland was described by Hahn and other travellers as a luscious tropical paradise with permanent settlements and well-organised agricultural production.<sup>23</sup> The major sand dunes north of Walvis Bay (amongst the highest in the world today) apparently did not then exist. Instead there was savanna, bush and an abundance of game just inland from the immediate coastline.<sup>24</sup> It is evident that it is only developments of the past century that have today rendered this land productively unviable.

On the basis of mid-19th century observations, it seems that the marked difference in terms of soil aridity and suitability for cattle farming observed today between Namaqualand and Hereroland is not so much a natural condition as man-made and of much more recent origin than has thus far been accepted. Consequently, it is not possible to use these contemporary differences as bases for historical explanation which has been done in the past.<sup>25</sup>

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23. See, for instance, the description in F. Galton: The Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical Africa. London, 1853, ch.7.

24. Thus, Andersson reported one mile of sand desert inland (from Walvis Bay), WA AP 1, Aug. 1850. F. Galton mentioned sand dunes only south of Walvis Bay and called the area to the north a 'plain', F. Galton: Narrative, 29. Similarly, Captain Morell, some 20 years earlier, had not found sand dunes about the Kuiseb River, let alone further north of it, see Morrell's Voyage to the African Guano Islands. A Narrative of a Voyage to the South West Coast of Africa, London, 1844.

25. R. Moorsom: 'Proletarianisation', chapter 3.

As I will now attempt to show, it appears that unscrupulous exploitation of the soil, the large-scale decimation of game, and the more historically specific processes set in motion by the Orlam migration can be held partly responsible for such dessication.<sup>26</sup>

Colonial domination and neo-colonial exploitation have not reversed these processes, but, on the contrary, have augmented them.

### 2.3 THE PEOPLE IN NAMA- AND DAMARALAND

#### 2.3.1 Herero-Speakers

In Damaraland there were groups of Herero-speakers clustered around chiefs, some of them with great wealth in cattle, many followers and considerable fame.

'The Hereros' did not exist as a political entity. The major unifying factor of these pastoral nomads was their language. Herero is part of the general Bantu-language group. The first migration of Herero-speakers into South West Africa probably happened around the mid-16th century when they migrated from the east to settle in the Kaokoveld. It seems that only in the second half of the 18th century did groups of them begin to push

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26. S. Nicholson: 'The Methodology of Historical Climate Reconstruction and its Application to Africa', Journal of African History (20), 1979, 31.

southwards,<sup>27</sup> a movement that was eventually checked by the Afrikaner Orlams under Jonker Afrikaner. They were skilled cattle breeders. Some chiefs possessed such enormous herds as to arouse the great admiration and envy of more than one European contemporary, especially in the latter part of the 19th century.<sup>28</sup> Women collected veldkos, grew calabashes, and some men hunted. Their settlements seemed to have been of a semi-permanent nature as Herero women built mud huts. The most highly esteemed articles were iron beads and copper ornaments which were traded from neighbouring Ovambos. Politically, they were organised into disconnected lineages and clans, although the formation of larger chieftaincies can be traced in the 19th century.<sup>29</sup>

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27. In the absence of any well-established archaeological research in this field our evidence comes mostly from oral traditions collected by Vedder and available in Quellen 2, and T. Sundermeier: Die Mbanderu, St. Augustin 1977, 11-17.
28. For instance, missionary Büttner's ironical remarks do not quite conceal the envy and admiration behind them: "The Herero are a people which ... do not seem to know anything higher than to have as many cattle around them as possible. ... As a real German is enthusiastic about his forest, so they are enthusiastic about their cattle, and for a prince in Hereroland there is no greater pleasure than observing how his cattle are counted. For a Herero party there is no topic more interesting than to go through the experiences of their oxen and the ancestries of their cows again and again ..."  
G. Büttner: Das Hinterland von Walfischbai und Angra Pequena, Heidelberg 1884, 228; see also farmer Schlettwein's highly appreciative remarks about Herero herds and their cattle breeding in Der Farmer in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika, Wismar 1907, 37.
29. W. Werner: 'Investigation', 51-61.

My data up to the 1870s suggests that it is adequate to speak of 'Tjimuaha and his followers' or 'the people around Kahitjene' or 'Maharero and his elders' etc., and not postulate 'tribes' again. This terminology does not convey any insight into the changes experienced by various people sharing Herero language and cultural practices, but this is not my focus here. On the other hand, it certainly prevents us from applying rubber-stamp categories (which implies so much more prejudice than we are willing to acknowledge most of the time), like 'the Herero' or 'the Herero tribes'. Hopefully my usage does what is required at this stage: it begs the question.

### 2.3.2 The 'Damaras'

The next difficulty is of a more grave nature, namely how to describe and name a still obscure category of persons who are known today as Damaras, or Bergdamaras, or even 'Klipkaffirs', a very strong term of derision which is still in use. Elsewhere<sup>30</sup> I have tried in detail to deal with the classification of these people; who they were, how they changed and what roles they played. The result was tentative and left many questions

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30. B. Lau: 'Critique'.

unanswered. I concluded that people had existed who were part of the Nama language/culture group but for unknown reasons had historically evolved certain distinct characteristics like stable settlements, massive hunting apparatuses and copper mining and working, but owned hardly any cattle. These were not shared by other Nama-speakers. They also had a separate identity and their own name. It is especially this latter fact which is undeniable and must convince us, contrary to other evidence, that people existed who were Namas but not of the original Nama 'tribes', nor were they Orlams. They could also not be classed among the entirely vague group of people termed 'Bushmen'.<sup>31</sup> Jonker Afrikaner, a major political leader and pioneer, and also a historian, once told Galton and Andersson that those "Bergdamaras always existed in this country". He explained that it was only in Damaraland that they lived in mountainous areas, having taken refuge there from encroaching Herero-speakers. By way of proving this point, he added: "About the Kuiseb and south of

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31. There is even a very early reference clearly indicating that Hau-khoi were part of the Nama language/culture group. Thus, when the Albrechts mentioned the 'fieldshoewearers', they added: "To the north-west of them there are two other tribes belonging to the Namaquas. They are called the Kykoup (Gai-//khaun, B.L.) and the Tamaras". CA LMS Journals, Albrechts March. 1809.

it, a great number of Bergdamaras are living. The Ovahereros have not been much in that direction. Before the arrival of the Damaras, the Namaquas, and Bergdamaras are said to have lived together in the plains and possessed plenty of cattle."<sup>32</sup> In the absence of a published 19th century archaeology there is very little to qualify or add to this information.

Although in the period under consideration we never meet them as political actors in their own right but mainly in relations of subjugation and exploitation to others, members of this group at times lived in relatively independent settlements and called themselves by their very own name: Hau-Khoi. For the purposes of this discussion, there does not seem to be a better term.

### 2.3.3 Other Nama Speakers

The big body of Nama speakers, numbering between 17 000 and 33 000,<sup>33</sup> was historically separated into two major

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32. WA AP 2, 18 Aug. 1851.

33. CA G, 50-77, "Report of W.C. Palgrave, Esq., on his visit to Damaraland in 1876". He estimated 33 000 Nama-speakers in the territory including 'Bergdamaras'. T. Hahn's population figure was 16 850, Ibid., 94. Other estimates were around 25 000 inhabitants of Namaland, see CA HP 9, last page of diary 3, 1845-1853.

groups: the original 'Namaquas' and so-called Orlams who migrated into Namaland from areas further south. They settled there, associating with one of the five most influential leading 'Orlam' families.<sup>34</sup>

Without access to an acceptable body of archaeological data, the origin and time of migration of the original Namaquas must remain obscure. There are, of course, numerous theories. Among them, R. Elphick's theories appear to be the most recent ones. Elphick suggests that Khoi-Khoi tribes migrated to the middle reaches of the Orange River from a certain 'nucleus area' somewhere near present-day Botswana. There they split, one part moved north-west to the Atlantic Ocean and

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34. The origins of the term Orlam are not quite clear. Candy Malherbe has found the earliest references to 'Oorlams' or 'Oorlamsche Hottentotten' as coming from the east (Bethelsdorp, Graaff-Reinet) rather than the north, meaning 'civilised heathen', or denoting 'Bushmen who had had some contact with the colony, generally as herdsmen for farmers', oral communication with C. Malherbe. 'Orlam' was also claimed to be derived from the Malay word for white lamb or 'barren ewe', F. Galton: Narrative, 40.

Another explanation suggests that it is derived from 'overland', see A. Kienetz: 'The Key Role of the Orlam migrations in the early Europeanisation of SWA (Namibia)', International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 10, 1977, 554.

settled in present-day Namibia; the other moved south.<sup>35</sup> Hopefully future archaeological research will tell us more about the dates and scales of these migrations, and whether the country was unpopulated then or not.

At the turn of the 18th century, these Namaquas were separated into a number of different groups and sub-groups. These seem to have been established by at least the mid-18th century.<sup>36</sup> According to oral traditions collected by Hoernlé at the beginning of this century, these seven or eight groups were all descendants of one line of ancestors. She recalls a myth of origin related to her by a headman of the most southerly group, the Bondelswarts. This myth states that there were once five brothers, each of whom became the founder of a Nama 'tribe'. The eldest was the ancestor of the Gai-//khaun or 'Red Nation'; the other brothers founded the !Gami-#nûn or Bondelswarts, the //Haboben or Veldskoendraers, the !Khara-khoen or Fransmann Hottentots (or Simon Kopper Hottentots), and the //Khau-/gôan or Swartboois, who are said to have descended from the youngest brother. The #Aonin or Topnaars and the !Gomen or Groot Doode are not part of

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35. R. Elphick: Kraal and Castle, 18-22.

36. W. Hoernlé: 'The Social Organisation of the Nama Hottentots of Southwest Africa', Am. Anthropol. 1925, 6.

this legend but themselves claimed to be offshoots of the Gai-//khaun. In the 1850s a new Nama group, also related to lineages of the Gai-//khaun established themselves at Keetmanshoop and became known as Karo-!oan or Tseibschen Hottentots.

Interestingly, many of the Dutch names appear to have been literal translations of the Nama name: thus the !Gomen were the Great Dead, or Groot Doode; the !Gami-#nûn were the people of the black bundle or Swart Bondel.<sup>37</sup> The //Haboben were called after a kind of sandal worn by the people which means veldschoen in Dutch and Habeb or Howeb in Nama. The #Aonin were the people of the point (the sea coast being the extreme point of Nama occupation).<sup>38</sup> Their Dutch name Topnaar

37. Hoernlé related that "their own legend concerning their name is that they once formed one group with the Rooi-Natie; that on the death of an old chief his sons quarreled among themselves, the older going off with his supporters, while the younger brother stayed behind with his little group huddled together so that they looked like a little black bundle", *Ibid.*, 5. This, however, was denied by Budack who offered the translation 'Bondelsitter' as a correct equivalent of the Nama name, K. Budack: 'Die traditionelle politische Struktur der Khoekhoen in Südwestafrika', Ph.D., University of Pretoria, 1972. In this context A. Albrecht's notes are very interesting: "The whole nation is divided into different tribes, each of them distinguished by a particular name and governed by a Chief ... That division or tribe of the Great Namaqua nation in which we have begun our missionary work is called Kaminuqua (Kaminocque) ... Our interpreter translated it into the Dutch name of Bondelzwart but I can not tell what this means". He mentioned the *Veldskoendraers* but did not know the latter's Nama name. CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht, 'Observations' nd, ca 1809.

38. W. Hoernlé: *Op.cit.*, 5-16.

also refers to one of their staple foods, namely the !Nara plant. Names like "Veldskoendraers" and "Bondelswartz" were known from very early times. Thus the Albrechts had already mentioned them in the first years of the century.<sup>39</sup>

It is necessary to establish whether any of these names are of help in understanding the pre-colonial history of Namaland. This question arises because we must bear in mind that in contrast to more modern ideologies about the different 'tribes' in the area, the Nama-speakers around the turn of the last century shared structures of political/social and economic organisation, language, myths and rites. They also had a consciousness of being related to one another which was expressed in genealogical terms.<sup>40</sup> They did not occupy their own territory. Hoernlé's claim that they all had fountains and places seems true enough, but these waterholes were not limited to a specific territory. Rather, they were widely dispersed.<sup>41</sup>

The Gai-//khaun, Bondelswartz, Veldskoendraers and //Khaugôan populated the territory from north of the Orange River

39. CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht, 'Observations', ca 1809.

40. With regard to expressions of fictional or real genealogical relations among the various groups, see also W. Hoernlé: 'Organisation', Am. Anthrop. 1925.

41. See map 2.

up along the Fish River at least as far as the Hutup and had no apparent boundaries between them. (The story of the 'Red Nation' with their 'tribal headquarters' at Hoachanas is one of the more blatantly mythical foundations of Namibian history.) The early pattern of settlement and how this changed will be looked at in detail in Chapter 5.<sup>42</sup>

Yet, the different names and identities undeniably existed even in the very early period. Later, as will be shown, they were further entrenched by merchant capital penetration. Patterns of alliances and conflicts evolved which were precisely defined in terms of these groupings. Also, territories and boundaries became more sharply defined. It appears that even if we do not know exactly to what extent a 'group' was simply a family with leadership rights claiming that they represented "the Veldskoendaers" or "the Bondelswarts", there is some historical reality expressed by these names and, therefore, we cannot abandon them entirely.

However, there is a second observation of importance

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42. The only group which appeared to have occupied a relatively well-defined area - namely the mouth of the Kuiseb River - from the beginning of the 19th century onwards were the #Aonin or Topnaars, cf. J. Alexander: Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa, London, 1838, II, 99-102.

to be made here which clearly shows that these are not semantic games but that the terms and names do represent real processes past and present and must be taken seriously.

It is noticeable that among the original Nama groups and the Europeans with whom they interacted, the practice of calling a group by the name of their leaders became more and more prevalent.<sup>43</sup> For instance, the !Khara-khoen at some stage were called the Fransmanschen Hottentots.<sup>44</sup> This name fell into total disuse (except on maps) and the people were later called 'the Simon Kopper people' or 'Piet Kopper's people' or 'the Kopperschen'. In the same way the //Khou-gôan (or children of the Gai-//khaun) came to be called 'the Swartboois' after the Dutch name of Chief !Huisib, William Swartbooi. Sometimes they were also called 'the Rehobothers' after their headquarters. The Namas who settled around Keetmanshoop in the 1850s had no Nama appellation, but instead came to be called the Tseib'schen Hottentots after their chief Tseib.<sup>45</sup>

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43. There is, of course, one major difficulty here which can only be solved by oral research among old people in Namibia. This is that our written documents were produced by Europeans and we actually cannot be certain about the names and terms that were used in the various time periods by Kapteins and other Nama-speakers themselves. We can only assume that here (as in other cases) the European missionaries did not use their personal nomenclature but that their use of names by and large reflected the usage of the people they lived with. However, it does

With the Bondelswarts a similar process occurred even if it was 'the other way round' - the Nama name of the Chief was replaced by the surname 'Bondel' or 'Bondelswart'.<sup>46</sup> This practice became completely entrenched with the beginning of the German administration. The term Veldskoendraers also fell into disuse. Instead, frequent mention was made of "Nanib" or "Hendrik Nanib and his people".

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(Footnote 43 continued):

not even matter significantly whether it was Nama-speakers themselves or Europeans responding to some changes who used these new names. What we are interested in is only the reality of change.

44. The origin and meaning of this name is rather obscure. Vedder claimed that the Nama name meant 'the quite tall people' but this has no apparent connection to the term 'Fransman. Hottentots'. Budack, in a recent study, also came to the conclusion that from an etymological point of view the name could not be clarified. K. Budack: 'Struktur', 14.
45. CA G. 50 -1877, Report, 94.
46. For example, CA C 04397, R. Ridgill to Civil Commissioner, 24 Sept., 1855.

I think the changes in usage are significant and must be accounted for by changes in political/social structure which I shall analyse in greater detail in Chapter 5. What became defunct, as I shall demonstrate, was not just the old 'tribal' name but also the pre-capitalist structure of social and political organisation. Political leadership, patterns of settlement and general processes of community formation among Namas took on forms similar to those in Orlam groups, as did practices of calling a whole group by their leader's surname or the name of their 'headquarters'. It is only by paying attention to names and designations that such fundamental changes can be fully comprehended.

Our usage of terms must be adapted to indicate that these transformations were taking place. Therefore, I will continue using Dutch collective names, especially for the early period, like 'Veldskoendraers' and 'Bondelswarts' but will attempt to make adjustments for later periods, for example, 'Nanib and his followers' or 'Abraham Bondel and his people'.

Special mention has to be made of the so-called 'Red Nation' or 'Rooi Nasie'. This term is altogether unacceptable. First of all, it is a collective term that was applied to all Nama speakers (except to Hau-Khoin)

and not only to the Gai-//khaun.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, it is a term of derision.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, I propose to use the term Gai-//khaun for the earlier period and possibly 'Oasib and his followers' for a later time.

#### 2.4 THE ORLAM MIGRATIONS

As mentioned earlier, in the beginning of the 19th century the so-called Orlams were migrating into areas north of the Orange River.

The social and political relationships which were established between the incoming Orlams and the resident Nama groups, the nature of the alliances that were struck and related questions will only be considered later.

Such kommando groups moved northwards and crossed the Orange River. After a tumultuous period of violent conflict with the original Nama-speakers, they began to settle.

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47. It appears to be a term commonly applied to the Khoi-khoi by Bantu-speakers. Other people also used the expression 'Red People' to mean Nama in general. Thus, Jonker once explained to Andersson and Galton that when Hereros had migrated southwards, many of 'the red people' or the 'Namaquas' were killed, WA AP 2, 18 Aug. 1851.

48. See Quellen 5, 26 Oct. 1852. Vollmer noted that 'Red People' was a term of ridicule.

This area of South African history has been sorely neglected. Apart from Marais' history of the Cape Coloured People, a research essay by Theresa Strauss on the Koranna wars and Heese's important work on education in Namaqualand,<sup>49</sup> we can only point to work that deals with the dissolution of Khoi society at the time in a more indirect way, such as that of Candy Malherbe and Susan Newton-King.<sup>50</sup> None of these works focus on the processes that led to the Orlam migration, namely the gradual northward expansion of trade in guns, ammunition, horses, wagons, European clothing and other goods, and the social relationships accompanying it.

Processes of expanding merchant capital at the Cape, on the one hand, and social disintegration of Khoi communities, dispossession, labour coercion and violence on the other led to the emergence of a new 'frontier' institution in the western and north-western Cape. This was the kommando. Legassick's description of the

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49. J.S. Marais: The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1947, Johannesburg, 1937; Theresa Strauss: War Along the Orange, Centre for African Studies, Cape Town, 1979; J.A. Heese: 'Onderwys in die Geskiedenis van Namakwaland', Ph.D., University of Stellenbosch, 1946.
50. Susan Newton-King: 'The labour market of the Cape Colony, 1807-28, Marks and Atmore (eds.): Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, London, 1980.

first stages of formation of such a kommando is very illuminating in this context. As colonial citizens "moved out to tap new trade routes or new hunting grounds, they would have found Khoi Khoi eager to accept arms and powder in return for serving as guides ... By the end of the 18th century, this class of Khoi Khoi dependants, some of them having regained autonomy, had become sufficiently numerous to become known as Oorlams, that is, Hottentots who ... are born and bred with the farmers, most of whom understand and speak the low Dutch language".<sup>51</sup>

As this description indicates, those Oorlams who often formed an autonomous kommando group and tried to maintain it, were people who were resourceful enough to reject roles of subordination that became available as the settlement at the Cape expanded. Characteristically, the men vested with leadership positions in such a kommando owned some property, were of 'mixed' descent and were baptised. They had clearly broken away from the social relationships which characterised Khoi groups. The people they collected around themselves had diverse origins: they were runaway slaves, dispossessed Khoi

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51. M. Legassick: 'Emergence', 255. See also J. du Bruyn: 'The Oorlam Afrikaners: from dependence to dominance, c. 1760-1823', unpubl. paper, UNISA, 1981; Edna Bradlow: 'The significance of arms and ammunition on the Cape's northern frontier at the turn of the 18th century', Historia, 26(1), 1981.

retainers and the like.<sup>52</sup> Most importantly, "the emergence of the commando-like band, which was the vehicle for the hunting, trading and raiding of the frontier zone, depended on access to firearms, horses and gunpowder".<sup>53</sup>

The emergence of the kommando was thus typified by a circuit of raiding and trading which is precisely captured in a contemporary's remark. Thompson noted that the Orlam Jonker Afrikaner "collected a band of people of his own race, runaway slaves and other desperadoes, and having by some means procured fire-arms, commenced a regular system of depredation upon the defenceless Namaquas and Korannas, plundering them of great numbers of their cattle which he exchanged again with some unprincipled colonists for further supplies of arms and ammunition."<sup>54</sup>

No 'tribal' names were attached to these groups, and even if Nama names were given to them, most of them fell

52. M. Legassick: 'Emergence', 255.

53. W.M. Freund: 'The Cape under the transitional governments, 1795-1814', in: Elphick and Giliomee (eds): The Shaping of South African Society, London, 1979.

54. George Thompson: Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, London, 1827, p.291.

into disuse quite soon.<sup>55</sup> Orlam groups came to be called either by an individual family name or by the name of their major place of settlement. Thus, all those associating with the family which held central leadership rights came to be called by the name of that family. This was the case with the 'Afrikaners', first under Jager, then under Jonker and lastly under his son Jan; and also with the people around the Witbooi family.<sup>56</sup>

The other Orlam groups came to be known as the people of Bethany<sup>57</sup> under David Christian and his father Jacobus Booii; the people of Berseba under the Goliath and Isaac families, and the Gobabis people under Amraal and later his son Andries Lambert. This last group is the only one which was called by a Nama name, even under the Germans, namely the "Khauas Hottentots".<sup>58</sup>

55. This does not only refer to the names given by European contemporaries. Elsewhere I have stressed an 'invisible' source of historical information, namely the guides, servants and wagon drivers who would invariably accompany Europeans on their trips, B. Lau: 'Critique', 33.
56. Although the Witboois had a Nama name, Kobesin, this apparently was a greatly disliked nickname meaning 'lazy', W. Hoernle: 'Organisation', 4.
57. According to Vedder, they also had a Nama name, !Amas, 'those who wear tanned leather trousers', Vedder: Early Times, 170.
58. This becomes obvious in colonial historiography, see for example, H. Bley: South West Africa under German Rule, London, 1971.

Numbers varied widely and it is impossible to achieve any accurate assessments of population figures for the group or changes in its size for any length of time. It seems reasonable to suggest that population figures vacillated roughly between 300 and 3 000, or even more.<sup>59</sup>

#### 2.4.1 The Afrikaners

The first group to have crossed the Orange River were the Afrikaner family and their associates, under Klaas, Jager or Adam Afrikaner. As early as the mid-1790s Klaas had been commissioned by the farmer Pienaar to run a farm on one of the islands in the Orange River, from where he launched raiding expeditions into Namaland.<sup>60</sup> Thus beginning to build up their own support base and supply routes, the Afrikaners soon felt themselves to be in a position to shed their servile roles. In a quarrel with Pienaar, the farmer was killed, his farm raided and the Afrikaners, with their women and children, came to settle at Jerusalem and Blydevewacht to the north of

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59. Hahn estimated that the Afrikaners, 'Bushmen and Bergdamara' included, numbered 5 200 people, CA HP 9, last page of diary 3, 1845-1853, n.d., n.p.

60. See M. Legassick: 'Emergence', 261, also J. du Bruyn: 'The Oorlam Afrikaners: from dependence to dominance, c. 1760-1823', unpubl. paper, UNISA, 1981.

the Orange River.<sup>61</sup> Jager had been baptised and seemed to have made do without large-scale raids, but not without material support from the missionaries, for a number of years.<sup>62</sup> He died in 1823.

As a very persistent legend has it, one of his younger sons, Jonker, who was not prepared to cede the kapteinship to his older brother, took the first chance to leave him with some people when he was called up to the Fish River by the Kaptein of the Gai-//khaun to help them against the encroaching Hereros. He "defeated the Damaras in three bloody fights in 1835, took their cattle from them, conciliated the Hill Damaras and became the great chief of this part of the country".<sup>63</sup>

This is evidently Jonker's personal version of history, related by him to Capt. Alexander. Another version, more credible partly (but only partly) because it is supported by more people than one, puts it this way:

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61. E. Bradlow: 'Petrus Pienaar: ruffian or courageous pioneer', Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library, 34 (3), 1980. See also Du Bruyn: 'The Oorlam Afrikaners', 1981.
62. J. Ebner: Reise nach Südafrika und Darstellung meiner während acht Jahren als Missionar unter den Hottentotten gemachten Erfahrungen. Berlin, 1829, 298.
63. J. Alexander: Discovery, II, 151. The date must be 1825 because Schmelen already visited Jonker at Tsebris near Windhoek in 1825, see JBRMG 3, 1832, 69.

"After Christian Afrikaner's death the Chieftainship fell on his son Jonker, under whose leadership the raids on neighbouring tribes were started anew (wiederaufgenommen wurden). Fights took place, won by the Afrikaners who took many cattle, except for once when they were defeated by the Bondelswarts under Jan Ortmann. After this event Jonker Afrikaner preferred not to stay near the victors and led the people far away, north-eastwards near to the country of the Damaras".<sup>64</sup> At any rate, Jonker and his 'band' were firmly established in the border area between Namaland and Damaraland by the mid-1820s. Their settling was not supported by, but nor was it against, the will of the head of the Gai-//khaun.<sup>65</sup>

#### 2.4.2 The Bethany People

The next group to be mentioned in a chronological context are the Booi or Frederick family of Bethany. When London missionary Johann Heinrich Schmelen first arrived in Klipfontein, as Bethany was called in 1814, he

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64. Moritz Backhouse, 1840, 233; see also H. Tindall: Two Lectures on Great Namaqualand and its Inhabitants, Cape Town, 1856, 36.

65. For more details, see chapter 3.

interviewed Kaptein Kobus (Jakobus), asking how long he had been resident there. Kobus claimed that it was ten years. Schmelen then proceeded to ask another leading family head (this was Fleremuis who had come with him and about 120 other men across the Orange River. Amraal Lambert, who later became the head of the 'Gobabis people', was also with them<sup>66</sup>) whether he was prepared to settle down at Klipfontein together with Kobus Bosis, to which he agreed.<sup>67</sup>

The story of this family is quite complicated and cannot be followed through here in great detail. Kobus had five or six sons, one of whom was David Christian, who succeeded Kobus as kaptein. After considerable strife in the 1820s, which made Schmelen's continued stay impossible, the eldest son, Jan, split and moved away from the area. For the next 40 to 50 years these people (and undoubtedly others who had no original connections) lived in the area between Bethany and the Kuiseb and Swakop region and never established themselves at a fixed place with a missionary.

#### 2.4.3 Amraal and His Group

Let us now look at Amraal Lambert and the people associated

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66. BRMG, 1855, 338.

67. TLMS, IV, 162.

with him. After crossing the Orange River with Schmelen as noted above, he lived at or near Bethany for at least 14 years.<sup>68</sup> Cook visited him several times and also helped him, Fleremuis and their 'band' of followers to get a missionary in the early 1840s. He left us the following account: "His great grandfather was the Chief of a tribe who inhabited the country in the vicinity of Table Bay, and possessed the lands most valuable in the western division of the colony. His grandfather ... lived with his people principally at the Hex River, situated in the district of Clanwilliam. His father became wagon driver to a Dutch farmer, but after the father's death, the family ... possessing among them some cattle ... ultimately crossed the Great Orange River and ... finally settled on the banks of the Fish River, where Amraal, the eldest brother, became a chief of considerable importance. About four years later, a long drought induced them to remove to Nouzanabis."<sup>69</sup>

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68. Schmelen often mentioned him as part of the missionary establishment at Bethany, see CA LMS Journals, 1815-1816, 28; also letter to Kitchingman, B. le Cordeur and C. Saunders (eds): The Kitchingman Papers, 95. Schmelen's relations with Amraal were close; the latter guided and accompanied him on his trip to Hereroland and Walvis Bay in 1825, see RLMS 1826, 85; also BRMG 1855, 33.

69. E. Cook: The Modern Missionary, Liverpool, 1849, 102-103. A very similar version is given in BRMG 1855, 338-339.

Later they settled a little further north at Gobabis or Elephant's Fountain.

#### 2.4.4 The Berseba People

Berseba was established similarly to the settlements at Bethany, Windhoek and Gobabis, but only in the late 1840s/early 1850s. However, less is known about the history of the two families who came to assume leadership positions in the community. Here, as in Windhoek, Gobabis and Wesley Vale, the establishment of a community which came to act in its own right was linked to the 'acquisition' of a missionary. When Knudsen of the Rhenish Mission Society was a missionary at Bethany, he had a series of 'outstations' and werfts surrounding Bethany which he served. Part of his circuit was Gulbrandsdalen and also the place of Christoph Tibot. Unfortunately the diaries available to me do not actually explain where his place was.

Moritz gives the following explanation: "Christoph Tibot, an Orlam from Pella, had gathered a small Christian community around him after Schmelen left Bethany".<sup>70</sup> Knudsen noted in November 1843 that he travelled with Tibot to his settlement at the Fish River, mentioning Paul Goliath for the first time. "The day before Paul Goliath had come with part of his people for

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70. Moritz Knudsen 1845, 157 (footnote); also BRMG 1854, 125.

a visit ... He was baptised formerly and is a kind of kaptein over Tibot's people. They were dressed very decently, and many of them spoke Dutch".<sup>71</sup> These two groups, together with people from Gulbrandsdalen then formed the congregation at Berseba in 1850 under Samuel Hahn which soon became a firmly established community.<sup>72</sup>

#### 2.4.5 Kido Witbooi's People

The people who were with old Kido Witbooi when he settled at Gibeon with missionary Knauer followed a very similar pattern. At the beginning of the century the Witbooi family was living at Pella, in Little Namaqualand. As Bochert noted it was the unfavourable terrain and the British annexation of the Cape Colony which forced the Witbooi family to leave Pella and to look for a more suitable place of settlement.<sup>73</sup> They made unsuccessful attempts to settle in Griqualand and among the Tswanas<sup>74</sup> and had been living in scattered little groups in Namaland since the mid-1850s. When a suitable place for settlement and, what seems more important, a missionary was

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71. Quellen, 3a, Nov. 1843.

72. Quellen, 3a, p.110.

73. Bochert: 'The Witboois', 22.

74. Ibid.

found in the early 1860s they established a more closely-knit community at Gibeon.

It seems to me that their settlement at Gibeon in 1863 must be seen in the perspective of the political upheavals of that period. The decision to accept a missionary then meant making a definite political commitment which those years of sharply polarised conflict demanded of every Kaptein.<sup>75</sup> However, more about these processes will be said in Chapter 9.

In the next chapter, I will consider the years of contact and clash between these kommando groups and the inhabitants of Namaland.

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75. See Chapter 9.

NAMALAND IN THE PERIOD 1800-18353.1 THE INVASION OF NAMALAND BY ORLAM KOMMANDOS, 1800-1835

When the kommando groups from the Cape pushed northwards and crossed the Orange River, they met with pastoral Nama-speaking peoples owning large herds of cattle. This early period of contact can be roughly divided into three phases (although distinctions between the phases are blurred). The first phase was characterised by occasional skirmishes and clashes between those Nama-speakers and Orlam kommandos. In this phase, it became clear that the Namas although much more numerous, were militarily inferior to the Orlam raiding parties as they did not own guns and horses. Also, due to their large cattle herds, they were probably not as mobile as the Orlam kommandos. In the second phase, Orlam leaders took over rights to waterholes and pastures (apart from raiding cattle herds) and thus must be seen as conquerors. This phase lasted up until 1835. The third period, largely coinciding with the second phase, was marked by the establishment of an alliance between the most powerful Orlam-kaptein and the most senior Nama chief. These were Jonker Afrikaner and the head of the Gai-//khaun (probably Oasib) respectively.

Any attempt to elucidate the early relations between Nama and Orlam groups north of the Orange River is hampered by the scarcity and inadequacy of available written sources. For about ten years, from 1825 to 1835, there was no European resident in Namaland. Furthermore, at least until mid-century, these were completely undiscovered wildernesses from a European point of view, with "strange, even terrific" inhabitants. Therefore, our outline of the Orlam invasion of Namaland must remain sketchy.

### 3.1.1 Occasional Skirmishes and Clashes Between Orlams and Namas

The contacts through raiding and trading between Orlams, other Khoisan groups and even farmers on both sides of the Orange River were well developed long before Jager Afrikaner settled at Blydeverwacht. During the 1790s, Jager had been temporarily located on an island in the Orange River.<sup>1</sup> In a recent paper, de Bruyn has dated a campaign of Klaas Afrikaner and his followers, involving a skirmish with the farmer Guillian Visagie, to 1793.<sup>2</sup> Later reports by Ridsdale and Knudsen indicate that this man's farm was situated near Keetmanshoop, i.e. almost 300 km north

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1. M. Legassick: 'Emergence', 261.

2. J. du Bruyn: 'The Oorlam Afrikaners', 6.

of the Orange River.<sup>3</sup> There are frequent early references to Namas living far to the north of the Orange River being afraid of the 'hat-wearers'.<sup>4</sup> The Albrechts noted in their journal of 1809: "One of our difficulties with the Namaquas is their prejudice against foreigners, particularly against the Hottentots, (Orlams, B.L.), some of whom we are obliged to hire in our services as they are far better acquainted with agriculture and the building of houses. From this cause (sic) many quarrels have arisen which ... retarded our success ...".<sup>5</sup>

### 3.1.2 The Orlam Kommandos as Conquerors

The dividing line between phase one and phase two is not clear. While between 1806 and 1822 three missionary settlements existed in Great Namaqualand, all missionary endeavours ceased after that for almost 15 years.

These fifteen or twenty years must be seen as an era of conquest and intense struggle for territorial rights,

3. Ridsdale: Scenes, 275; Moritz Knudsen, 1845, 158.
4. Such anxiety was expressed by a Nama chief east of the Liver River, see CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 13.
5. CA LMS Journals, 4 Feb. 1809. 'Hottentots' unlike 'Great Namaquas' were "such as have lived with the peasants among the Christians, and are therefore ... considered as more civilised", TLMS III, 27.

water holes and for people. Missionary efforts ceased because it was no longer possible for a European to be resident in Namaland. Conflicts were spontaneous with no apparent pattern - mainly Orlam against Namas, but also Orlam group against Orlam group. This friction was widespread and entirely unmediated by any European form of problem-solving (such as treaties). Many communities were uprooted, nothing was established any longer, and every right had to be fought for. In the process Nama groups lost claims to water holes and pastures as well as probably many thousands of head of cattle. Our knowledge of these violent and tumultuous years is dependent on very sporadic accounts indeed.

Importantly, even this time of conquest was marked by a combination of subjection and alliance. The mission station at Warmbad was razed to the ground by the Afrikaners under Jager and Titus in 1812. About Klaas Afrikaner's place itself, Moffat noted that a Nama chief had ceded to him his dominion in Namaland and "it henceforth became his by right, as well as by conquest."<sup>6</sup> This should probably be regarded as an attempt by Orlam Kapteins to prevent any Nama groups from gaining access to a missionary, the latter being of great political significance.

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6. Moffat: Labours, 76.

Kobus Boois, probably represents a similar case of a combination of alliance and conquest. Apparently he paid four rolls of tobacco to a Nama chief for being allowed to settle at Bethany.<sup>7</sup> Although he had invited Schmelen to stay, he soon began raids on "Namaquas by the Fish River".<sup>8</sup>

Schmelen, for his part, soon started to serve outposts and kraals of Gai-//khaun who had moved near him, as well as other Namas.<sup>9</sup> This was not tolerated by the Orlam leaders at Bethany. They incited people at the station in a successful bid to oust Schmelen. The missionary had to leave after he "almost begged them upon my knees that they should come to church but they would not".<sup>10</sup>

When Schmelen had travelled to Bethany in 1814, he asked Aimap, a Nama chief (probably of the Veldskoendraes) whether

7. TLMS IV, 161.
8. CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 9-10.
9. CA LMS Journals, Schmelen, 1819, 8, 9; 1815-1816, 26, 27, 28.
10. See Schmelen's detailed account of the 'civil war' situation, CA LMS Letters Schmelen, 26 Sept. 1822. Schmelen understood that the immediate cause was his reluctance to furnish the people with more gunpowder, but does not seem to have been aware of the overall political and strategic importance of missionaries.

it was safe for him to return along the Fish River. Aimap, after having talked about nothing but "the wars and fightings in this country" advised him not to do so. "He said if I went that way I must expect to fight, for the people are now under no subjection".<sup>11</sup>

Some years later Moffat, travelling south-east of Bethany, remarked that the 'wild Namaquas' were very apprehensive of the 'hat wearers', and of Titus Afrikaner. Also, a man from the north arrived and "gave a sorry account of the country".<sup>12</sup>

For Missionary Schmelen, his initial impressions and information did not change during his times at Bethany. He travelled north once from the station for almost two months but did not get to the sea. Concluding his account he noted: "I was entirely surrounded with war ..."<sup>13</sup> After he was forced to leave the station, he wrote to the Governor saying that he would not go back there nor continue to translate things into Nama "excepting that the Government would assist us in obtaining some kind of order amongst the different tribes".<sup>14</sup>

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11. TLMS IV, 323-326.

12. Ibid., 127.

13. CA LMS Letters, Schmelen, 29 July 1814.

14. Ibid., 26 Sept., 1822.

Missionary Archbell was expelled from Bush Fountain in 1822, where he had worked briefly among the Gai-//khaun. William Threlfall, the last missionary for a long time to come who tried to work in Namaland shortly afterwards, was actually murdered. Shaw quoted him as writing in one of his last letters in August 1824: "We had some alarming accounts of the state of the natives and country beyond the Orange River. They say that Gammap (head of the Gai-//khaun, B.L.) and another chief are dead ...<sup>1</sup> They said all they could to discourage Jacob and Johannes and his two assistants from travelling beyond Warmbad."<sup>15</sup> Later he wrote to Shaw that: "Tsaumap (of the Gai-//khaun B.L.) ... had given him much information respecting the tribes northward. That the old chief was very poor, having been robbed of all his cattle, not by Afrikaner's people, as had been reported, but by some of the disaffected people of Bethany".<sup>16</sup> Threlfall's murder was related to a refusal of the Orlam Kapteins to co-operate with him. He appeared to have suffered a gradual deprivation of guides, food and oxen<sup>17</sup> so that he was left without protection.

Finally Schmelen, on a last visit to these regions, wrote from Bethany in 1828: "We hear of nothing but oppression

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15. Shaw: Memorials of South Africa, London 1820, 277-278

16. Ibid., 278.

17. S. Broadbent: The Missionary Martyr in Namaqualand, London, 1857.

and persecution. The poor Nama are often so badly treated by the Orlams that my heart bleeds (for them). The Afrikaners and most of my people treat the natives in an abominable manner, not only by depriving them of everything, but also by using the women and children as whores and by treating them worse than slaves. If we cannot close off the coast on this side, so that the whale fishermen cease selling gunpowder there, then I believe that little good will be done in the future."<sup>18</sup> This illuminating piece of evidence also gives us insights into the sources of ammunition in times when no trader from the Cape would make his way up there.

### 3.1.3 Jonker's Alliance with the Head of the Gai-//khaun

Jonker Afrikaner, with a group of men and women, soon established himself as the most successful kommando leader and moved furthest to the north of Namaland. Between 1825 and 1835 he struck an alliance with the head of the Gai-//khaun, the most senior Nama group. This alliance is important because firstly it lent political legitimacy to the presence of Orlams in Namaland. Secondly, it was the terms and circumstances of this

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18. Schmelen to Kitchingman, 28 March 1828, B. le Cordeur and C. Saunders (eds): The Kitchingman Papers, 95.

alliance which secured Jonker and his associates the 'hegemonic' position they held for many years in Namaland.

In this period, Jonker and his people moved to the Windhoek-Rehoboth area, soon followed by a large group of Gai-//khaun with their chief who left the Lion and Fish river area.<sup>19</sup> Although it is impossible without extensive archaeological research to establish the circumstances of the Afrikaner's move to the north of Namaland, it emerges from the written historical record that they were allowed to settle in the Windhoek area by the mid-1820s.<sup>20</sup> They were also given the right to incorporate whole groups of Herero speakers into their network of dependants or followers. Thus, they were given a kind of monopoly access to Herero-labour. Even if the Gai-//khaun also started to raid Herero-speakers, it was only Jonker and his associates who originally had acknowledged rights over Damaraland and its inhabitants. These avenues of surplus appropriation constituted the basis of Jonker's powerful position. (Yet, as we shall see in a later section, Jonker's power position was not left entirely uncontested by the head of the Gai-//khaun.)<sup>21</sup>

Little is known about the years when the Afrikaners first established themselves at Windhoek. Apparently they

19. See map 2.

20. Schmelen visited him there in 1825, see Moritz Schmelen 1832, 221.

21. See below, Chapter 7.

did not 'conquer' the Gai-//khaun because there is no evidence of tributary or exploitative relations between them. Rather the Kaptains were on friendly terms. As mentioned, the head of the Gai-//khaun with large numbers of followers left the Fish River area and, as Jonker, also moved northwards to live in an area only a few days from Windhoek. By the 1840s, Oasib and many others were living in the Kubakob,<sup>22</sup> i.e. in Jonker's immediate neighbourhood, and in fact moved even closer to him.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Rehoboth and Tsebris, both formerly occupied by the Afrikaners<sup>24</sup> and only 80 km from Windhoek, were made the headquarters of the Nama Kaptein Huiseb, later Willem Swartbooi, is especially significant. It clearly indicates that we are dealing with an alliance.

The Afrikaners had to ensure that Herero chiefs would not extend their pastures south of the Swakop. In return, they were given substantial rights over territories and people in the area between the Swakop and Kuiseb rivers, as previously noted. Thus Palgrave contended before a Cape Government commission in the 1880s, when land claims

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22. C.H. Hahn: 'Aus Alt-Südwestafrika', AH 1961, 106.

23. See Ibid., 112. Andersson, about a day from Windhoek, reported in 1851 that the Gai-//khaun "have been lying all about here", WA AP 2, 30 Aug. 1851.

24. Alexander: Discovery, II, 187. See also Moritz Schmelen, 1832, 221.

by Piet Haibib of the Topnaars were discussed, that before 1863 Jonker was the 'suzerain' of Piet Haibib. "Prior to that the country had been claimed to the east (of Walvis Bay, B.L.) by the red nation: but by an agreement between the chief of the red nation and old Jonker Afrikaner, all that portion about Walvis Bay reverted to Jonker".<sup>25</sup>

An agreement between Jonker and Oasib in 1858 after a great deal of conflict (which we shall consider only in Chapters 7 and 8)<sup>26</sup> confirmed and possibly clarified the terms of the original alliance. Oasib agreed to consider Jonker as an independent Kaptein who was equal to him in status. Jonker was the overlord of Hereroland and it was agreed that Oasib's territory should reach to the Auas Mountains. The border line between their territories was to be the Kuiseb River.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, this alliance certainly must be seen as a crucial point in the history of Namaland and its inhabitants, even if its timing is not altogether clear. By way of illuminating the nature of the early contacts between

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25. CA G. H. 21/19, q. No.1151.

26. The more immediate causes of this conflict revolved around fees and royalties from the copper companies which began to exploit copper reserves in Central Namibia in the mid-1850s. See below, Chapters 7 and 8.

27. CA HP 9, 22 April 1858.

Nama and Orlam further I shall now briefly consider some aspects of social and political organisation among the original Nama groups.

### 3.2 AN OUTLINE OF THE EARLY NAMA SOCIAL FORMATION, 1800 - 1820

In this section I shall present the historical evidence demonstrating that the original Nama groups (the 'genuine Namaquas' as they are sometimes called in the sources) were pastoral peoples involved in pre-capitalist forms of production similar to those of many other peoples in southern Africa.<sup>28</sup>

#### 3.2.1 Settlement Patterns

This is clearly suggested by our data on early settlement patterns. An analysis of waterholes and cattle posts, based on very early sources, shows unmistakably that until the 1840s certain groups did claim specific places for themselves as Hoernlé argues.<sup>29</sup> However, this was

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28. This discussion will be limited by the scarcity of ethnological data in the few early sources which exist. Thus, I will be able to expose certain fundamental features of these pre-capitalist formations but not their inner dynamic.

29. Hoernlé: 'The Social Organisation of the Nama Hottentots of Southwest Africa', Am. Anthr. (27), 1925, 5.

## REFERENCES

This compilation of water posts means complete. Only data produced by Europeans were available. The evidence is of two types:

- (a) Names of places which were mentioned, even if the spelling was not correct.
- (b) The description of the routes along those routes. The information given on the maps of this historical site is not reliable if the information is not a reasonable amount of time (a day's journey from Bethany').

Only evidence including a list of the Nama groups was used from the following sources:

TLMS IV, 324, 159-161, 161; Schmelten 1815-1816, 2, 8; Journals Schmelten 1819, 8; 1821-1822, 13 Dec. 1821, 1821; Schmelten, 6 Nov. 1818; (no day given), 30 Aug. 1805, 4 Feb. 1805 (no day given), 12 March 1805; CA LMS Journals Kitching; Archbell 1822, 220; Morice's times the sources refer to place names. In order to get extra information was received from Memorials, 130; CA LMS Journals Kitching; CA LMS Journals Kitching with Dr. F.K. Budack; !Huiseb, who was probably a reliable source.

- ◄ AMRAAL'S GROUP
- ▲ AFRIKANER
- ✱ BETHANY PEOPLE
- BONDELSWARTS
- ▲ VELDSKOENDRAERS
- ◆ FRANZMANN'SCHE HOTTENTOTS
- GAI//KHAUN
- SWARTBOOIS (//KHAO-//GÔAN)
- SETTLEMENT

estimated that the Bondelswarts numbered about 1 400 and the !Gomen 800,<sup>31</sup> Schmelen reckoned that the Gai-//khaun numbered between 5 000 and 6 000 people.<sup>32</sup> On his travels, he passed cattle posts of the Veldskoendraers and other Nama chiefs with populations of a thousand people or more.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, he often visited cattle posts or werfts of 100, 130 or 150 houses.<sup>34</sup>

The total Nama population was also much larger than the number of incoming Orlams. Later estimates indicate a figure of 10 000 or more. For instance, Hugo Hahn compiled the following list:<sup>35</sup>

Bondelswarts:	4 000
(illegible)	4 000 (probably Gai-//khaun)
Veldskoendraers:	1 000
Fransmann'sche:	1 000
Willem Swartbooi:	1 500
Topnaars:	800
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	12 300

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31. CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht: 'Observations', n.d. ca 1809.

32. TLMS IV, 324-325.

33. Ibid.

34. CA LMS Journals, Schmelen 1816, 21; 1819, 8; CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman 1820, 11. This means a number of up to 1 000 people; see Chapter 4.

35. CA HP 9, diary 3, last page. H. Tindall's estimate was 9 100 excl. Topnaars at the Bay, Two Lectures, 33-38.

3.2.3 Major Branches of Production: Cattle Breeding, Veldkos Collection, Hunting, Tobacco Cultivation

These people practised a pastoralist existence with their herds of cattle, sheep and goats in the area between the Orange and Upper reaches of the Fish River. Their staple foods were sour milk, veldkos and game.<sup>36</sup> The evidence gives no indication of the importance of hunting in the social process.

However, there are descriptions of the hunting techniques used. The Albrechts once (ca. 1808) accompanied the chief of the Bondelswarts on a hunt, together with about 80 men. They noted: "The men were separated into two divisions and so far from each other that one division could hardly see the other. The individuals themselves were about a stone's throw from each other, and placed in the form of a crescent. At a given sign, they ran towards a point in such a manner that they surrounded the game in a circle." The weapons used were assegais and occasionally a musket.<sup>37</sup> Agriculture was not practised apart from the cultivation of tobacco and dagga.<sup>38</sup>

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36. TLMS III, 209; B. Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 3, 1821, 119-120; CA LMS Journals, Albrechts, 25 May 1808.

37. TLMS III, 319. For a similar description, see Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 121.

38. TLMS IV, 161, Shaw, Op.cit., 121, CA LMS Journals Kitchingman, 1820, 16.

The early Nama were also incomparably richer in cattle. Thus, we have frequent references to numerous herds and an "abundance of milk".<sup>39</sup>

Barnabas Shaw, who visited Gamma Tsawoeb, head of the Gai-//khaun and other Nama chiefs in 1820, left this illuminating description:

"Some of them (Namas, B.L.) may properly be called rich, as they possess immense numbers of horned cattle, besides goats and sheep. We were frequently surprised at the return of their cows and oxen from the fields: clouds of dust, seen floating in the air on every side of the village ... they delight much in their cattle, and, like the Caffers, they turn the horns of their favourite ones in every direction which fancy suggests to them as ornamental."<sup>40</sup>

The terrain was apparently quite suitable for tobacco cultivation, hunting and large-scale cattle raising.

Shaw noted in his commentary on Namaland, that "some parts ... are mountainous and barren in the extreme, while others produce plenty of grass for innumerable multitudes of cattle."<sup>41</sup> Missionary Archbell reported that in the Bethany area, "A scarcity of water on the station will never be known, as in addition to eight fountains, the

39. Thus, Kitchingman noted that in Nama kraals meat was "frequently cooked in milk"; op.cit., 10.

40. Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 119.

41. Ibid.

River Untup (Hutup, B.L.) is distant from us about half a day's journey, which will supply us abundantly with timber for building, and also prove a great blessing on account of its grass and water".<sup>42</sup>

(i) Notes on Domestic Production

The domestic production of these Nama-speaking pastoralists was rich and diverse. It exhibited a kind of self-generating 'adequacy' which allowed groups to exist without becoming dependent on European imports.

There was a strict sexual division of labour. Married women were the main producers as they milked the cattle, and thus produced the staple food, a kind of yoghurt. This was supplemented by veldkos which they collected. They also made mats and built huts constructed from these mats.<sup>43</sup> Also, it was their children, mostly uninitiated young men, who would perform tasks related to cattle-tending such as herding and watering. Hunting and the conduct of political affairs was the domain of men.

The men made their own weapons, namely assegais, bows,

42. WMN 3, 1882, 338.

43. TLMS IV, 212-213, For a description of the labour process involved in mat making in the 1840s, see chapter 5.

arrows, a quiver to hold them and also the poison to enhance their effectiveness.<sup>44</sup> The Albrechts noted that there were two sorts of assegais: one type was barbed like a harpoon, and the other was plain.<sup>45</sup> Apparently both men and women made their own clothing,<sup>46</sup> consisting of different types of aprons, karosses, skin caps and sometimes beasts' maws.<sup>47</sup> Lavish decorations, deserving special mention for their diversity and sophistication, were part of the outfit. Apart from rubbing their bodies with red powder and fat,<sup>48</sup> it was noted that: "They have ornaments of ivory, copper and iron rings<sup>49</sup> on their legs and arms, and are much attracted to beads to put on their wrists and necks and waists. Many had their hair adorned with small shells, in which the figure of the star seemed to have preference. A red powder mingled with fat, and profusely laid on the head, forms in their estimation a rich pomatum. Some of their heads appeared as if overlaid with red pastry - those of

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44. Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 120.

45. TLMS III, 211.

46. H.C. Knudsen: 'Nachrichten über die Damara und Nama', AH, 1963, 111.

47. CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 14-15.

48. Ibid, 13-14. The iron was apparently procured from meteors, see Ibid., 9, as well as "from people where the sun comes up", i.e. Bantu-speakers from the east, see Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 122.

49. Shaw, op.cit., 120.

others resembled a mop for washing floors - and some had the resemblance of the quills of the porcupine. Their appearance is curious, wild, and, to a stranger, even terrific. The ladies use various sorts of paints with which they daub their cheeks. Here a difference of taste is displayed, some using red, others brown, and some jet black, being a composition of charcoal and fat, blended together." Kitchingman made an additional note about the laboriousness of pounding bark for the various powders made and used by women.<sup>50</sup>

However, there were many other aspects of domestic production: clay pots were manufactured (and, as early as 1808, iron pots were traded "from the colonists"). Pipes were made of a green stone hollowed out in a conical form and pierced at the pointed part ... "not being provided with such pipes, they make shift with an emptied marrow bone".<sup>51</sup> Albrechts noted that industry included the preparing of calabashes for milk, and the making of wooden buckets, cups and basins, and skin bags for personal effects.<sup>52</sup> The brewing of honey-beer as amongst the

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50. It was noted at a Nama chief's kraal: "This morning we were disturbed of our rest by some women who were up long before day, beating camel thornwood to powder, to powder their hair. It is astonishing what labour these people make to be dirty". CA: LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 12.

51. TLMS III, 213.

52. Ibid., 213-214.

the Orlams, was popular.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.2.4 Central Aspects of Social and Economic Organisation In Early Nama Groups

Information about the social relations structuring these activities is scarce. It appears that decision-making processes, the organisation of the cattle posts system, and the distribution of power in these groups, were structured by kinship relations.<sup>54</sup> Although a detailed analysis cannot be constructed, we have some early accounts which give illuminating insights into forms of Nama organisation which as we shall see later, vanished under the impact of the Orlam invasion.

#### (i) The Position of the Chief

Shaw made the following observations about the political organisation: "Each tribe or clan is governed by a chief ... the chief receives the hind part of every bullock which is slaughtered; this he distributes amongst the males of his village, all of whom are called his soldiers. He also collects a sufficiency of milk at the door of his

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53. CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 12.  
B. Shaw: Memorials, 129.

54. The theoretical and empirical works whose conclusions underlie this presentation are mainly those of French economic anthropologist, see Chapter 1, footnote 33

hut, to deal out amongst the poor and the needy. On the death of his wife, every male who has arrived at years of maturity, gives him a cow, which, after a certain number of years, is returned."<sup>55</sup> This indicates not only social practices of reciprocity characteristic of African pre-capitalist societies, but also a system of surplus appropriation and the encouragement of followers to become dependent on their chiefs, which helped to buttress chiefly power. We are also dealing with a form of accumulation that is pre-capitalist in nature, in that its purpose was to increase, not the number of commodities of exchange, but the numbers of followers or dependants.<sup>56</sup>

As Shaw noted, "A part of every animal taken in hunting is required by the chief, and though it should be in a state of putrefaction before it can be brought to him, he nevertheless demands his right".<sup>57</sup> Abraham Albrecht added that, in cases of disobedience, the chief was able to call a group of armed men together and "unexpectedly surprises the offender in his kraal ... and takes away all his cattle. This being effected, the offender is obliged to ask the Kaptein's pardon and to submit, in

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55. Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 120.

56. See for example Jeff Guys' analysis of such pre-capitalist accumulation in The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom, London, 1980, chs. 1 and 2.

57. Shaw: Memorials, 120.

order to have his cattle restored to him".<sup>58</sup>

(ii) Surplus Appropriation of Uninitiated Young Men

The labour of uninitiated young men was directed towards the strenuous task of cattle raising. Referring to "the young men" who, upon coming of age, will not milk cows any longer, Albrechts noted that "One of the most laborious tasks in which they are occasionally employed is to procure water for their cattle during the hot season of the year. They are obliged to dig large and deep holes, in or on the banks of the periodical rivers to the depth sometimes of 20 feet, and from 10 to 12 feet wide. Instead of a spade, they make use of the shoulder bone of an ox, but as such holes do not fill with water, they cannot suffer the cattle to walk down to it, but are obliged to draw out the water that, at a time, is requisite for quenching the thirst of the animals. They therefore lay down two large blocks of wood, near the waterpit, and cover them with a sheep's skin, which is to serve as a kind of watering trough; then they draw out the water in a bamboo, which one hands up to the other. This labour sometimes occupies the men half a day, during suffocating heat ...".<sup>59</sup>

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58. CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht, 'Observations', n.d.

59. TLMS III, 212. See also Campbell: Travels, London, 1815, 308, who noted about the 'Great Namaqua': "They abound in horned cattle, goats and sheep, taking care of which is the only task assigned to their children."

(iii) The Control of Matrimony

The ability to allocate the labour of these young males seems to have derived from control over matrimony. Thus, a man with more than one wife could attract more followers because additional wives increased the productive capacity of his family and dependants. Wives provided both labour and future labour in the form of children; more cattle could be milked in the evening and more children were available to herd the cattle. Thus, more food could be produced and more cattle could be lent to followers through the cattle post system. Similarly, to withhold a wife from a young man meant that he had to do many more years of cattle-tending for an adult male owner.

A. Albrecht made the following observations about the 'Great Namaquas': "Polygamy is predominant in this nation. Even those who are poor generally have two, but those who are rich have three, four or more wives. Not more than two live in each hut together, but if a man happens to have more than two wives, he keeps them separate at such places as he uses to visit occasionally. ... A man having a liking to such or such a girl, first of all speaks to her parents, and declares to them what his intentions are. If the parent or guardian give their consent to the marriage, the young man makes a present to them, and then a day for the wedding is agreed upon between them. On this day, the two families assemble, the bridegroom kills a buffalo, and the whole

party feasts and makes merry, as long as the provisions made by the bridegroom will last, after which the two people are considered as being united ... In case the parents of the bride are in good circumstances, they return to their son-in-law a present of the same value as they have received from him. If the parents were poor, the return is not made. Sometimes it happens that a married woman runs away from her husband; in this case the husband immediately applies to her parents for the restoration of the present given by him previous to his marriage. If the present is returned to the satisfaction of the offended husband, the affair is at an end. If the present is not returned because the parents are unwilling or too poor, conflict ensues, often violent and long-term."<sup>60</sup>

(iv) Other Forms of Pre-Capitalist Surplus Extraction

However, it was not only the sons and daughters of a family who would look after the cattle, but also the servants. They were reported "to watch their cattle by day". Little is known about the kind of exploitative relationships tying the so-called Damaras (Hau-Khoi) to

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60. CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht, 'Observations', n.d. Campbell, op.cit., 308, noted briefly: "When they marry, the husband gives cattle to the parents of the female, and also slaughters some for a feast".

Namas as cattle herders. Probably the relations here were similar to those that structured the cattle post system in Orlam communities.<sup>61</sup> Damaras were also reported to make iron rings,<sup>62</sup> assegais and copper ornaments for Namas, and "tho' he (the Nama master, B.L.) can do nothing himself, yet he beats the Damara when he does not work to his mind."<sup>63</sup>

### 3.2.5 Aspects of Cosmology

All early missionaries amongst the Nama commented on the various dances and the 'hole-game', 'hous' as Alexander called it.<sup>64</sup> Various dances were popular: the Pot Dance, and the Great Reed dance - the former involving men exclusively, the latter apparently only women dancers.<sup>65</sup> Typically, Albrechts noted that these dances were "always accompanied with vices and the corruption of morals".<sup>66</sup>

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61. See Chapter 4.

62. Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 121; CA LMS Journals Kitchingman, 1820, 15.

63. Shaw, Op.cit.,; Kitchingman, Op.cit.

64. Alexander: Discovery I, 271.

65. On the Reed Dance, see Alexander, *ibid.*, 233-234; on the Pot Dance, CA LMS Journals, Albrechts, 5 Jan. 1809.

66. Albrechts, *Ibid.*

The dances were apparently shared by Nama groups and Orlams alike. Sometimes up to 20 reeds would be played in harmony.<sup>67</sup> The women would sing, clap their hands and circle the male reed players in a dance, and sometimes the reed players would form a circle around the dancing women, who often displayed considerable endurance.<sup>68</sup>

The role of women in the Pot Dance is not clear; apparently here a sheep was slaughtered as the men danced around the pot.<sup>69</sup>

We also have accounts of a regular system of healing by 'witchdoctors' who produced little pieces of wood out of the patients' flesh, sucked wounds, made incisions,<sup>70</sup> and cut off the joint of the little finger for good luck or health.<sup>71</sup> There was also the famous legend of man's mortality: the story of the hare and the moon which involved a strict taboo prohibiting adult men from eating the flesh of the hare.<sup>72</sup> Although all references to a supreme deity called Heitsi -Eibib are of a much later date,

67. CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht: 'Observations', n.d.

68. Alexander: Discovery I, 234.

69. Moritz Backhouse, 1840, 236.

70. Campbell: Travels, 308; Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 120, 121.

71. Shaw, Ibid., 121.

72. See CA LMS Journals, Schmelen, 1815, 3; also WA AP 10, (x).

(s/he was not mentioned by the Albrechts, Shaw, Kitchingman or Schmelen), extensive burial rites existed. The custom of throwing stones on a grave one was passing by was widely practised.<sup>73</sup> The old and infirm were customarily placed in an enclosure with a little food and water and left to die there. The functionalism of this practice can be seen in terms of the essential seasonal migrations, but it outraged the missionaries.<sup>74</sup> It will be demonstrated below that pastoral habits declined during the course of the century, and so did this custom.

Most interesting in this respect is the initiation of men and women into adulthood. Men became what missionary Shaw called, the "chief's soldiers". The entrance into maturity was understandably linked to matrimony, the borrowing and owning of various types of cattle. Thus initiation was a vital step towards any position of power for males. Consequently initiation rituals were elaborate, of great social significance. "When their sons are declared to be men, they erect a shell, kill an animal, and tie its fat on his head and round his neck, which, according to custom, he must wear till it rots and falls off. They likewise cut several strokes on his

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73. For instance, Schmelen recorded a burial among Veldskoendraers that went on for days, CA LMS Journals, Schmelen, 1815, 34; also B. Shaw: 'Account', WMN, 1821, 75.

74. Shaw, *Ibid.*, 121-122; see also CA LMS Letters, A. Albrecht, 'Observations', n.d.

breast with a sharp instrument. They also collect all the milk belonging to a kraal ... (to dance and feast, B.L.). The entrails of the animal which was killed as the announcement of the ceremony, being dried and pounded into a powder, are now mixed with water with which the initiate is rubbed all over, and he is then declared to be a man in the presence of the whole kraal."<sup>75</sup> Shaw reported that the women had something called "another slaughter, or another sacrifice. For this particular cattle, and none but particular persons are allowed to partake thereof, the males are altogether excluded. I doubt not that this custom has in former ages been intended as a sort of religious ordinance."<sup>76</sup>

These accounts do not provide a complete analysis of the Nama production process. They do indicate, however, that these social formations had rich and diversified forms of production and cultural expression. It has also become clear that Nama society existed and reproduced itself independently of the Cape trading nexus.

However, it would be misleading to assume that by the time Namas and Orlams clashed, Nama groups were still entirely unaware of the expansion of the Cape Colony, or the significance of the commodities that found their way

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75. Campbell: Travels, 310 ff.

76. B. Shaw, Op.cit., 121.

northwards. We may note here that some guns were owned by members of the Bondelswarts Namas in 1808.<sup>77</sup> They also traded with the colonists on the other side of the Orange River by then, and were even reported to go on raiding and plundering expeditions to the "Tamara nation" (probably Herero-speakers).<sup>79</sup> By 1820, Gamma Tsawoeb, head of the Gai-//khaun, was quite aware of political power relations extending far beyond Namaland. Thus, when missionary Kitchingman refused to give him the shirt he requested, he said: "It is a strange thing that my people can get such things and I cannot, since there is no-one greater than I or the (Cape) Governor".<sup>80</sup>

The two groups of people who met when the Orlams migrated into Namaland were fundamentally different. Unlike the Namas, Orlam kommandos were dependent for reproduction on their links with the Cape. Furthermore, their social

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77. TLMS III, 319. Also, Kitchingman noted that the head of the Gai-//khaun desired guns as much as beads, see CA, LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 15.

78. TLMS III, 210.

79. CA, LMS Journals, Albrechts, 4 Feb., 1809.

80. CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 16.

relations were infused with notions of commodity exchange derived from practices in the Colony. This will become more evident in the next chapter, where I shall analyse the social forces operative in Orlam communities which were established largely in the 1840s, after the phase of original alliances and conquest had come to an end.

ASPECTS OF THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
ORGANISATION OF ORLAM GROUPS

In the preceding chapters we saw how kommando groups emerged in the Cape, pushed northwards across the Orange River and heavily clashed with the pastoral Nama-speaking inhabitants of these areas. The Orlam invasion resulted in a tumultuous period mainly characterised by conquest but also by alliances between Nama and Orlam groups. This came to a conclusion around the mid-1830s, when Orlam groups began to cluster around certain leading families. They carved out territories for themselves and began to settle at 'headquarters'.

In this chapter I shall analyse major aspects of political, social and economic relations of these communities as they emerged in the period from 1835 to 1850. Some of my material will be taken from the two communities which existed in the earlier years of the century already, namely the people of Bethany and the Afrikaners at Jerusalem. Still, the process I shall analyse must largely be situated in the period 1835-1850.

#### 4.1 THE SIZE AND POPULATION OF ORLAM GROUPS

The size of the groups we are dealing with here is extremely difficult to assess, because missionaries and travellers were often unsure about the total number of outposts belonging to a settlement. Thus, Anderson once noted that Jonker's werft consisted of about 200 huts. "Of those there were perhaps 50 belonging to Damaras and Bergdamaras. I should much like to know what portion of Jonker's people this is. It is a rare thing, I believe, to see so many people together in one place".<sup>1</sup> Generally, the missionaries were more concerned with the number of people at the main settlement rather than with the total figure of people claiming to belong to one particular group.

Still, some very rough estimates are possible. An Orlam settlement did not usually have more than 1 000 people and often considerably fewer. As we will see later, there were probably economic reasons for such strict limitations on size. In the 1830s, it was estimated that the population of Titus Afrikaner's groups at Blydeverwacht and a nearby outpost amounted to 300-400 people.<sup>2</sup> Several years

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1. WA AP 2, 20 Feb. 1852.

2. Cook: The Modern, 75.

previously, Jonker had left this community with almost 300 armed men and possibly an equal number of women to establish himself at Windhoek.<sup>3</sup> In 1815, it was noticed that the Bethany settlement consisted of 100 huts, "sometimes more and sometimes less".<sup>4</sup> This indicates the presence of at least 500 people.<sup>5</sup> At Amraal's place (first at Wesley Vale and then to the north at Gobabis) there were 400-600 people in the 1840s<sup>6</sup>, and the group at Berseba under Paul Goliath was reported to number 700 people.<sup>7</sup> Only under Jonker Afrikaner was a larger scale settlement achieved, be it at Niais, Tsebris or Windhoek. In 1836 it was estimated that Niais was a town of 1 200 people,<sup>8</sup> and in 1842 Windhoek was a settlement of 2 000 inhabitants. One thousand of these lived in Windhoek and another 1 000 'dependants' lived on its outskirts.<sup>9</sup>

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3. G. Thompson: Travels, 291. The women were rarely mentioned.
  4. CA LMS Journals Schmelen 1816, 32.
  5. CA HP 9, 19 Dec. 1848.
  6. J. Tindall: The Journal, 129; Moritz Cook to Backhouse, 24 Aug. 1840, 239.
  7. BRMG 1852, 313.
  8. J. Alexander: Discovery, London 1836 11, 154.
  9. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1842, 256; Hahn reported the same figure although at his time of writing there were only 700 people at the station, BRMG 1843, 25.

The church which was built in Windhoek for 500-600 people was often reported to be "too small".<sup>10</sup>

In the following decades, however, Orlam and Nama communities split up and contracted. For example, in the late 1850s Kaptein Amraal arrived at Hoachanas with 60 of his men, and these were considered to be "almost all his people".<sup>11</sup> But I will examine this in greater detail at a later stage.

## 4.2 THE KOMMANDO

### 4.2.1 Numerical Strength of the Kommando

As has been indicated in the last chapter, the institution of the kommando was a crucial instrument of surplus appropriation among Orlams. Furthermore, structures of subordination, political organisation and property relations arising out of the linkages with the Cape nexus were also concentrated in the kommando.

The kommando usually consisted of only 10-50 armed men on horseback. Thus, Abraham Albrecht mentioned the

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10. H.H. Diehl: 'Carl Hugo Hahn in Suidwest-Afrika', M.A., R.A.U. 1973, 37.

11. Quellen 5, 4 Jan. 1858.

depredations of nine armed Afrikaners.<sup>12</sup> Cook met Chief Bondel with 20 men, armed and on horseback as early as 1836.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, missionary Tindall encountered Willem Swartbooie with 20 armed men.<sup>14</sup> At another time, a Herero village was raided by 50 armed 'Namaquas',<sup>15</sup> and a kommando of Jonker's was reported as passing Otjimbingwe with 20 men on horseback and 20 on oxen.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes, the kommando was larger. For example, Jonker went to Ovamboland with a kommando of "at least" 200 men.<sup>17</sup> At times, there was an insufficient number of men to ensure a successful raid. Missionary Tindall reported that a "small kommando", having only two guns with them, tried to raid a Herero village but was unsuccessful; another of six armed men and some unarmed 'assistants' was also unsuccessful.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.2.2 The Economics of Cattle Raiding

The kommando's tasks, according to Legassick, "were simultaneously political and economic. It drew from both the indigenous and colonial systems but, as a band of armed retainers, had feudal characteristics".<sup>19</sup> At the

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12. TLMS 111, 427.

13. Cook: The modern, 62.

14. J. Tindall: The Journal, 30

15. BRMG 1852, 29.

16. BRMG 1853, 37.

17. BRMG 1853, 379.

18. J. Tindall: The Journal, 142

19. M. Legassick: "Emergence", 274

level of social and economic organisation, the kommando replaced the kinship group.

The spoils of raiding could be considerable indeed. Missionary Schmelen reported in 1814 that Titus Afrikaner had raided several kraals "of the Great Namaquas" and "robbed several thousand of sheep and cattle from them".<sup>20</sup> The scale of Jonker's gains among groups of Herero-speakers sometimes was immense. Hahn mentioned that 12 000 oxen were captured in one raid.<sup>21</sup> In another, Andersson estimated the number of stolen cattle at 18 000.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, when Jonker Afrikaner raided the Mbanderu (the eastern section of Herero-speakers) in early 1846, his booty was about 2 000-4 000 head of cattle.<sup>23</sup>

Raiding never involved large-scale violence. The following is a vivid and typical account. Moffat, wondering at the success of a "small and inconsiderable body of banditti", reflected on their mode of warfare. "... on one occasion Berend's party... unexpectedly carried off every ox and cow belonging to Afrikaner... After a desperate though unequal contest for a whole day, having repeatedly taken and lost

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20. CA 4MS Letters Schmelen 29 July 1814.

21. CA HP 9, 31 March 1852,

22. WA AP 1, 6 Feb. 1851.

23. CA HP 9, 16 March 1846.

their cattle, they (the Afrikaners, B.L.) returned home". It was only after a tactically very clever ambush that the cattle could be retrieved again by the Afrikaners under Jager.<sup>24</sup>

The frequency of raids is even harder to assess than population figures and numbers of captured cattle. Yet it is possible to show that cattle raids were regular and took up a very considerable amount of the total labour time available. None of the Orlam communities settled in Namaland managed to sustain themselves for more than about five years without cattle raiding. For instance, when the Afrikaners under Jager acquired a missionary in 1815<sup>25</sup> and Jager was baptised, the 'depredations' appear to have stopped for a time. This might not have been unrelated to the fact that people at Jerusalem received material support from <sup>the</sup> missionary and not only spiritual guidance.<sup>26</sup> However, as early as 1818, Schmelen reported new raids by Titus.<sup>27</sup> As soon as Jager died in 1823, regular raiding started anew under Jonker and his brother.<sup>28</sup>

24. R. Moffat: Labours, 79-80.

25. The decision to have a missionary, the need for one and its implications for the groups concerned will be dealt with in Chapter 6.

26. Ebner: Reise, 298.

27. CA LMS Letters Schmelen 6 Nov. 1818.

28. see chapter 2

Similarly, when Schmelen began his missionary activity among the Boois family at Bethany in 1814, he did so only under the condition of 'peace' prevailing.<sup>29</sup> By 1819 Schmelen reported that a group led by the chief's son had left the station to purchase guns from a sailor at Angra Pequena. On their way, however, they "began to quarrel with the natives and took an abundance of cattle and sheep."<sup>30</sup>

The same pattern can be observed for the communities in later years. When Knudsen began his missionary labours among the Orlams of Bethany in 1842, there were many baptisms and no cattle raids for a number of years. In 1847, Knudsen left for the Cape and the settlement at Bethany disintegrated.<sup>31</sup> By 1850 there were two houses left, and soon after Knudsen had returned he was expelled.<sup>32</sup> Kaptein David Christian and his leading families only came back to settle at Bethany in 1855, under missionary Kreft. This was partly due to the fact that the weather in those years was extremely favourable and pastures abundant. Also, missionary Kreft cultivated tobacco for a number of years to attract people to the station.<sup>33</sup> However, only a few years later, conflict in Namaland accelerated when the so-called

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29. TLMS IV, 161.

30. CA LMS Journals, Schmelen 1819, 3.

31. Quellen 3a, 13 March 1848.

32. Ibid., 16 March 1850.

33. BRMG 1856, 2-12.

'Orlam-war' began in 1863, involving many cattle raids by the Bethany people and others.<sup>34</sup>

The Berseba people followed the same pattern with only three "raiding-free" years.<sup>35</sup> So did Amraal's group at Wesley Vale and Gobabis. After four years of 'peace'; raiding began again in 1848, apparently even against Kaptein Amraal's will.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, Jonker managed to obtain a missionary after 17 years of settlement. From 1842-1846, Windhoek appeared to be a blossoming mission station under a very peaceably inclined Kaptein. Yet, by the end of 1846, Jonker had incurred heavy debts which obliged him to undertake a series of raids of the Mbanderu Herero; the 'peaceful' times never returned.<sup>37</sup>

It is difficult to establish how many raids would be carried out by a kommando in a given time period as raiding was not seasonally structured. The missionaries probably did not record every raid of the people they lived with. Also, missionaries were often absent on trips to the Cape, or to other missionaries. Still, Tindall recorded at least

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34. see chapter 9.

35. Quellen 3a, 8 Jan. 1853.

36. J. Tindall: The Journal, 115.

37. CA HP 9, 16 March 1846.

one raid by Amraal's kommando each year from 1848 to 1851.<sup>38</sup> Schmelen noted several raids by the people at Bethany in 1819.<sup>39</sup> There were also raids in 1820 and 1822.<sup>40</sup> Schmelen himself had to leave the station and Namaland shortly afterwards but remarked about 'war' and 'disorder' in almost every report of his sporadic visits until 1828.<sup>41</sup>

The assessment of Jonker's raiding activity presents more difficulties. The Afrikaner Orlams established relations of domination and subordination over substantial numbers of people living between the Kuiseb and Swakop Rivers. Thus what was called a 'raid' was often nothing but the collection of taxes or tribute. Still, even those operations were carried out by kommandos which moreover often traversed very considerable distances.<sup>42</sup> The activity of Afrikaner

38. J. Tindall: The Journal, Cape Town 1859, 115, 131, 141, 146. As these people's staple food, namely sour milk, was available all year round, it does not appear that raiding would be related to seasons and possible 'hunger-gaps' as are known from agricultural societies in Southern Africa.

39. CA LMS Journals, Schmelen 1819, 3.4.

40. Ibid., Ktchingman 1820, 9-10; Schmelen 1821/1822, 22 March 1822.

41. Ibid., Schmelen 1827, 1-2; CA LMS Letters, Schmelen 18 Oct. 1822.

42. The distance from Windhoek to Walfish Bay is at least 300 km depending on the route. Also, in the late 1850s Jonker began extensive raiding among groups of Ovambo-speakers, more than 700 km distant from his headquarters, RMS KP March 1859: Petermanns Mitteilungen 1860, 356, no author.

kommandos was considerable. The missionaries reported not merely one or two, but several cattle procuring kommandos each from 1848-1849.<sup>43</sup> Between 1850 and 1852, at least three to four Afrikaner kommandos were constantly providing themselves with cattle.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Hunting and the Kommando

Another major activity of kommando groups was hunting. As I shall demonstrate later, hunting became increasingly structured by relations of exchange based at the Cape. It involved larger numbers of people and always required a greater investment of time and energy than cattle raiding. This was probably due to the fact that communities either sent out cattle raiding kommandos (which meant conflict with their neighbours), or they went on long, drawn-out hunting expeditions. Both activities were alternative ways of procuring means with which to pay for European trade goods.

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43. Figures for 1846 in BRMG 1849, 122-125; BRMG Feb. 1847, 13; CA HP 9, 28 Feb. 1848; Quellen 20, 15 Apr. 1849; J. Tindall: The Journal, 14.

44. CA HP 9, 3 March 1852; *ibid.*, 25, March 1852; *ibid* 31 March 1852;  
 WA AP 2, 7 Apr. 1852.  
 CA HP 9, 3 Aug. 1850; 4 Sep. 1850; 30 Nov. 1850; 20 Aug. 1851; 20 Sep. 1851; WA AP 1, 6 Feb. 1851.

Although hunting for local consumption existed and will be looked at more closely in the following paragraphs, the example of Jonker demonstrates that hunting as early as the 1840s was an activity similar to cattle-raiding both in its form and in its purpose. Both were vital in procuring commodities. Hunting pits, shooting enclosures at waterholes and other labour-intensive forms of hunting were never mentioned in connection with the Afrikaners. Hunting involved a high degree of capitalisation and even technology. As a missionary remarked in 1847: "Jonker Afrikaner... today went away with all his kommando men to hunt elephants. He was accompanied by his friend Jan Laspert, a Bastard from Pella,... who had given him a new wagon and horses and was promised tusks in return"... They stayed away for four weeks.<sup>45</sup> Some years later, Jonker had extended his elephant hunting grounds as far north as Otjozondjupa.<sup>46</sup>

During the 1860s, it was noted that the "big elephant hunt" led by Amraal from Gobabis could take up to six months under normal conditions.<sup>47</sup> The kommando went into the veld with 50 riders on horse-back and spare horses, more than 20 wagons and was accompanied by "a large number

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45. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 224.

46. WA AP 2, 15 Aug. 1851.

47. BRMG 1863, 275.

of Damaras" (servants, B.L.). Two weeks before they returned a trader arrived in order to "sell his powder and cash in the people's debts". Two other traders also arrived soon afterwards. They left Gobabis with 6 000 pounds of ivory altogether.<sup>48</sup>

These examples show clearly that hunting had become an activity similar to cattle-raiding. The value of tusks lay first and foremost in the fact that they could be exchanged for other commodities. Thus, hunting was also firmly integrated into the Cape nexus.

#### 4.3 THE EFFECTS OF COMMODITY EXCHANGE ON ORLAM POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS-

The social and economic relations of the kommando were fundamentally determined by commodity exchange with the Cape. This introduced a dynamic into the kommando which, as an institution, was largely, although not entirely, responsible for the patterning of wider social relations within the Orlam groups.

The dynamics of incipient class relations were characterised by two connected factors of control. The one was that the centre of political power always rested with a relatively small, highly trained group of military men, (probably

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48. BRMG 1863, 274-279.

numbering between 18-50) who were the ones to organise kommandos, gained most of the booty,<sup>49</sup> sent their wives and children to school and church, and displayed their superior status in what could be called 'conspicuous consumption'.<sup>50</sup> The terms generally applied to actual control or policing functions were 'corporals' and 'cornets'; the name Amraal itself was considered to be derived from the military term of 'Admiral'.<sup>51</sup> The military nature of organisation was a core feature that dictated the structure of many other aspects of social organisation. The position of the Kaptein and his raad, the leaders of the kommando, was thus primarily based on their military skills in securing access to specific commodities like guns and horses or taxes and booty in cattle (which had a commodity aspect). In some instances, the Kaptein as leader of the kommando was able to extract tolls for the use of roads, royalties from European mining ventures, and fees for giving access to hunting velds.<sup>52</sup> This consolidated the Kaptein's power position within the kommando.

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49. For example, it was noted once that the people manning a kommando led by Jan and Jacobus Boois were left highly dissatisfied, "because Jan and Jacobus have shared everything among themselves". Quellen 3b, Sept. 1866 (no day given).
50. cf. C. Frey: 'Jonker Afrikaner and his time', Journal of the S.W.A. Scientific Society, 1, 1925-26.
51. Kitchingman made remarks to this effect in 1825, see Kitchingman Papers, B. Le Cordeur and C. Saunders (eds), 71; Loth: Mission, 18. Explanations for Amraal's name are in J. Tindall: The Journal, 58 (footnote by the editor).
52. See Chapter 8.

At the same time, military skills, which were acquired outside of any kinship structures, could be used by followers to gain access to such means of production as guns. Often, the leaders of the kommando were not able to control this process fully as they might have wished.

On the other hand, this small military group often controlled many thousands of people around them. The relations of surplus labour appropriation between these groups and the kommando were structured by pre-capitalist institutions as I shall demonstrate below. The power of the Kaptein was thus partly based on pre-capitalist forms of surplus extraction. In the following paragraph I shall try and elucidate this further. Some of these aspects of political and economic control will be examined only in chapters 8 and 9.

An important reflection of the social and political structure of Orlam groups is the constitution or 'Ryksboek' which was first adopted in 1847 by the Orlam group at Bethany.

Similar constitutions were later adopted by Orlam groups at Berseba, and Windhoek as well as by Nama groups at Warmbad and Rehoboth.<sup>53</sup>

In accordance with the military nature of the kommando, the Ryksboek was characterised by strictly patriarchal

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53. Ryksboek, bevattende alle wetten en regten van het kapiteinskap te Bethanië bestaande uit drie Boeken:  
 1. Het Boek der Ryks-Geskiedenis  
 2. Het Boek der Wetten, en 3.  
 Het Boek van Aanmerkingen. Typed copy WA A.8, Rust-Collection. Original in the RMS: temporarily lost. For Berseba see Quellen, Jan 1853. For Warmbad & Rehoboth see Ch.4. For Windhoek, see Chapter 8.

notions. In contrast to the practice of original Nama groups<sup>54</sup> it was explicitly stated that Kapteinship was to be inherited by the 'next' or oldest man in the Kaptein's family, be he brother, son or uncle. Under no circumstances was it to pass on to a woman. The Ryksboek contained 21 paragraphs dealing with questions of political organisation. A third part contained a large number of 'laws'. These were mostly taken straight from the Old Testament but also from the New Testament. The harsh, unyielding and puritanical spirit of the old Israel re-emerged here to act both as a guide line and as justification for what already existed. At the same time, notions from biblical Israel were mixed with ideas derived from the experience of missionaries in their industrialised homelands and ideologies shaped by the expanding merchant capital. These various influences reflected upon the constitution and produced tensions that were maintained right through the decades under discussion here.

Although leadership was largely defined outside of democratic processes (the Kaptein had the right to select two assistants for life long service) democratic notions were apparent. Thus, all 'family heads' were given the right to refuse any of the seven members of the raad or council which was the actual governing body. They could present alternative men on the day when the raad was to be elected; women had no vote on this occasion. Among them there was

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54. K.F.H. Budack, 'Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gai-//khaun (Rote Nation)', AH 1970, pp.49-62.

to be at least one 'elderly' (evangelist) and one interpreter. The Kaptein had no right to give any orders contrary to this and God's law. The death sentence was mandatory for murder. The drinking of honey beer and brandy and dagga smoking were forbidden. Council sittings were 'public' (excluding women) and decisions had to be based on the majority of the 10 raadsmen. Marriages had to be monogamous; any wife other than the first was to be renounced. Also, married couples were not allowed to beat or bite each other. Yet the husband could accuse his wife in front of the raad of unlawfulness. The raad had powers to sentence her to seven lashes and a day in the pillory. 'Masters' were allowed to flog their servants. The maximum punishment was 40 lashes.<sup>55</sup> A whole section was devoted to the 'Krygswetten' and also the 'Church Laws', indicating a strictly hierarchical structure. For example, there were different laws for the "overheid", for kings, masters, fathers and men.<sup>56</sup>

This constitution did not work as it was intended to do. For instance, it seems that the five-yearly meetings and general elections in January, stipulated in it did not take place very regularly. Certainly the death sentence was never carried out, very much to the dismay of the resident missionary. The drinking of honey beer and brandy as well as dagga smoking did not seem to have been stopped by these

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55. WA Ryksboek 2, paragraph 1-19.

56. Ibid, also Ryksboek 3.

laws which constituted a constant source of conflict between the missionary and his 'supporters', and other members of the congregation.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the pillory was probably more a threat than an actual practice. References to this punishment for women only are very rare indeed. These and other parts of the constitution attempted to provide a moral framework informed by Christian principles and supported by clauses such as those ensuring that at least one evangelist be a member of the raad.

Most importantly, this constitution clearly expressed incipient class distinctions and a form of democracy in political relations that is foreign to pre-capitalist kinship-based societies.

Europeans have often noted these features and commented on them. Missionary Schöneberg, for instance, noted about the Afrikaners: "The sons of the desert enjoy an achievement that many in our fatherland strive for in vain .... they are part of the decision-making machinery and are not treated by their chief as children."<sup>58</sup> Likewise the traveller Galton noted that "neither Jonker nor any other Hottentot has supreme power in his tribe: for these people are most tenacious republicans..."<sup>59</sup> The mere fact of

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57. See David Christian's case, chapter 8,

58. BRMG 1853, 247-248.

59. F. Galton: Narrative, 116.

asking a European to provide a coherent legal framework for the ordering of social relations is significant.

'Public' meetings open to all the men, the right to reject raadsmen, the 'Krygswetten' with their laws for "kings, masters, fathers and men", must be seen as attempts to frame a generally valid code for fundamental definitions of power outside of any kinship structures.

This is also borne out by the evidence on matrimony. In pre-capitalist societies these relations of domination are most firmly embedded in kinship structures. The quest for monogamy reflected in the constitution is highly significant. This must be seen as a clear indication that the accumulation of followers, centered around the quest for wives and female dependants as producers and mothers<sup>60</sup> had lost its centrality as the basis of accumulation. The basis of accumulation was moving rapidly towards the procuring of cattle and hunting produce for their value as exchangeable commodities. The importance of the latter was that it could be exchanged for guns, horses, wagons and other goods that entrenched the dominance of the kommando within the political economy of the individual Orlam groups.

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60. On women's production, see below. Here as in early Nama groups women would milk the cattle and their children would herd them. Cf. chapter 3

Monogamy was largely an actual practice that was confirmed in the constitutions rather than being a distant social ideal. For example, Moffat noted about 1820 that Titus Afrikaner, Jonker's uncle, at Blydeverwacht, "was the only individual of influence on the station who had two wives."<sup>61</sup> Knudsen stated about Bethany in 1844: "As far as polygamy... is concerned I am glad that I am almost free of this difficulty. • There is nobody here anymore and only one man in Gulbrandsdalen (who has two wives, B.L.). Of him I also hope that he will succumb to the prevailing mood and lawful feeling and will only keep the old woman."<sup>62</sup>

The dominant factor of production was embodied in the kommando structure and not in pre-capitalist institutions. This can be demonstrated when one of the main bases of political office, namely cattle wealth, is examined. In contrast to pre-capitalist societies, wealth, in the context of the kommando groups, had acquired a specific character. Largely, it meant having adequate resources in terms of guns, horses, and personal leadership qualities to mobilise a kommando and carry out successful raiding and hunting expeditions. However, it also meant holding cattle as private property and no longer merely as magnet for the accumulation of large numbers of followers.

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61. R. Moffat: Labours, 110

62. Quellen 3a, 25 Oct. 1844

Thus, although David Christian, the second son of Kaptein Kobus Booï had enough followers to compete for the chieftaincy in 1842, his brother Jan was considered the richer of the two as he owned about 1 000 head of cattle.<sup>63</sup>

Wagons, guns and horses in particular were purchased individually. This also indicates the importance of private ownership of commodities and means of production. The missionaries noted in 1849 that every "financially sound Namaqua" would possess his own wagon.<sup>64</sup> This sense of property status was also expressed in territorial terms. Unlike earlier practices among the original Nama groups,<sup>65</sup> the Orlam settlements were all characterised by firm notions of territoriality.<sup>66</sup>

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63. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1842, 250.

64. RMS KP Apr. 1849.

65. See map 2.

66. CA HP 9, 22 Apr. 1858, where Hahn related that Jonker Afrikaner desired to have borders to his territory established. Also, Amraal's people once fined some Veldskoendraers for having traversed 'their' territory without having asked permission, see J. Tindall: The Journal, 35-36. He also used to mention "the territories of Amraal", see Ibid, 87.

Political office was not only a function of military skill. The leaders of kommando groups as well as their immediate male family members were skilled iron workers and craftsmen. This was important for servicing and repairing wagons and guns, keeping horses, casting bullets and the like. These vital tasks required a thorough knowledge of smithing. Raadsman apparently were 'naturally' smiths as well.<sup>67</sup> The brothers of David Christian, as well as Titus Afrikaner, Amraal (who was called a 'master builder') and Christoph Tibot who was second only to the Kaptein at Berseba, were all known as outstanding craftsmen.<sup>68</sup>

Thus political office was largely tied to areas of commodity exchange and not primarily to a process of social production centred within the community itself. This encouraged instability which manifested itself in weakness of controls. This is reflected in the tenuousness of political power, the conflicts characterising kommando groups and the lack of sanctions to control breaches of social discipline.

For example, a kommando that went out to raid or to hunt was often ridden with conflict when it came to dividing the spoils. Krönlein in Berseba noted that<sup>a</sup> a hunting party,

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67. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 225.

68. J. Ebner: Reise, 297; BRMG 1854, 125; E. Cook: The modern, 103, 123; J. Tindall: The Journal, 50; Quellen 3b, 28 Sept. 1853.

who had just come back from the Kalahari desert, had had mighty quarrels and had split into two groups.<sup>69</sup> Weber noted that at Gobabis it happened "very rarely" that a hunt was completed without serious quarreling.<sup>70</sup>

Alternatively, people upon whom a Kaptein and his raad had counted would simply desert.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, as will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 8, Kaptein's could not control access to arms and ammunition and tightly as they wished.

There are other examples demonstrating difficulties of social control. A man in Amraal's group was once called to the Kaptein and received 23 lashes for being "determined to have two wives". Then, because of "improper expression used during the infliction ...

69. BRMG 1858, 108

70. BRMG 1863, 272

71. There must have existed something like 'politics of desertion' about which we know very little because the missionaries were quite unconcerned about the relations between masters and servants at their settlement. However, Hahn once recorded having met some of Jonker's former people who had deserted him, CA HP 9, 24 July 1852. Andersson noted that "many of his Bergdamara and Namaqua have of late broken loose...", WA AP 2, 16 Aug. 1851.

of punishment, (he) was caught by a horseman and suffered 45 additional stripes which exhorted a promise of subjection."<sup>72</sup> In another case, the raad "sat for three days" to discuss the case of a few stolen cows.<sup>73</sup> However, the clearest evidence of the inability of leadership of these groups to exert effective political control is provided by cases in the 1860s when under severe political pressure every Orlam settlement fragmented into two or more factions and appeared to be at the point of disintegration.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Relations of Domination and Subordination and the Role of the Cattle Post System

Social relations were affected by processes of commoditisation in a crucial way as we saw. Yet social forms expressing pre-capitalist relations of production remained part and parcel of the kommando group. Labour processes still embedded in those relations continued to be important. This created inherent contradictions and tensions which were never solved by the groups in question. I shall demonstrate later how merchant capital affected and subordinated these relations in Orlam (but also Nama) formations without ever becoming truly integrated.

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72. J. Tindall: The Journal, 66-67

73. Ibid, 135

74. See chapter 9

Thus a complete breakaway from pre-capitalist relations was never achieved. This will become clearer when examining Orlam relations of domination and exploitation; the surplus labour appropriation of 'dependants'.

Some of these relations found expression in the cattle post system. At the level of material consumption, cattle products together with veldkos, provided the mainstay for the subsistence of the Orlam settlements. This refers mainly to the milk but also to skins, and the meat of cattle, sheep and goats. No family possessing cattle would keep them all at one kraal but rather distribute them in various outposts under the care of 'servants' or dependants. This was for a number of reasons. One was geographical; the scarcity of surface water resources made it difficult to keep very large herds in one place. Secondly, the risk of loss through raiding, theft or the outbreak of a contagious disease among the cattle was considerably reduced if the cattle was scattered at different outposts. Also, the cattle posts made it easier to keep a record of numbers and natural increase. Lastly the cattle post system served as an important means of social control as it attracted and maintained the loyalty of followers and dependants. These were allotted a number of cattle to look after and had the right to live off the produce of the animals. This need for subservient labour meant that cattle owners were obliged to attract followers rather than accumulate commodities. It was the dependants

who counted in this system and not primarily the number of cattle.

Cattle needed for consumption and breeding purposes, as well as trade, would be kept at these outposts. Backhouse has furnished us with a description of an Orlam cattle post system in southern Namaland in 1840 which is similar to accounts of Khoi cattle keeping of earlier periods<sup>75</sup> and also to that of pastoral groups Herero-speakers.<sup>76</sup>

It was noted that some Orlams "have considerable goat and cattle herds as well as many poor relatives who do service with them for payment which usually consists in cattle or hides. One ox or one cow, or two or three sheep, or goats in addition to food, is the usual payment for one year's continued service."<sup>77</sup> The missionaries noted in 1852 about Bethany: "Some gentlemen, like Cornelius (brother or Kaptein David Christian, B.L.) had seven huts lying around their own one in which their Bushmen, that is their herdsmen, lived."<sup>78</sup>

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75. R. Elphick: Kraal and Castle, Yale University Press 1977.

76. W. Werner: 'Investigation', 62-70.

77. Moritz Backhouse 1840, 230.

78. BRMG 1852, 309.

Where those relations of dominance were established with Hau-khoi and Herero-speakers, this was due to the military superiority of the Orlam kommandos. For instance, it was reported that members of the Topnaar group had "placed themselves under the protection of Jonker, and by herding his cattle many of them gained a competency."<sup>79</sup> The missionaries stated in 1852: "When meeting a Bergdamara herding cattle, these herds belong to the Namaqua who have ordered or coerced these black people to be their herdsmen."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Tindall noted in 1846 while travelling, "... halted among rich and poor Cattle Damaras. The latter are cattle herds for Amraal and his people."<sup>81</sup> Latter he went on to say: "Unyoked at a Cattle farm of Amraal's. The village contained sixty-nine huts of Cattle and Berg Damaras, and also Bushmen."<sup>82</sup> At times, Herero servants were even employed to "regularly...seek food in the field" for their masters and were "given little or no wages."<sup>83</sup> Orlams also employed dependants to grow tobacco

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79. J. Tindall: The Journal, 39.

80. BRMG 1852, 211.

81. J. Tindall; op.cit., 90.

82. *ibid*, 96. Similarly Keinschmidt noted about well-to-do people in the veld of Bethany that they gave sheep and goats to Bergdamara herds who could keep the milk, Moritz Kleinschmidt 1842, 253.

83. J. Tindall, op.cit., 143.

for them and make copper ornaments.<sup>84</sup>

However, dependants were employed on other than these directly productive tasks. They had to be available for service in kommandos, as carriers, guides<sup>85</sup> and fighters,<sup>86</sup> for road-building and repairing<sup>87</sup> (which was crucial for trade), for the collection and payment of taxes,<sup>88</sup> as messengers<sup>89</sup> and as guardians of a settlement's women and children when most of the other men were absent raiding or hunting.<sup>90</sup>

Often there was a very substantial number of dependants involved. For instance Cook noted in 1840 about Amraal's place that Amraal lived there with about 400 people. Then "there were servants and poor people, numbering 200, working 1-10 miles away from the village (as well as) Bushmen and

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84. BRMG 1860, 214; CA HP 9, 1 Aug. 1846; Moritz Knudsen 184, 143.

85. H. Knudsen: 'Nachrichten über die Damara und Nama', Afrikanischer Heimatkalender, 1963, 109.

86. BRMG 1852, 213; BRMG 1855, 51.

87. BRMG 1849, 201; E. Cook: The Modern, 127; Moritz Hahn 1846, 226.

88. T. Baines: Explorations in South West Africa, London 1864, 73-74.

89. BRMG 1969, 263, 270.

90. CA HP 9, 26 July 1846.

Hottentot dependants who did not possess any cattle and lived near them in constant traffic with them, numbering a thousand. A thousand Bergdamara were in a similar position. Amraal reigns over these people of different tribes as a little king..."<sup>91</sup> Also, references to whole villages "belonging" to one or other of the Orlam Kapteins are quite frequent. Thus, Galton noted in 1851 that "hardly a Hottentot lived at Elephant Fountain, but there were large werfts of Bergdamara there who of course belonged to Amiral."<sup>92</sup> Andersson in 1854 counted the people of Jonker's place and concluded "that the aggregate of Namaquas capable of carrying arms did not exceed five hundred. The servants, or rather slaves, on the other-hand, consisting of bushmen, Hill Damaras and impoverished Damaras, were probably three to four times as numerous."<sup>93</sup>

Here we can see clearly how a rather small group of men was able to establish relations of domination and exploitation over large numbers of dependants, in a way reminiscent of feudal and other non-capitalist forms of extraction in Europe and other parts of Africa.

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91. Moritz Cook 1840, 239. Elsewhere, Cook stated that "within a day's journey" from Amraal's place one would find 1 000 people, The modern, 119.

92. F. Galton: Narrative, 263; similarly, Kleinschmidt mentioned a Hau-Khoi werft of 43 huts which was "subject to Jonker" Moritz 1842, 254.

93. C. J. Andersson: Lake Ngami, London 1856, 286.

Here we must also consider the relations that the Afrikaners established with various groups of Herero-speakers. These were exceptional as far as Namaland was concerned and formed the basis of Jonker's hegemonic position. The Afrikaners extracted tribute in labour services and cattle from these groups for several decades. However, these relations will be considered in detail only in chapter 7.

Yet, even these relations of surplus appropriation embodied in the cattle post system were dependent for their reproduction on the Cape trading nexus. This was because the cattle wealth which attracted and kept followers consisted of raided cattle or was acquired as a form of taxation from Herero-speakers. Such wealth could not have been maintained without a constant supply of horses and arms and ammunition. Thus, even in an examination of the pre-capitalist relations which formed some kind of 'productive base' for Orlam groups, the overriding importance of the factor of exchange cannot be overlooked.

#### 4.3.2 Notes on Cosmology

At the superstructural level, surviving remnants of pre-capitalist rituals and customs inherited from pastoral Khoi groups were combined with social practices borrowed from the westernised lifestyle of the Cape colony. We

find little or no evidence of rites that would serve to reproduce a society based on pre-capitalist processes of production structured by kinship. There were no cults of reverence to the chief among Orlams other than a brief reference to the chief being given the best piece of meat of slaughter animals.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, there was only a single reference to lobola among Orlam groups. This was recorded by Ebner in 1815 at Jerusalem where, if any of Titus Afrikaner's men wanted to marry, "his father goes to a family which seems decent to him, chooses a partner for him and asks the parents whether they are prepared to give their daughter to his son in marriage." The bridegroom then gave his bride's parents "a present of a few head of cattle."<sup>95</sup>

These rites were not very elaborate when compared to those of other pastoral peoples. The number of cattle was not specified but seems to have been negligible (mehr oder weniger Stück Vieh). This means that by the 1820s this custom had been stripped of its social-economic significance and only retained symbolic value.

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94. H.C. Knudsen: 'Notizen', GC SAPL, n.d., 24. One of the great difficulties of finding evidence on Orlam customs is that by the time missionaries and travellers sat down to write about them, the differences between them and the original Nama inhabitants had become sufficiently blurred to make them talk about 'Namaquas' rather than specifying.

95. J. Ebner: Reise, 195.

There is very little evidence of initiation rituals. Knudson did record that the youth to be initiated had to shoot one head of game. The father then struck a piece of iron and said to his son: stand motionless like the Great Brukaros. The girl to be initiated had to sit with her back to the mat hut and apparently the intestines of slaughtered cattle were placed around her body.<sup>96</sup> A similar procedure was applied, according to Tindall, when it was suspected that a woman was pregnant with twins.<sup>97</sup>

Yet certain Khoi customs were known in Orlam communities, even if many of them were supplanted by other habits in the course of decades. For instance, the story of the hare and the moon was widely known. The taboo on eating the hare demanded by the myth was still observed in Bethany in 1815.<sup>98</sup> Also, at Niais in 1836 the women still wore skin head-coverings<sup>99</sup> and the tradition of dancing

96. Knudsen: 'Notizen', GC SAPL, n.d., 8

97. J. Tindall: The Journal, 133

98. CA LMS Journals Schmelen 1815/1816, 3, noted that when Bethany people find a hare in the field "they will tore them (sic) to pieces and say, It is your fault that I do not become alive again."

99. J. Alexander: Discovery, 11, 183.

the reed-dance and the pot dance was very much alive at least until the 1860s in Orlam communities.<sup>100</sup>

Similarly, the 'hous', a game played with holes in the ground and beads long retained its popularity.<sup>101</sup>

Christianity and commoditisation processes eroded not only the pre-capitalist base but also the beliefs in magic and skill in healing which it had sustained. The practice of removing little objects from a sick person's body, performed by a 'witchdoctor' was still prevalent among the Afrikaners in Windhoek in the 1840s.<sup>103</sup> The widespread presence of 'witchdoctors' was often deplored by missionaries. In later years they were usually encountered as individuals wandering from settlement to settlement and no longer established within any single group. There was the case of 'witchdoctor' Kullmann near Berseba who to the missionary's great dismay, had 'infiltrated' his congregation. Krönlein described the operations that were performed on a dying man in Beseba by Kullmann: his body was greased with red ochre and fat, then a string of beads was placed around his body and he was lightly flagellated<sup>104</sup>.

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100. J. Alexander, *Ibid.*, 162, 183; BRMG 1854, 179 about dancing at Jonker's place; CA HP 9, 7 March 1853; cf. also the remarks about the 'musician of Bethany', BRMG 1855.

101. BRMG 1855, 280. These remarks should be compared with the section on Nama rites and customs, Chapter 3.

102. Moritz Backhouse 1840, 235.

103. CA HP 9, 13 Oct. 1845.

104. BRMG 1862, 225.

with little sticks.

An interesting description of a practice of the 19th century was given by Andersson. He explained that by a form of vaccination, initiates either had to drink animal poison, be bitten by a snake or another poisonous animal, or else had to have the poison "cut into their bodies".<sup>105</sup> He went on to say that "a shirt, a handkerchief, a cap...worn by such persons till they became perfectly black, is considered by these people as the best and surest remedy against all diseases, poisonous bites etc. A corner of it is put into water and washed clean. The water is then given to the patient - be it man or beast - to drink."<sup>106</sup> This is an example of how a potentially highly effective and skilled healing device (the vaccinated man could obviously suck the venom from snake bites without danger to himself) was subverted into a fake.

#### 4.4 EFFECTS OF COMMODITISATION ON BRANCHES OF PRODUCTION

Those domestic industries and labour processes which had been most clearly linked pre-capitalist relations of

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105. WA AP 2, 7 Oct. 1851; Knudsen reported the same practice, 'Notizen' GC SAPL, n.d., 27.

106 WA AP 2, 7 Oct. 1851.

production, like cattle breeding and hunting, were not only affected by the modes of commodity exchange expressed in the kommando structure, but in fact became subordinated to them. An examination of such processes of subordination will allow us to see more clearly the extent to which the kommando form of commoditisation was truly locked into the social dynamic of these communities. The kommando system produced a dynamic which not only bred large-scale conflict but most seriously undermined the weak 'inner' productive base set up by the ruling groups.

#### 4.4.1 The declining importance of cattle breeding skills

A strong point in favour of this argument is provided by the evidence of cattle breeding. Successful cattle breeding in Namaland and Damaraland involved a certain set of technical skills, which were socially defined. In this case, as in developed capitalist societies, technical knowledge must be seen as a social relationship; cattle breeding was essentially a social skill. It goes almost without saying that specific controls had to be exercised to enforce the appropriation of the surplus labour needed for such labour-intensive activities as the watering of cattle.

These social skills were not developed in the kommando groups. In the process of accumulation for commodity exchange these cattle breeding skills had either been

lost or were otherwise lacking. On a social and political level their importance was supplanted by skills of a different nature: cattle raiding and bush warfare by strictly disciplined and purposefully led kommandos.

Thus the number of cattle owned by Orlams was invariably much smaller than the estimates given for original Nama, or Herero, herds. No Orlam Kaptein was ever said to own the "great numbers of cattle" and the "abundance of milk" which Kitchingman noted at a kraal of the Gai-//Khaun near Bethany in 1820.<sup>107</sup> The 400 oxen which Jonker apparently called his own in the 1840s<sup>108</sup> (together with 100 oxen grazing at the Bay among Topnaars)<sup>109</sup> seem negligible compared to the 4 000 or 12 000 he was supposed to have carried off as tribute from Herero-speakers.<sup>110</sup>

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107. CA LMS Journals Kitchingman 1820, 15.

108. Moritz Hahn 1846, 209.

109. BRMG 1855, 204. It is interesting to note in this respect that it was estimated that a family of five persons (incl. children) would need an average of five cows, 15 goats and 15 sheep to subsist. CA HP 9, 4 May 1856. If there were only 1 000 people around Windhoek in the 1830s and 1840s (which is an extremely moderate guess), they would have required 5 000 head of cattle, 15 000 goats and 15 000 sheep for subsistence alone, let alone trade guns, wagons and horses. This may serve as an indication of the scale and nature of Orlam indebtedness.

110. cf. ftns. 20 and 21. Interestingly, Andersson and Galton once tried to work out how much cattle Herero-speakers in the north possessed - that is, those they knew of, excl. the eastern section. Andersson concluded that they had "only" about 80 000. WA AP 1, 6 Feb. 1851.

The 1 000 head of cattle owned by Jan Boois of Bethany, the richest of old Kobus' sons,<sup>111</sup> did not compare with the 10 000 head of cattle which Oasib and his Nama dependants still owned in the 1850s.<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, Orlam communities, in contrast to Nama or Herero groups, did not dig wells to water their cattle, because they had become military men rather than cattle breeders. The extremely laborious and time consuming task of well digging was accomplished with primitive tools before the watering of each and every head of cattle could even be started.<sup>113</sup> Its accomplishment obviously required a very high degree of labour coercion, control and general social energy focussed on it. In Orlam groups these energies were directed at raiding, rather than at tending cattle. It was only Herero servants or dependants (forced at the barrel of a gun traded from the Cape!) who would water the cattle from wells.

When Tindall had his cattle watered at one of Amraal's outposts, he noted: "The Damaras were standing in the wells, ladling the water out with deep wooden vessels,

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111. BRMG 1849, 209.

112. Quellen 5, 4 June, 1854.

113. A. Albrecht offered a detailed description of this, see TLMS III, 212; cf also Andersson's notes on cattle tending among Herero-speakers, Lake, 316-318.

and pouring it into troughs out of which the cattle drank. Several hundred ... were watered in about an hour and a half".<sup>114</sup> At the same time, he was "borne down with grief in every place where I met with Hottentots to see their cattle crowding in great numbers into mud holes to drink, and the people drinking out of the same shallow pools, when a few hours of digging would produce a supply of pure clean water."<sup>115</sup> ○

This had consequences. For instance, it made permanent settlements virtually impossible and greatly increased dependence on supplies of surface water, which was rarely available in Nama- and Damaraländ. Also, under such circumstances, pastures around surface water were bound to become quickly exhausted and unable to support stock. We encounter frequent references to pastures exhausted after only a decade or so of settlement, especially around mission stations.<sup>116</sup> Knudsen recorded in 1844 that "the cattle Damara digs deep holes next to riverbeds and draws water out of them quite unlike the Namaqua (sic., Orlam) who migrates to a different place or a fountain as soon as the water in the river

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114. J. Tindall: The Journal, 91.

115. Ibid., 87.

116. On Berseba, see BRMG 1854, 113; BRMG 1858, 158; on the veld of Bethany, see Quellen 3b, 10 June 1853; 29 Dec. 1862. By 1861 all Nama stations were collectively called "bad" although the missionaries had made sure originally that water, springs and pastures were abundantly available. RMS KP June 1861, paragraph 3.

bed is exhausted."<sup>117</sup> To quote just one further example, Wesley Vale, which was initially praised by both Tindall and Cook in the 1840s<sup>118</sup> for its abundance of game and its "many fountains which are all being cleared by the people", was abandoned only a few years later. Moreover, these had been years of relatively good or very good rainfall.<sup>119</sup> Rapidly exhausted of its resources, Wesley Vale was considered "useless" as a station;<sup>120</sup> its fountain was apparently "too small" and this caused Amraal and his group to move north.<sup>121</sup>

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117. Moritz Knudsen 1844, 155. Knudsen only worked among Orlams and by the 1840s no longer distinguished between Orlams and Namas.

118. Cook: The Modern, 119, 165; J. Tindall: The Journal, 38.

119. Cook reported excellent rainfalls at Wesley Vale in October 1842, op.cit., 163, 166. J. Tindall stated that in 1846 rains were so good that the Nosop was even flowing for many days, op.cit., 98. In a similar vein, the year 1848 seems to have been one of fantastic rains, BRMG 1848, 97-102.

120. F. Galton: Narrative, 255. By that time, the climate had apparently dried out considerably, see Ibid., 253, 299; Andersson: Lake, 324, BRMG 1852, 124.

121. RMS KP March 1856, paragraph I5. Even in the 1840s, under Tindall, Amraal and most of his community had moved away to Gobabis, and could only live in Wesley Vale by constructing dams, J. Tindall: The Journal, 112, 125, 128.

The tending of cattle in fact was such a low-ranking task among Orlam groups that even those precious surface waters like fountains, springs or river pools were allowed to become clogged by dirt, mud or vegetation. They were not cleared except on missionaries' initiative. Thus, Samuel Hahn once helped Tibot's congregation to clear their fountains.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, when Kleinschmidt visited Jan Booi and his people east of Rehoboth, he found all the men absent. He commented that "hearing the rumour of my arrival they had quickly begun to open and clean a fountain three hours southwards from here" so that Kleinschmidt might be impressed enough to settle with them there.<sup>123</sup> Knudsen actually reported having had to blast a rock in order to "enlarge" the local spring.<sup>124</sup>

The missionaries in 1852 explained that the 'Namaquas' (here meaning the Afrikaners) were arrogant and vain but no real pastoralists: "... with their bad house-keeping, their clothes are soon in rags. They don't have any income and have to satisfy all their needs from their herds, and those are not very big, especially since they care little for their cattle. To put any effort into

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122. Quellen 3a, 29 March 1848.

123. BRMG 1861, 72.

124. Quellen 3a, 10 Feb. 1844.

his cattle other than to move it from one place to the next does not easily go into a Namaqua's head ...".<sup>125</sup> Similarly, Knudsen noted about Tibot's group (later part of Berseba): "If they have cattle, this is their only mainstay; if their herds get depleted, their life goes, or they become Bushmen again". This was happening, he went on to explain, due to a lack of pasture when people lived at a mission station, and also through "the purchase of clothing, etc. Those who have any possessions (in cattle, B.L.) mostly hang on to it greedily but they must have powder and lead at any cost and must ... pay dearly for it. The native may see something he likes ... a silk scarf or so, and even if he had to give his last sheep for it he has to have it ...".<sup>126</sup> Hahn summed up his observations of 20 years in a very similar way. Having noted that their water holes were dirty, he explained that 'the Namaquas' decidedly were not pastoralists at all.<sup>127</sup>

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125. BRMG 1852, 28.

126. Moritz Knudsen, 1845, 158.

127. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873.

Thus there is almost a circulovirtuosis here in that the lack of skill or care in cattle breeding increased the importance of raiding so that relations of exploitation could be produced. This in turn not only accentuated social and political disinterest in pastoral skills, but also depleted natural resources in a most fundamental and irreparable way. Similar dynamics and pressures become obvious when we look at the relations between hunting for consumption and commodity exchange.

#### 4.4.2 The Transition From Hunting for Local Consumption To Hunting for Trade

Trade, especially of a local nature in skins, hides and other animal products, probably took place among many communities. It also seems that still in the 1840s (and even before that) hunting was undertaken mainly for the purpose of consumption. This is even more likely when considering the general pressures on cattle breeding. Thus, Galton's typical description does not show hunting as being part of exchange relations with the Cape. He noted that Kaptein Amraal and 40 of his men used to "take their wagons with them for some days and then make an encampment, whence they journey short distances on ride-oxen and shoot what they can, bringing the meat back jerked to the wagon" (cut into strips so that

it can dry in the sun, B.L.).<sup>128</sup>

Although not directly linked to the accumulation of exchange goods, this kind of hunt still led to a very massive depletion of game resources. Andersson, for instance, noted in 1854 east of Windhoek: "From the number of bleached bones of rhinoceroses, giraffes and other wild beasts scattered about, it was evident that game had at one time been abundant in these parts ..."<sup>129</sup> Similarly, while Cook and Tindall had commented frequently on the abundance of game, especially rhinos,<sup>130</sup> when visiting Amraal only ten years later, the traveller Galton had to trek several days eastward to meet his first rhinoceros. He also observed that the whole central area of northern Namaland was sorely depleted of game.<sup>131</sup> From their big hunt of 1858 into the Kalahari, the Bethany Kommando brought back 32 elands, 40 gemsbok and 20 zebras. This was considered very satisfactory.<sup>132</sup> Obviously, the veld around Bethany, which extended right to the seashore, no longer yielded

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128. G. Galton: Narrative, 258. There are more references to hunting for consumption, see BRMG 1855, 86, on the annual hunt for game "to the east"; also Quellen 3a 29 Sep. 1848; BRMG 1858, 106.

129. Andersson: Lake, 368.

130. Cook: The Modern, 129.

131. F. Galton: Narrative, 255 ff.

132. BRMG 1858, 106.

anything approaching these numbers.<sup>133</sup>

However, even in the 1840s hunting linked to the trade nexus based at the Cape was practised by Jonker who controlled access to the northern hunting veld.<sup>134</sup> and who often engaged in elephant hunting together with his associates. Even then Jonker and his kommando had

133. It is interesting to note in this respect that people who were usually subjected to an exploitative relationship with Orlams and Namas, Hau-khoi and so-called Bushmen, were repeatedly reported to be engaged in making pitfalls and huge hunting apparatuses from fencing with thorn bushes, apparently even as late as 1866. Thus, Andersson, on approaching Swartbooi's werft in the Erongo mountains, noted "immense fences for game (which) met our eyes on every side, and I was stupid enough to attribute their construction at first to the Namaqua, but of course they would be too lazy for such exertion. Indeed, the labour must have been gigantic. The Bergdamara, as usual, are the constructors ..." WA AP 11, 13 Nov. 1866. For similar references as well as on 'shooting houses' near waterholes and pitfalls, see H. Tindall: Two Lectures on Great Namaqualand and its Inhabitants, Cape Town, 1856, 31; BRMG 1849, 202; J. Tindall: The Journal, 38, 68; BRMG 1852, 211; BRMG 1860, 209; Quellen 5, 24 June 1857. Most unfortunately, there is absolutely no indication as to whether the exploits of this 'non-kommando' type hunting were part of the exploitative relations established between Orlams and their 'dependants', although this appears to be very likely.
134. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 224. Kleinschmidt added: "... The elephant hunt in these areas is entirely in Jonker's hands".

to travel at least eight days to meet elephants. Obviously the animals had already started to retreat into the interior.<sup>135</sup> A year later Saul and Petrus Boois (of the Kaptein's family at Bethany) planned to join Jonker in an elephant hunt but apparently stayed at Bethany.<sup>136</sup> In the 1850s Amraal, the Kaptein located next to the elephant hunting grounds, was "visited annually by trading caravans from the Bechuana tribes in the northwest of Lake Ngami"<sup>137</sup> and also planned to go on a big elephant hunt.<sup>138</sup>

In the 1850s leading men from Bethany began to hunt elephants in the north "instead of raiding" for the first time. David Christian defended them against the missionaries' allegations, saying that they were not going on a raiding kommando, they "went only to get the tusks and hides of the elephants in order to sell them so that he would finally have some money in his hands".<sup>139</sup> However, when the Cape traders became increasingly interested in elephants' tusks and especially in ostrich

135. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 224, op.cit.

136. Moritz Knudsen 1844, 152

137. JBRMG 26, 23

138. BRMG 1856, 236.

139. Quellen 3b, 15 Oct. 1853.

feathers, a boom set in. The importance of hunting for consumption fell well behind the need to produce hunting goods for trade. Thus, F. Kreft noted in January 1863, for the Bethany area: "At the beginning of the year the men had gone to hunt ostriches for four to five weeks. For some years now the ostriches are hunted in great quantities because the feathers are so precious. They are chased to death in the noon heat. Many a horse loses its life this way".<sup>140</sup> A little later he reported: "After New Year 1864 almost all men went to hunt ostriches, because the traders shout for feathers only."<sup>141</sup> This hunting was so extensive that the ostrich flocks became seriously depleted: "The local people have been on a hunt 6 - 8 days northwards from here because the ostriches in this area are already nearly extinct",<sup>142</sup> Kreft commented. However, this did not make the hunt for elephants less attractive to many groups.<sup>143</sup>

These examples demonstrate that even activities that were formerly steeped in pre-capitalist relations and geared to the self-sufficiency of the community, changed

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140. Ibid., Jan. 1863 (no day given).

141. Ibid., Sep. 1864.

142. Ibid., 18 Nov. 1869.

143. For example, the kommando from Berseba planned to join Amraal in an elephant hunt, BRMG 1861, 259-260; Jonker and others were reported to organise hunts together with Amraal, BRMG 1862, 48; BRMG 1863, 277.

radically in character under the pressures of commoditisation. This then served to tighten the exchange nexus with the Cape and consequently people became more dependent on hunting for their daily existence.

#### 4.4.3 The Unviability of Domestic Production

It was not only in hunting and cattle breeding but also in most other productive activities within Orlam communities that labour time was directed away from production and reproduction. It was now being invested in areas closely connected with the Cape trade nexus.

In the same way that cattle breeding skills were lacking, or being lost, the production of household items appears to have become subordinate to the production of goods for their exchange value. The importation of European manufactures became increasingly important. Skills that were no longer handed down from one generation to the next became lost so that the dependence on trade items from the Cape was considerably increased. Andersson drew Jonker's daughter in her 'native dress' in 1851, wearing a skin apron, a skin hat, beads, etc.,<sup>144</sup> while Alexander reported 15 years earlier that the women at

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144. WA AP 2, 22 Aug. 1851.

Niais were wearing aprons and skin hats.<sup>145</sup> Twenty odd years later photographs of Jan Afrikaner, his raad and a group of women from Jan Afrikaner's werft do not show a single piece of clothing made from local materials, let alone in 'native' or 'traditional' style.<sup>146</sup>

From the 1840s onwards, we can observe an 'in-between' stage where European style clothing became the rule although it was still largely locally produced.

Thus it was reported about Jan Booï that he was wearing "skin trousers and a skin jacket, a white night cap under his grey hat, a pair of local veldskoën but no shirt".<sup>147</sup>

A similar process is apparent in the production of household items. Among the few items manufactured by men even as late as the 1840s were wooden bowls, skin buckets for water and milk<sup>148</sup> and pipes made from soapstone

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145. Alexander: Discovery, II, 183. See also Ebner describing the use of richly decorated sheepskin karosses and aprons among the Afrikaners in Jerusalem, Ebner: Reise, 135.

146. See Appendix A.

147. Moritz Knudsen 1842, 138; Knudsen: 'Notizen', GC SAPL n.d. 20; Moritz Backhouse 1840, 231; B. Ridsdale: Scenes and Adventures in Great Namaqualand, London 1883, 177. At the same time, material from Europe became a very important trade item, see RMS KP Aug. 1845, appendix. This contains a list of the most important import articles totalling 49 of which 15 are materials and sewing articles.

148. Moritz Kleinschmidt, 142, 249.

(which could apparently be procured at several places in Namaland and were part of a countrywide industry).<sup>149</sup> There was still a limited degree of craftwork being practised.<sup>150</sup> However, all references to this limited domestic production are centred around the early decades of the century: by the 1860s and '70s such things are never mentioned while the import of European pots and pans had already become significant by the 1840s.<sup>151</sup>

On the other hand, the brewing of honey beer gained in importance and was supplemented by the distilling of brandy, from the mid-1850s onwards. To make brandy

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149. Ebner, op.cit., 134: The stone was also found on the way from Angra Pequena to Bethany, Quellen 3b, 9 July 1853, and pipes were made by people as far north as Jan Booï and his group, BRMG, 1859, 28. The social relations structuring this particular industry and local trade item remain quite obscure after extensive research. We can assume that certain exploitative relationships established by Orlam and Nama groups incorporated pipe-making but there are other instances where exploited groups maintained a degree of autonomy through trading these pipes, see Gürich: Deutsch Südwest-Afrika. Reisebilder und Skizzen aus den Jahren 1888 and 1889. Hamburg, 1891, 141.
150. See footnote 142, also Moritz Backhouse 1840, 235.
151. RMS KP Aug. 1845, Appendix.

a liquid had to be pressed from 'reseintje berries' (which had formerly been a staple foodstuff because of their high nutritious value).<sup>152</sup> "The liquid is boiled in an iron pot, with a wooden lid, in which an opening is cut, and a common kettle is inverted upon it; to the point of the kettle a gun-barrel, from which the breech has been removed, is attached; around this clothes are wrapped which are kept constantly wet with cold water; every aperture at which vapour might escape is carefully sealed with clay, and a vessel placed at the end of the tube receives the liquid."<sup>153</sup> Alcohol became very important.<sup>154</sup> In later years, when brandy was not available from traders and the natural reserves of honey or berries were depleted, people started to buy sugar from traders to make their beer.<sup>155</sup> Drinking, dancing and smoking appear to have been very widely practised, which does not seem to reflect the missionary

152. BRMG 1855, 19.

153. H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 43. His father noted that by 1849 people at Amraal's place had taken to brandy drinking, having "acquired the art of distilling from the colonial farmers who formerly held some of them in bondage". J. Tindall: The Journal, 130. Jonker and the people around Jan Booi were also reported to have distilleries going, CA HP 9, 2 Jan. 1859; Ibid., 6 July 1856.

154. For example, Ibid., 4 Sep. 1845. See also the 'Ryksboek' WA A.8, where honey beer, brandy and dagga were summarily forbidden.

155. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873.

sensitivities expressed in the sources. Hahn, for instance, noted that at Jonker's place there had been a big party again: "From New Year's till January 4 they had not stopped boozing, dancing -- ".<sup>156</sup> Such festivities played an increasingly important role in discouraging disaffected followers from deserting to other groups. This trend clearly demonstrates how positively labour was locked into the sphere of exchange relations with the Cape. Large resources of labour were invested in iron-working, roadbuilding and repairing. The importance of maintaining wagons, guns and horses has already been commented upon.<sup>157</sup> In addition, bullets had to be cast. Tindall noted at Amraal's place: "At the forge craftsmen are manufacturing iron bullets to use against the Damaras".<sup>158</sup> ○

Road-building and repairing in Namaland had to be done with primitive tools and no blasting technology, and was therefore extremely labour-intensive. Jonker had two important roads built by the mid-'40s - one across the Auas mountains (which traders from the Cape had to cross)

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156. CA HP 9, 5 Jan. 1857. Interpunctuation in the original.

157. See footnotes 70 and 71.

158. J. Tindall: The Journal, 138.

and another one several hundred kilometers long to Walvis Bay.<sup>159</sup>

The missionaries commented on the road from Bethany to Berseba (through Mountain Gross Brukaros) and called it a "masterpiece".<sup>160</sup> "When one considers how people had not only thrown away all movable stones, be they big or small, on the four-day long mountainous road, but also had removed even rocks, one of them 15 foot long, without adequate tools, then one cannot justly agree any more that the Namaquas ... are stupid and lazy ...".<sup>161</sup> The Kaptein and his raad at Bethany had been involved in organising road-building before, especially to the port of Angra Pequena.<sup>162</sup>

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The same dynamic was apparent in attempts at gardening which the Kapteins made in order to break the dependence on widely scattered cattle posts for subsistence. Gardening in the 1840s at Windhoek seemed promising.<sup>163</sup>

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159. Ibid., 36; Möritz Hahn 1842, 256; Moritz Hahn 1844, 186.

160. Moritz Samuel Hahn 13 Sep. 1850, 246 (footnote).

161. BRMG 1852, 332 - 333.

162. CA LMS Journals, Schmelen 1819, 7.

163. Missionaries talked about the "most abundant gardens" in Windhoek, BRMG 1849, 117.

Yet when Orlam chiefs at Windhoek complained to Galton in 1850 about the state of the country and asked him for advice, they said that: "No planting or sowing was going on ... there was no law in the country ..."<sup>164</sup>

Rath also noted that the numerous and "abundant" gardens in Windhoek had ceased to exist.<sup>165</sup> In later years, attempts at gardening were abandoned. Bethany was another example. While Knudsen and S. Hahn in the 1840s battled with some success (and chiefly support) to establish agricultural production,<sup>166</sup> Kreft only had his own gardens for which not even fencing was provided by the Kaptein.<sup>167</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Women's Production

Women's production, unlike other branches of production, was not subordinated to the pressures of merchant capital penetration. Throughout the decades under discussion the women were responsible for the bringing up of the children of a settlement, went out daily to collect veldkos, and milked the cattle every evening. They

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164. F. Galton: Narrative, 122

165. BRMG 1852, 27.

166. BRMG 1949, 317; Quellen 3a, 6 Jan. 1844, Ibid., 1 Dec. 1848.

167. BRMG 1861, 325 + 326.

prepared the food and made the mats with which their houses were constructed. The ease with which these houses could be dismantled and assembled ensured the mobility of the Orlam and Nama communities. Thus they were vital to the continuity of individual households and families. The provision of a form of shelter that was readily adaptable to the needs of seasonal migrations was of the highest priority.<sup>168</sup>

The making of mats was a highly skilled activity. — The mats, sometimes more than six to eight feet long,<sup>169</sup> were made from reeds or rushes which were collected, dried and put into hot water to soften. Then every member of the family took a piece into the mouth to chew it. The reeds were then made into a cord by being turned on the naked leg. Finally, the mats were woven with the same technique that today is used in basket making.<sup>170</sup> The collection of reeds often necessitated week-long excursions involving many women and sometimes up to 13 wagons.<sup>171</sup>

Women were repeatedly mentioned vis-a-vis the missionary. It was mostly women who demanded a missionary and it

168. The collection of veldkos was a highly skilled activity; apparently there are about 30 types of veldkos in Namaland, see H. Vedder, Die Bergdama, 67.

169. SAPL GC Knudsen: 'Notizen', n.d. 21,

170. For a detailed description, see WA AP 10, xi.

171. BRMG 1854, 224-226.

seems possible to establish significant connections between women's productive roles (which were the only relations whose reproduction was independent of the kommando structure as indicated) and the intricate involvement of these groups with missionaries. Thus it can be argued that the ideological stability and continuity which the missionary and Christian teachings could offer the dislocated Orlam groups, was desired by the ruling groups mainly in order to retain the loyal adherence of the women. However, these were not clear-cut issues. Although Christian teachings were used by the ruling group as a means of control, Christianity and the missionaries at times also came to be 'refuges' for oppressed groups and provided them with an independence which the Kapteins did not want them to have.

As these processes developed on very similar lines among Orlam and Nama groups, my treatment of these issues will combine both groups in Chapter 6.

In the next chapter my analysis of the characteristic features of the Orlam kommando group in Namaland will serve as a blueprint for my argument that the original Nama 'tribes' under the impact of the Orlam migration became transformed. By the mid-19th century, they were motivated by identical dynamics as those of the kommando structure.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE KOMMANDO IN  
NAMA GROUPS, 1835-1850

5.1 THE FORMATION OF KOMMANDOS BY NAMA GROUPS

The traveller, Campbell noted in 1812 that "some of the Great Namaquas have travelled as far as Cape Town, have wondered at what they saw there, but none have ever attempted to imitate anything which they saw, for they have no ambition to differ in anything from the manners and customs of their forefathers ..."<sup>1</sup> This situation was, in the following decades, to change in a fundamental way. In this chapter I want to demonstrate that Namaland was transformed by the Orlam migration.

In the course of time it was not only the Orlam's guns and wagons that were 'adopted' by the original Nama inhabitants, but their social relations as well. As I will attempt to show, pre-capitalist relations of production dissolved, the old material culture disintegrated or was abandoned, 'discretionary' consumption became 'necessary' consumption, and relations of exchange with the Cape assumed the same determining position in the overall process of production and reproduction as was the case with Orlam groups. By the late 1850s

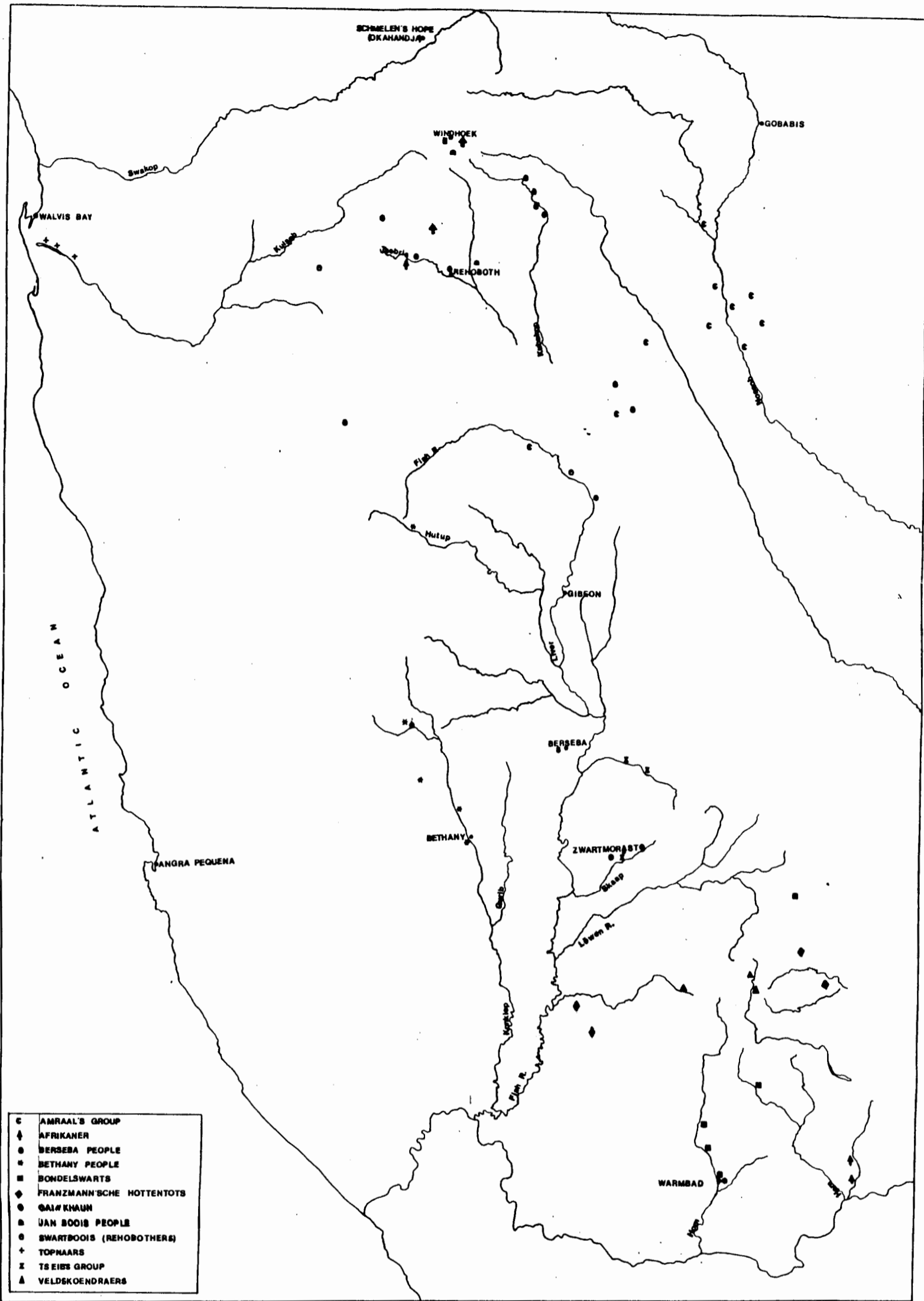
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1. Campbell: Travels, 309.

#### REFERENCES

The maps used for verifying old place names were the same as those listed in Map II. It must be stressed again that this map does not show the extent of cattle posts or territories; it only gives a broad indication of new 'headquarters' of chiefs and some of their followers. The data were taken from the following sources:

Cook: The Modern, Liverpool 1849, 33, 45, 76, 118, 119, 136, 138, 160; JBRMG 20, 33; Tindall: The Journal, Cape Town, 1959, 69, 70, 120, 128;  
R. Ridsdale: Scenes, London 1883, 73, 127, 130, 162, 163, 229, 231, 254, 274; Moritz Kleinschmidt 1842, 256; Moritz Knudsen 1842, 141, 142; Moritz Knudsen 1845, 159; Kleinschmidt and Hahn in AH 1961, 104, 106, 112; BRMG 1854, 20; CA HP 15 Apr. 1846, 9 Feb. 1847, 18 Dec. 1847, 17 June 1848; Moritz Hahn, 1843, 176, 179; BRMG 1863, 214.



MAP 3 THE EMERGENCE OF DISTINCT TERRITORIES 1835-1850

a fundamental transition had taken place. The direction and inner dynamic of Nama 'tribal' groupings had altered, commoditisation had become locked into the social processes of these groups. Capitalist penetration under the dominance of commodity export through Orlam agents led to the unleashing of processes of underdevelopment and socio-economic differences between Orlams and Namas vanished.

The kommando groups' need for social and political stability (which was reproduced by Nama groups as we will see) at times led to responses and experiments which were creative and showed great political acumen. Their well-developed awareness of the threatening nature of imperialism long continued to be a serious obstacle to colonial domination.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in looking at processes of social disintegration and underdevelopment, it is crucial to bear in mind that at the same time the foundations for new traditions and cultural expressions were being laid.

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2. See, for example, Legassick: 'Emergence', footnote 87. Jonker Afrikaner's powerful political position is a case in point which will be closely examined in Chapters 7 and 9. Also, I would like to refer to Hendrik Witbooi's sustained struggle against German colonial rule in this context, see Horst Drechsler: Let Us Die Fighting, London, 1980.

Merchant capital penetration by Orlam agents led to the emergence among original Namas of a state of dependence on the Cape nexus which we have seen emerge among Orlam groups. This exercised an important influence in determining their reproduction requirements. Commoditisation came to be 'locked' into their social processes, and gradually the distinctions between incoming Orlams and original Namas vanished. After less than half a century a process of assimilation had run its full course: the focus of Nama production changed and became directed towards trade links with the Cape and cattle-raiding. The force behind it was linked to the specific phase of merchant capital penetration, which is analysed in Chapter 1. Gamma Tsawoeb summarised this in a succinctly apt metaphor. In 1820 he "said to Brother Schmelen that he had cleaned his head of powder (locally made bark, B.L.) and now prepared for a hat."<sup>3</sup>

### 5.1.1 Nama Cattle Raiding and the Kommando

By the mid-1850s kommandos, using the same techniques as the Orlams, were being set up as institutions of major importance among original Namas. Guns and horses were used and the cattle raided were largely those of Herero-speakers. The scale was massive. Galton

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3. CA LMS Journals, Kitchingman, 1820, 16.

claimed that Oasib, chief of the Gai-//khaun, could "now muster 1 000 guns".<sup>4</sup>

Henry Tindall summarised the state of the country to a Cape Town audience in 1856. He meticulously identified who was 'marauding' and who was not. Thus, the Bondel-swarts were "rich in wagons, horses, cattle and sheep" but did not go on raiding expeditions.<sup>5</sup> They were, however, paid by the Cape Governor for not doing so and for acting as 'border police'.<sup>6</sup> The people under Hendrick Hendricks (Veldskoendraers) Tindall charged with making "frequent forays amongst the Damaras and the Mationas (Bechuanas to the east, B.L.). The tribe is well provided with fire-arms, horses and wagons ..."<sup>7</sup> Worst of all, in his view, were the Gai-//khaun. "They were notorious above all others for their extensive and unceasing depredations on the Damaras. They have been

4. F. Galton: Narrative, 69

5. H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 33.

6. See Cook: The Modern 53, who mentioned the "liberal present" which chief Bondel had obtained from the Cape Governor; letters by the chief himself to the Governor express his policing functions very clearly, see CA G H 14/1, Abraham Bondel to Governor, 8 Aug. 1838; Ibid., 26 Aug. 1845. This special position vis-a-vis the Cape Government set this group apart from the other communities in Namaland. For the period under discussion here they stayed mostly outside of the conflicts of the 1850s and 1860s.

7. H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 36

known to make as many as fifteen forays during a year ... The wealth which they have thus acquired has enabled them to procure a large supply of fire-arms and to keep up their stock of horses ..."<sup>8</sup>

Even Nama groups not falling into this pattern can be shown empirically to have come to depend on some kind of raiding or other special source of income. Reference has already been made to the people under Abraham Christian. The Swartboois went on raids - even if they called these 'trade expeditions' or "looking for new fountains" - which the missionaries clearly identified for what they were.<sup>9</sup> Not only guns, ammunition, horses and wagons were bought with the raided cattle, but other commodities as well, such as clothing,<sup>10</sup> European beads, chairs, tables, rough bedsteads and boxes.<sup>11</sup>

#### 5.1.2 Hunting and the Kommando

The focus in hunting apparently changed as well, because the social implications of cattle raiding came to be an integral part of hunting as well. This is exemplified by the use of horses in hunting by the Namas.

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8. Ibid., 37. See also Quellen 3a, 8 Jan. 1852, on several raids by Willem Fransmann's kommando.

9. BRMG 1853, 310; 1854, 28, 186.

10. See below.

11. H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 42.

Some missionaries wanted to travel from Hoachanas, the 'headquarters' of the chief of the Gai-//khaun, to Bethany. Their purpose was to buy horses, but they were informed that getting horses represented much effort and financial outlay, "as all of them were set aside for hunting".<sup>12</sup> Hunting was on the way to achieving 'kommando' status.

## 5.2 SOCIAL RELATIONS AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE KOMMANDO

Here we are not only dealing with a new branch of production or a new form of trade, nor were these simply different and probably better production techniques, due to the efficiency of guns vis-a-vis assegais. These manifestations of involvement in the Cape nexus signalled a major change of focus of productive activities. The exchange relationship came to acquire the same determining power in social and political processes that was observed in Orlam groups.

This shift was reflected at the level of social and political control. Kinship structures and the old

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12. RMS KP 1861, paragraph 2. Also, Hahn once noted that he met "a whole party of Rehobothers numbering 40 (who) arrived partly on horses, partly on ox-back. They wanted to hunt lions nearby". CA HP 9, 20 July 1859.

social sanctions of chiefly power were eroded. Due to the overlap of production and commodity exchange relationships so characteristic of the kommando structure, the democracy of the market place had begun to penetrate political organisation.

Eloquent examples of this development are provided by the Swartboois in Rehoboth under Missionary Kleinschmidt and by the Gai-//khaun under Vollmer. Their significance rests on two reasons. Firstly, Kleinschmidt's continuous involvement with <sup>the</sup> Rehobothers stretched over a period of 19 years and produced a substantial quantity of data. Secondly, he was married to Schmelen's daughter, Hanna, herself of Nama descent, who spoke Nama fluently and was more actively involved with the community than any other missionary's wife. After overcoming their initial contempt at hearing a woman of their own kind and not a male European missionary preach to them,<sup>13</sup> (Hanna would translate Kleinschmidt's sermons and prayers), the Rehobothers prided themselves on having "almost" two missionaries rather than a mere one.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Hanna came to be a well accepted and highly esteemed person among the Swartboois.

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13. BRMG 1847, 232

14. BRMG 1863, 104-108

In addition, the remarkably good relationship between the couple allowed for sufficient communication between them for Hanna to share her insights into the community with her husband. Since she was not only of Nama descent, but could communicate with the women of the settlement, these insights were often penetrating and in one case even decisive. Thus Kleinschmidt's informative reports and letters have a quality quite unparalleled by other missionaries. It was probably precisely for these reasons that more of his accounts than those of other missionaries were published in the Journal. In contrast, Vollmer's accounts lack this perception, a deficiency of insight which is mostly due to the fact that his involvement with Oasib, head of the Gai-//khaun at Hoachanas, was very tenuous. Oasib was never able to establish himself with a sizeable community at Hoachanas with any degree of permanency.

#### 5.2.1 The Erosion of Kinship Structures and the Adoption Of Legal Codes and Constitutions

At Warmbad, we can identify political relations based on notions of commodity exchange rather than on kinship by the mid-1830s already. Cook reported in 1835 in connection with the Bondelswarts: "The male part of the people were called together to hear the proposed regulations for the government of the station, to which

they assented, where nine of the most eligible of the people, with the chief, myself and Peter Links, were appointed to superintend their administration".<sup>15</sup>

In 1840, a new council was apparently elected by the chief and his 'principal men' as well as others.<sup>16</sup>

A few years later, Ridsdale noted that the raadsmen "are nominated in the first instance by the chief, although, should he wish to introduce an unacceptable member, the raadsmen have a right to object."<sup>17</sup>

The clearest example of the erosion of kinship structures and the establishment of a kommando organisation identical to the one observed in Orlam groups, was provided by the Swartboois at Rehoboth. After four years at Rehoboth, Kleinschmidt authorised a 'Code of Law' for the Rehobothers, patterned on the Ryksboek of the Orlams of Bethany.<sup>18</sup> However, it was much more specific when it came to legal matters. It clearly highlighted the class structure of this community. Patriarchy was entrenched by this code as by the Ryksboek of

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15. Cook: The Modern, 41.

16. Ibid., 112.

17. R. Ridsdale: Scenes, 83

18. Quellen 30, Law for Rehoboth, 25 Aug. 1849.

Bethany. It stated that chieftaincy was hereditary, the eldest son following his father. The chief had two counsellors assisting him as well as 10 judges. If possible, the latter should be important family heads and men of good moral standing. If matters should become 'too difficult' for them, they had to be referred back to the chief. A new set of judges had to be re-elected or exchanged after every two years, and in the case of 'bad behaviour', they were to be suspended from their office. Then followed a set of regulations for "citizens, bywoners and servants": a citizen could only be a male person who owned at least one gun, five cows, and fifty sheep and goats, was no rebel, and obedient to the law. At a general meeting ("Volksversammlung") a citizen had a vote on decisions affecting war or peace. Citizens were obliged to do military service and labour on public works if so required.

Bywoners were those who did not possess the wealth necessary to qualify for citizenship but who were their own masters and had some movable possessions. However, they had no vote and were not liable to taxes except in an emergency. Judges could not be chosen from their ranks as from among the citizens.

Servants were also 'free' people, but could not arbitrarily abandon their masters. They had to discuss the matter

with them or present their cases to the judges. Under the abovementioned circumstances, servants could even become citizens. These rules and classifications appear to have excluded women.

These sections of the Rehoboth constitution were followed by a body of laws. The death sentence could not be enforced, very much to the dismay of the missionary.<sup>19</sup> Marriages had to be monogamous. If a woman performed an abortion on herself or on another woman, she was to be flogged and had to stand in the pillory for three days. For adultery and pre-marital relations the punishment was 40 blows, for rape, 80. If somebody stole cattle he had to return double the amount, not merely the stolen animals. If he could not either return the original number stolen or double, he had to work for what he owed, at the following rate: half a year per head of cattle, 1 month per goat or sheep. If he could not work he received 39 blows per head of cattle and 20 per goat or sheep. This meant that the punishment for stealing two head of cattle or raping a woman was roughly the same. A borrowed ox which was injured would be paid for; a rented ox, not.<sup>20</sup>

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19. See, for instance, BRMG 1852, 824

20. Quellen 30, Law for Rehoboth, 25 Aug. 1849.

These were very strict and very precisely formulated laws which not only show the importance of cattle, but also the newly-recognised importance of individual ownership of cattle.

Thus this code gives a clear indication of incipient class relationships that were based on the private ownership of means of production, namely guns and cattle. The politico-economic relations that were confirmed by this constitution were far removed from the relations of surplus labour appropriation in the pre-capitalist Nama social formations considered in the preceding paragraphs. Furthermore, Christian principles have begun to play an important role in the ideological make-up of the communities. We will examine this in more detail in the next chapter. In this light, we must consider aspects of the constitution such as citizenship, carrying with it a kind of 'qualified franchise', the quest for monogamous marriages, rotating offices of judges or raadsmen, specifications about borrowing or renting oxen and others.

#### 5.2.2 The Rejection of Polygamy

The impression of a transformation of politico-economic relations in Nama groups is substantiated by briefly considering evidence on polygamy. Polygamy was a

crucial institution of pre-capitalist surplus appropriation in the old Nama groups. By the late 1840s, it had almost ceased to exist in Nama communities.

Kleinschmidt wrote in a letter dated 17 November 1851:

"Polygamy is a difficult question ... we are freed from this evil in so far as our Kapteins do not allow a man to have more than one wife ..."<sup>21</sup> When Andersson wrote his short notes on Namas, there was no remaining evidence of bride-price as a social institution: "When a man wants to marry, he demands the girl from her father, and if he is favourable to the match it may be considered as settled. On this occasion an ox or cow must be killed outside the door of her home ... If a man grows tired of his wife, he simply returns her to the parental roof without the least ceremony. Although she may (brood over such proceedings), there is no remedy. Widows are left to care for themselves."<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, H. Tindall noted in his lectures: "Polygamy does not appear to have prevailed to the same extent among the Namaquas, as with the Damaras and other African tribes".<sup>23</sup> Still, his sudden use of the past tense here indicates that we are not dealing with abrupt and sudden changes.

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21. Quellen, 30.

22. WA AP 10, x. The words in brackets were illegible in the original.

23. H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 41.

Even by the mid-1850s there was no clear dividing line between polygamous and monogamous structures in Nama groups. We can only trace tendencies. Thus, Kaptein Oasib still had two wives in 1860 and intended to take a third.<sup>24</sup> In the mid-1850s the judges at Rehoboth all began to take more wives, and Kaptein Swartbooi himself expelled his wife, Anatje and took five others in a bid to re-create the polygamous power structures needed to control the young men.<sup>25</sup> However, as the case indicates, old social sanctions had lost their power to such extent that women and girls could no longer be forced to accept incorporation into a polygamous household; they resisted and many of them did so successfully, backed by the missionary.<sup>26</sup>

The gradual dissolution of polygamy without being neatly replaced by monogamous structures; was accompanied by social disintegration. Thus, Hahn noted several times that 'indecenty' was prevalent among Namas and even spoke of "the dissolution of monogamous marriage". "Sins of the flesh", he argued, were the rule and not the exception, especially among those who were

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24. BRMG 1860, 52.

25. BRMG 1855, 376-378. See especially chapter 6.

26. Ibid.

baptised.<sup>27</sup> There is also evidence to show that not only the institution of marriage changed considerably, away from polygamy, but also the values surrounding it. Thus, Swartbooi's son Johannes was sent to Berseba to look for a bride, and Kleinschmidt commented: "A Christian Orlam girl he must have, that's what the old man thinks; our Namaqua girls have not yet progressed in the ways of civilisation as far as these, and Berseba has a good name".<sup>28</sup>

### 5.2.3 The Replacement of Kinship Controls by Kommando Controls

Oasib's case may serve as an example of the typical difficulties of political control in the kommando organisation as observed among Orlam groups. Power no longer meant control over kinship structures but was related to access to commodities. In the absence of laws and sanctions supported by a resident missionary, Oasib's hold over his 'subjects' appeared to be dwindling. In 1847 Tindall recorded that Oasib had told him "that against his will a number of his people, headed by subordinate chiefs, had plundered Damara villages for

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27. CA HP 9, 10 Jan. 1859. However, we must note that this may be exaggerated as Hahn was an adamant adversary of all Nama-speaking groups and very biased in his mostly negative assessments.

28. BRMG 1863, 99.

the sole purpose of enriching themselves. I advised him to make them restore the stolen cattle. He said he had not the power to do so; but requested me to use my influence to prevent the parties concerned getting horses, guns and ammunition."<sup>29</sup>

The missionaries reported one case in the early 1850s when a cattle post belonging to inhabitants of the mission station at Otjimbingwe was raided by a party made up partly of impoverished Herero-speakers, partly of 'run-away' subjects of Oasib, and partly of Topnaars. Oasib went out with 60 to 70 people to apprehend these robbers and rounded up the people plus 15 guns and ammunition. The stolen cattle were not returned to the Otjimbingwe cattle post, though, but kept by Oasib after each of his assistants had been rewarded with one.<sup>30</sup> How many other cases may there have been which did not end as successfully for Oasib<sup>31</sup>, who repeatedly tried to exercise his old rights of seniority over Swartbooi

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29. J. Tindall: The Journal, 111.

30. BRMG 1853, 372-375.

31. In this case, they not only had missionary support (as Otjimbingwe was concerned) but also Jonker's because this was 'his' territory for raiding and tribute collection. Also, Jonker considered the missionaries as too important to raid one of their establishments, or even be under the suspicion of having done so. Thus, he offered them a written confirmation that he was not involved in this incident. See BRMG 1853, 53, 248-249.

and his group? Generally he was less successful.<sup>32</sup>

When he wanted to establish a missionary settlement, Oasib was not supported by many of his followers. Being unable to exercise 'traditional' controls, he could not even enforce his will by using more modern persuasions. As we saw in Chapter 4, such weaknesses of control were characteristic of the kommando structure. Oasib and his son arrived at Hoachanas with two wagons, each loaded with the belongings of five households. That was all. His followers from the Kubakop told him flatly that they did not want to go to Hoachanas and they were not interested in a missionary, nor did they wish to see their children instructed.<sup>33</sup> Vollmer noted that Oasib had "given out orders to all sides that more people must come here ... if they did not come, they would not get any more clothes, powder and ammunition".<sup>34</sup> This threat did not solve his problem, probably because many of his followers could acquire guns and ammunition from elsewhere. Right into the 1860s, Vollmer did not have more than 100 people at most on the station and often far fewer - with the exception of March 1858 (the climax of the rainy season) when he counted 90 huts. However, by October

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32. BRMG, 1855, 324.

33. Quellen 5, 26 July 1853.

34. Ibid.

of the same year, the station had emptied again.<sup>35</sup>

This evidence suggests that Oasib had to depend on his access to key commodities to control his subjects. As we saw, he was still followed as the leader of a kommando but not when it came to settling at Hoachanas.

#### 5.2.4 The Emergence of Political Identification Outside of Kinship Structures

The examination of the processes of community formation also reveals how control over kinship structures came to be replaced by individual access to resources that were indirectly or directly related to processes of commoditisation under merchant capital penetration.

By mid-century in Nama, as in Orlam groups as well, the settlement of families at or near mission stations and the acceptance of 'sovereignty' of a certain 'Kaptein',

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35. In Quellen 5, 15 Feb. 1854, Vollmer noted 50-100 churchgoers; on 21 May 1855, he recorded only seven huts at Hoachanas because Oasib and others were at Rehoboth; on 18 December 1856 there were 100 people at Hoachanas; on 14 April 1857 the station was abandoned with the exception of 60 women; in December 1858 (no day given) he recorded his first three male baptisms; in March 1858 (no day given) there were ca. 350 people at the station, but he recorded on 13 October 1858 that most of them had left again.

were no longer dependent on genealogical connections, nor did people consider themselves to be genealogically connected.<sup>36</sup> The case of the Namas under Kaptèin Tseib of Zwartmorast (later Keetmanshoop) will illustrate this.

The Tseib'schen Hottentots only came into existence as a group in the late 1840s or early 1850s and were an off-shoot of the Gai-//khaun. The fact that Tseib split from Oasib does not necessarily indicate a loss of political power on Oasib's part, due to overall processes of social transformation. Nama groups were known to have split into sub-groups long before merchant capital penetration of the territory.<sup>37</sup> However, this case seems to have been something other than simply a lineage split, leading to the establishment of a new kraal. Knudsen wrote about Zwartmorast in 1845:

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36. The best example here is Bethany where, at one stage, Jacobus Boois, Amraal Lambert and Willem Swartbooi lived with their followers, see Chapter 2. Similarly Oasib and several of his associates once lived at Rehoboth for a time in 1855. Kleinschmidt noted that he was prepared to excuse a lot about him because he kept "all the outside rabble who stay here with him" in control, BRMG 1856, 344.

37. See Budack: 'Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gai-//khaun', AH 1970.

"The present Kaptein of Zwartmorast is a very rough Namaqua ... and only has his next of kin with him. But his people, which are scattered with their cattle, would be many if collected together."<sup>38</sup> Tseib's income was not derived from tribute, cattle-raising or other pastoral pursuits. Goats and sheep could not even be kept on Zwartmorast because of the 'Blood ziekte' prevalent there.<sup>39</sup> Rather, it came from payments for letting other people's horses graze at his settlement during the dangerous season.<sup>40</sup> As Knudsen noted, the site was not good for cattle. "Zwartmorast is healthy enough to accommodate horses from afar during the 'dying season'. Tseib, however, demands huge fees for his water and grass ..."<sup>41</sup> Tseib also said that, with regard to the formation of a missionary settlement, he "had been quite willing to live together with Tibot's people to share their spiritual goods, but his brother (sic) was against this and wanted them to look for their own teacher to form their own people."<sup>42</sup>

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38. Moritz Knudsen 1845, 157 (footnote).

39. Moritz Knudsen 1845, 158.

40. See Chapter 8.

41. Moritz Knudsen 1845, 158.

42. Moritz Knudsen 1845, 158.

A brief look at the general interrelationship between older Nama and immigrant Orlam groups by the 1840s and 1850s will demonstrate this point further. Thus, the missionaries noted that the Orlam Jan Booi, with all the people around him, was part of the Rehoboth community.<sup>43</sup> Kleinschmidt, the missionary to the Rehoboth Namas, would often visit Jan Booi's werft.<sup>44</sup> Jonker and Oasib, although involved in a continuous power struggle, did not hesitate to organise communal raiding expeditions against Herero-speakers, a practice also common between Veldskoendraers and some of Amraal's people.<sup>45</sup>

With reference to the Bondelswarts, Cook offered comments such as: "A considerable number of people have arrived at the station, bringing their families, cattle, horses, etc."<sup>46</sup> More importantly, by the mid-century, the Boois from Bethany, the Gai-//khaun, the Swartboois,

43. JBRMG 19, 1848, 52.

44. JBRMG 26, 1855, 21.

45. BRMG 1852, 19. Apparently Oasib was arranging raids with Amraal, see J. Tindall: The Journal, 115. Also, Hahn once found Jonker and his people living together with a large part of the Piet Kopper people, see BRMG 1860, 187, also CA HP 9, 10 Jan. 1859.

46. Cook: The Modern, 50.

Jonker, Oasib and Amraal's people, were all intimately connected through marriages, and not only in the leading families.<sup>47</sup> To cite a few specific cases, we may note that Chief Abraham Bondel married Jonker's sister<sup>48</sup>. Jonker was a son-in-law of Jan Boois<sup>49</sup> as was David Willem Swartbooie's son.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, one of Jan Boois' men was married to a sister of Willem Swartbooie<sup>51</sup> and Swartbooie's daughter was married to one of Amraal's men.<sup>52</sup>

In terms of the Orlam's social origins, this meant that such concepts as lineages and homesteads had largely lost their validity.

Thus, the patterns of conflict and alliances made by the various groups from mid-century onwards, cannot be understood in genealogical or any other kinship terms. Such notions ceased to exist or retained marginal significance in diplomatic relations between

47. This was noted in the BRMG 1855, 34.

48. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 222.

49. Quellen 20, 18 Sept. 1842.

50. BRMG 1856, 334.

51. BRMG 1859, 26.

52. BRMG 1855, 19.

the Kapteins.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, it is specifically the tendency of travellers, missionaries and traders to refer to 'the Namaquas' and to make no further distinction between Namas and Orlams from the 1840s onwards (except by way of referring to a situation of the past) which indicates how thorough the process of assimilation was by that time.<sup>54</sup>

### 5.3 PRODUCTION, COMMODITISATION AND THE RISE OF THE KOMMANDO

In the following section, I shall outline a process of restructuring and re-allocation of labour in Nama groups. Here, the 'underdeveloping' qualities of the kommando dynamic will become evident. As I shall demonstrate,

53. It was a case in point when Oasib fell out with Jonker in 1855 and expected Willem Swartbooi on these grounds to ally with him, BRMG 1855, 18. Another case, though taken from a different political context that we cannot elucidate here, is given by D. Christian's testimony to Palgrave with whom he travelled to Rehoboth in 1878. Palgrave noted: "He came, he said, to remove from the Kuiseb the Boois tribe ... as being run-aways from David Christian's tribe." CA BBNA 1879, Palgrave to Secretary for Native Affairs, 26 June 1878. Thus, he attempted to make claims on people or properties which had not been made for 50 years.

54. For example, see WA AP 10, x; Knudsen: 'Nachrichten', AH     , 1963, 109.

the Orlam invasion set in motion a process by which the Nama groups became increasingly dependent on the Cape nexus. I shall begin by considering how the emphasis of labour processes was turned away from production towards the reproduction of exchange relations with the Cape.

### 5.3.1 The Relations Between Labour Allocation and the Cape Exchange Nexus

Hahn once made the following observation when he visited Oasib's werft in the Kubakop river: "The Red Nation have established a kind of police about a year ago, which is concerned to provide strangers, Namaquas, Bastards or Europeans, with all sorts of comforts. When a traveller dismounts his horse, or outspans, there are certain officers who take his horse or ox, lead it, unsaddle, water and graze it and make sure in the evening that lions don't get at it. They take care that the traveller receives sufficient milk, often meat too, water and food, that the children or others don't disturb him... When the traveller is alone, somebody must sleep with him to maintain the fire or do other services ... As soon as the traveller wants to leave, he lets one of the officers know ... and at the required time his ox or horse will surely be ready, albeit in the

middle of the night."<sup>55</sup>

As with Orlam groups, road-building became important. Ridsdale, referring to Veldskoendraers, noted that "new roads have been made and old ones repaired."<sup>56</sup> He also recorded that Veldskoendraers had made "a clear open road for a wagon, of many miles in length."<sup>57</sup> Swartbooi was recorded to have left with some men to make a road.<sup>58</sup> Smithery, the repairing of guns and wagons became crucially important. The brother of Willem Swartbooi was reported to be a skilled craftsman as a repairer of guns.<sup>59</sup> Rehoboth even had a proper forge, and for a while, a resident smith who was, of course, not the only metal worker there.<sup>60</sup> Ridsdale claimed that the Bondelswarts at Warmbad did not spend much time looking after their cattle, but rather on smithery work connected with their guns and wagons, although here, as in Rehoboth, an 'outside' expert was employed.<sup>61</sup>

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55. Moritz Hahn 1844, 191.

56. Ridsdale: Scenes, 264.

57. Ibid., 275.

58. Quellen 5, 2 May 1848.

59. Quellen 5, 17 Sept. 1848; Quellen 20, 23 May 1847.

60. BRMG 1855, 372.

61. R. Ridsdale: Scenes, 87; also BRMG 1860, 24, about wagon works at Hoachanas.

### 5.3.2 The Loss of Cattle Breeding Skills

Thus, labour processes were restructured in a fundamental way. The focus of total social production moved away from cattle breeding towards cattle raiding and exchange links with the Cape. The social sanctions required to coerce young men into carrying out the strenuous tasks of cattle tending had lost their power. With the rejection of polygamy, 'juniors' became men who would join the Kaptein in a kommando. The allocation of labour time became increasingly directed towards the maintenance of exchange relations with the Cape. This initiated a dynamic leading to social and political dependence on the Cape exchange nexus.

From the 1840s we find no more evidence that Namas continued to water their cattle from laboriously dug wells. Instead, the data suggest the same decline of cattle breeding skills that was so noticeable amongst the Orlam groups.

Now, rather than engaging in such heavy labour tasks as digging wells, Nama groups came to depend on surface water for their cattle. Persistently they searched for 'stronger fountains' or 'more springs' as soon as the surface water holes were exhausted. Willem Swartbooi was reported to be desperate for a new site with more surface water and wanted to move away from

Rehoboth.<sup>62</sup> The wider veld around the station at Hoachanas and Rehoboth was soon ruined through over-grazing.<sup>63</sup> The Topnaars at the Bay were particularly hard hit because all the cattle destined for the Cape via the sea, fed from the Kuiseb pastures and severely depleted them.<sup>64</sup> These changed conditions clearly no longer had anything to do with the seasons.

As with the Orlams, the dependence on fountains in the absence of wells was great. Yet here, too, the effort put into clearing and maintaining them was quite inadequate. Thus Vollmer noted that the Rehoboth springs were soiled by women and children because of their red colours and the cleaning was 'difficult'.<sup>65</sup> Vollmer also noted in 1855 that Oasib, at that time living at the Rehoboth station, wanted to leave because the water there did not agree with his wife. Vollmer commented, "many others, too, became sick after drinking the water".<sup>66</sup>

A further contributory factor was that cattle posts

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62. BRMG 1854, 149 ff.

63. JBRMG 26, 22; BRMG 1860, 53.

64. CA HP 9, 8 Jan. 1858.

65. Quellen 5, 2 July 1851.

66. Ibid., 23 Nov., 1854.

appear to have become smaller and the dimensions of kraals and settlements shrank. Kraals of 100 to 150 houses were no longer common.<sup>67</sup> Hoachanas had an average of 100 people. In the Warmbad area, Ridsdale visited some Bondelswarts outposts and kraals in the 1840s. Although these were missionary 'sub-centres' with resident evangelists at them, he found no more than 150 to 200 people at each centre.<sup>68</sup> Rehoboth itself certainly never had more than 500 churchgoers.<sup>69</sup>

### 5.3.3 The Loss of Hunting Skills

The hunting veld also appears to have been depleted due to the same lack of application of skill. In the early 1850s the Gai-//khaun had to extend it as far north as the Omatako Mountains in order to supply their game needs. Andersson noted that after having crossed those mountains he came across a "large enclosure where several pitfalls were dug for wild animals. The guide told us they belonged to Red People and Berg Damaras".<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, in this context, hunting skills apparently decayed in the same way as cattle breeding techniques.

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67. See above.

68. R. Ridsdale: Scenes, 130, 163, 167.

69. cf. Quellen, 20.

70. WA AP 1, 27 April 1851.

Whilst travelling with some Rehobothers who lost their way, Kleinschmidt was astonished to find that only a "young bushman could trace the wagon road again. I was amazed to see that my young Namaquas are so far back in this art compared to their fathers for this became obvious several times on the trip ... Grown up mostly in the school and on the station, their senses and thoughts must have taken a different direction otherwise I cannot explain this."<sup>71</sup>

#### 5.3.4 The Transformation of Settlement Patterns

Related to these changes were changes in the pattern of movement and settlement. As map 2 shows, it was not really possible to define distinct territories for each of the Nama groups. The head of the Gai-//khaun exercised rights over certain undemarcated territories without having first claims to all the waterholes in these territories. When Missionary Schmelen arrived at Bethany and learnt from Kaptein Kobus Boois that the latter had "bought the place for five rolls of tobacco 10 years ago"<sup>72</sup> he had probably done so in acknowledgement of the prior rights of a

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71. BRMG, 1861, 66.

72. TLMS, IV, 161

Nama chief.<sup>73</sup> However, these rights soon lost their meaning and after the 1850s were only remembered when it suited the Kapteins politically;<sup>74</sup> they could certainly no longer be enforced.

Instead there was a move away from social-political incorporation to settlements patterns characterised by mutual exclusion and a much more definite demarcation of group boundaries. Through the Orlam migrations these Nama groups acquired new concepts of private property, competition for resources and commodities. These were accompanied by a new market rationality and it appears, new needs for settlement and security. As was customary for Orlam groups, they acquired a missionary and established permanent 'headquarters'.

Willem Swartbooi, for example, lived near Bethany for a long while with many followers. He then moved to

73. Although we lack direct evidence it appears that Jonker Afrikaner himself did not settle at Windhoek without the approval of the head of the Gai-//khaun. See also Chapter 3.
74. For example, at a time of most intense power struggle with Jonker in the mid-1850s, Oasib chose to remind David Christian that the waterholes of Bethany were actually his and that he demanded a 'fine mare' as rent for it. Whether he ever received this rent is not clear. See BRMG 1854, 155. Apparently, his rights were still respected at a later stage as far as unpopulated areas were concerned. Thus Vollmer recorded that Kido Witbooi was visiting Oasib and asking for a place to establish himself with a missionary, BRMG 1861, 229.

Warmbad.<sup>75</sup> In 1845, however, he moved to Missionary Kleinschmidt at Rehoboth and settled there with at least 500 people.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, the Veldskoendraers made Schans Vlakte their 'headquarters' in the 1840s, even if it did not last very long. Ridsdale's account of them must be considered typical. He noted in 1844<sup>that</sup> "they had no place of public worship, and no schools; now they have a large stone chapel in course of erection, and 150 children in the Sunday- and weekday-schools ... they were at that time almost destitute of any decent clothing ... but since my first visit traders have found their way hither and now a large number are clothed in articles of European manufacture ... Then they had neither wagon roads nor wagons, but now ... they have made a tolerable road and are in possession of eight wagons ..."<sup>77</sup>

Amraal also settled at two centres (Wesley Vale and Gobabis) in the 1840s, after a considerable period of moving around. Soon he even demanded fees from Veldskoendraers who, after raiding Herero-speakers, crossed 'his' territory on their way home.<sup>78</sup> Oasib

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75. Cook: The Modern, 33.

76. Quellen, 20, 23 May 1845.

77. Ridsdale: Scenes, 177-178.

78. J. Tindall: The Journal, 135.

and some of his followers resisted the pressure for a permanently established missionary longest and only moved to Hoachanas in the 1850s.<sup>79</sup> This was a process of recognition of territory as against waterholes and thus served to reproduce the structures of underdevelopment evident in the transformation of cattle breeding techniques.

#### 5.3.5 The Effects of Commoditisation on Domestic Industries

Similar dynamics became obvious in domestic industries. As far as clothing was concerned, the change was neither abrupt nor total. As late as 1853 Rehobothers wanted to go on a hunting excursion to acquire giraffe skins for leather to make sandals.<sup>80</sup> However, the change was marked. Evidence such as that provided by Kitchingman and Shaw concerning 'traditional' dress, vanishes entirely from the sources. What we observe is firstly a change to homemade leather trousers, skirts and jackets, and then to full European dress. This is captured in a remark made by Knudsen in 1844 about the 'Namaquas': "The men, who do not yet wear leather trousers, short jackets with wide-rimmed hats and home made veldskoen as is fashionable, now only have a skin

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79. BRMG 1854, 279.

80. BRMG 1854, 23.

as wide as a hand in front, and a two stripped skin at the back".<sup>81</sup> Ridsdale commented, mainly about Bondelswarts, that the people were "in general well clothed, either in dresses carefully prepared by a process of tanning with which they are familiar ... or in moleskins and cotton prints of English manufacture."<sup>82</sup> At a later stage, he noted that Namas were "now clothed in decent English clothing and appeared more like civilized people than they had ever done before."<sup>83</sup> When the mother of H. Hendricks, Kaptein of the Veldskoendraers, made an appearance in the 1840s in full 'traditional' dress, it was a spectacle.<sup>84</sup>

'Discretionary' goods, former luxury items such as articles of European clothing and brandy, became 'necessary'. Here, as in Orlam groups, reliance on itinerant traders was not longer sufficient, and distilleries came into being. This should not be seen as an attempt to fight dependence on traders, rather traders were unable to then satisfy the growing demand for liquor. Kleinschmidt reported that by the mid-1850s, brandy began to be distilled at Rehoboth, adopting a technique similar to the one used by Amraal and Jonker

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81. Knudsen: 'Nachrichten', AH 1963, 109.

82. Ridsdale: Scenes, 82-83.

83. Ibid., 255.

84. Ibid., 166.

and their followers. The actual master of distilling, according to Kleinschmidt, was Swartbooi's eldest daughter who had learnt the technique at Amraal's place when she was married there.<sup>85</sup>

Although wooden vessels were apparently still made by Nama men in the 1840s,<sup>86</sup> it seems that European pots and pans did replace items of pottery manufacture, as there is no further evidence of pottery in the sources. Similarly, with firearms being increasingly used, it seems that either the labour time or the skill involved in making assegais, was no longer available. These skills were lost as they were no longer practised or handed down. Andersson's formulations, if not his evidence, illustrate this. Talking about guns as the only weapons of the Namas, Andersson added: "Originally they used bows and arrows ..."<sup>87</sup> Tindall and Hahn both noted that among Oasib's kommandos assegais had become sought after items of booty.<sup>88</sup>

Processes of commoditisation came to determine forms of production. Yet these changes and processes of underdevelopment were not complete. Nama culture was not

85. BRMG 1855, 19.

86. Ibid., 85; also H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 42.

87. WA AP 10, x.

88. J. Tindall: The Journal, 98; Moritz; Hahn, 1846, 209-210.

suddenly eradicated. Thus, Andersson gave an interesting description of bead and buchu making (but offered no evidence regarding the division of labour that this entailed). His entry for September 18, 1851 reads: "Saap. General name of all the different sorts of scented powder used by the Namaquas. One kind is a flower which they procure from south of Bethany but which as far as is known does not grow south of the Orange River. Another they make out of the peel of the young 'Coffee' thorn bush, and a third from a kind of lichen".<sup>89</sup> He also noted that the Namas ornamented themselves "profusely", mostly with copper and resin-based beads.<sup>90</sup>

Recent archaeological work suggests, however, that the heavy importation of beads of European manufacture overflowed the market, changed particularly the value attached to copper beads, and therefore contributed to the breakdown of their production and trade.<sup>91</sup>

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89. WA AP 2, 18 Sept. 1851.

90. WA AP 10, xi.

91. See John Kinahan: 'Recent Copper Working Sites on the Upper !Khūiseb Drainage, Namibia', unpubl. paper, Windhoek State Museum, 1981.

### 5.3.6 The Conservation of the Sexual Division of Labour

In Nama, as in Orlam groups, women produced veldkos and matting for the houses. They also provided other essential services like the construction of houses. They were responsible for the transportation of the household from one place to another.<sup>92</sup> This was an important function. These social activities, unlike all others, were not transformed on the new kommando structures, as I shall demonstrate.

Women defended the limited status which the provision of these services gave them. For instance, they had rights to the huts they built for themselves and their families. They could determine who was to stay in them. The missionaries tried to push for the building of brick houses, but it was the women, usually the closest followers of the missionary, who resisted. For example, Jonker's wife Beetje simply refused to live in a three-roomed house which Jonker built for

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92. On women collecting veldkos, see BRMG 1849, 313; mat-making and house construction, see Knudsen: 'Nachrichten', AH 1963, 108-109; GC SAPL Knudsen: 'Notizen', n.d., 21; also Ridsdale: Scenes, 87-89.

her. At the same time, she and "many (other) women" asked Missionary Kleinschmidt to let them go and fetch reeds.<sup>93</sup> This was a clear rejection of brick houses, made in a metaphorical form.

In this one instance, a new division of labour, i.e. a fundamental change in the labour process which would have involved the men in constructing brick houses, did not come about. Here was one area that did not succumb to the new pressures and the new directions of social energy resulting from commoditisation processes.

This does not mean that all relations between men and women remained unaffected within the new class relationships that we saw emerge in Nama groups. For instance, a 'citizen's' wife in Rehoboth would have a number of female servants.<sup>94</sup> If they moved to an outpost, she would ride one of the pack oxen while female servants and young people would have to walk.<sup>95</sup>

93. Andersson: Lake Ngami, London 1856, 326-327.

94. BRMG 1849, 101.

95. Andersson: Lake, 326-327, mentioned the "good dame of the house" who would be leisurely seated while everybody was busy packing. Knudsen noted that "the wife of a Namaqua who is so concerned about domestic affairs that she builds a mat house will never lead the oxen but rides next to her husband as gravely as he himself. They are too proud and servants they usually have in sufficient numbers". See also Knudsen: 'Nachrichten', AH, 1963, 109.

Patriarchal relations between men and women overrode all other differences. (A servant's wife would still have to cook and build a house for her husband while not being given decision-making powers.) They remained unaffected by the processes of underdevelopment and destruction of material culture that we observed above.

Women and their production took on a new importance. Their demands acquired a weight among the ruling men which they probably had not possessed before. This became significant in the establishment of relations with a missionary. Thus, women's productive role had a deep influence on the ideological make-up of the kommando group. In the next chapter, these will be examined in greater detail.

#### 5.4 THE TRANSFORMATION OF COSMOLOGY

Although women's roles as producers were not fundamentally transformed, the most distant corners of the social fabric of the groups were reached by the changes mentioned. With the dissolution of kinship structures, and the focal point of production shifting to exchange relations with the Cape, the elaborate set of customs, rites, religious and other cultural expressions available to old Nama groups faded away or vanished. They were

partly supplanted by social institutions linked to Christianity or the missionary.

The extent of these losses was great, indicated by Tindall when he noted: "they have no warlike or pastoral songs ..."<sup>96</sup> Religious notions, such as that of Heitsi-Eibib and the custom of throwing stones on graves, as well as the healing practice of extracting objects from the sick person's body were still reported in the 1850s.<sup>97</sup> The eating taboo attached to the legend of the hare and the moon was also still observed.<sup>98</sup> Significantly, Andersson's notes on Nama customs were all written in the past tense, with interpolations indicating that things had changed, such as: "In olden times it was customary in Namaland to abandon old people; or; "Formerly when a chief died it was the custom to call the whole tribe together ...", followed by a description of intestines and fat being placed on the new chief's head.<sup>99</sup> Andersson maintained the past tense in mentioning that "after a great hunt had taken place" choice parts were reserved for the police ... He reported no initiation, mentioning en

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96. H. Tindall: Two Lectures, 43.

97. WA AP 10, x.

98. Ibid.

99. See above, Chapter 3, for more details on these old customs.

passant that the day of initiation was a day of "great rejoicing". Burial rites appear to have been reduced to a minimum: "When a person is dead, some of his cattle are killed and a feast is given".<sup>100</sup>

Alexander gave a rather unfavourable account of the people under Abraham Bondel and a general moral decline in the 1830s. "Chastity is of small account among the Namaquas, the chiefs even when they go to the sea, lend their wives to the white men for cotton handkerchiefs, or brandy; and if a husband has been out hunting, and on his return finds his place occupied, he sits down at the door of his hut and, the paramour handing him out a bit of tobacco, the injured man contentedly smokes it till the other chooses to retire."<sup>101</sup>

The fading of old cultural practices and belief systems did not simply leave the groups with less than they had before. Rather, new cosmological relations were established, new religious notions adopted. These were found in the Christian religion and the person of a European missionary. However, in contrast to the old cosmology, this meant a deepening of the ties

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100. WA AP 10, x.

101. J. Alexander: Discovery, I, 196.

with the Cape. Also, the importance of the missionary often led to intense political conflicts within kommando groups as the missionary emerged as a rival political power. These relations will be considered in greater detail in the following chapter.

THE POSITION OF MISSIONARIES IN  
KOMMANDO GROUPS

In the preceding two chapters I have attempted to analyse the dynamics of production and control in Orlam communities, and have shown that these were reproduced by the original Namas within a few decades of contact.<sup>1</sup> I demonstrated that the determinant relation of production was embodied in the kommando structure. Hitherto, my analysis has excluded major ideological aspects of the kommando groups which will become more evident when the role of missionaries in these groups is examined. In the next section I shall demonstrate that missionaries acquired positions of great importance and political power in both Nama and Orlam kommando groups.

The absence of the ideological sanctions characterising kinship-organised societies made Christianity a potent instrument in the hands of the leaders when contriving the formation and reproduction of their communities. The place of the Christian religion in the communities will be examined in some detail.

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1. For the first decades of contact between Nama and Orlams, see above Chapter 3.

## 6.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN KOMMANDO GROUPS

By the mid-19th century, Christianity had become an integral part of social/political relations in Namaland, amongst both Orlam and Nama communities. For example, when Kreft met some of Oasib's and Witbooi's followers in 1863, he remarked: "I must say of these people to their credit that wherever they live together they erect a bush chapel ..."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Orlam groups only came into existence as units with their own political identities when either a missionary came to stay or a chapel was built, or both. The missionary acted as anchor for the community. This is true for all the Orlam groups; Bethany, Berseba, Wesley Vale and later Gobabis, Gibeon and Windhoek came into existence as mission stations or as places of worship. This was the case with Jonker who only acquired a missionary after several years of settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Jonker himself was known to be an emphatic preacher of the gospel and held services even in Herero villages

2. Quellen 3b, p. 63

3. When Kleinschmidt and Hahn came to Windhoek in 1842, a large white-washed chapel was already there, see Mossolow: 'Franz Heinrich Kleinschmidt 1812-1842; biographische Skizze', AH 1971, 39.

which otherwise had to provide him with cattle. He called this 'evangelising the heathen'.<sup>4</sup> Jan Booi was also reported to hold daily prayer sessions.<sup>5</sup>

After the Rhenish missionaries were expelled from Windhoek and Haddy of the Wesleyan Missionary Society had left, an evangelist from Hahn's station at Neu-Barmen regularly went to Windhoek to hold services there.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, Jonker's wife, her children and other raads-men's wives occasionally visited Neu-Barmen and Rehoboth for lengthy periods of time.<sup>7</sup> At Rehoboth,

4. Moritz Hahn 1843, 180; Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 221. The missionaries also noted about the years when Jonker was firmly based in Windhoek: "Relentlessly he held service and school twice daily in the stone chapel ...", BRMG 1862, 22. For an emphasis on evangelising efforts as far as Herero-speakers were concerned, see also Loth: Mission, 21.

5. Quellen 5, 31 Aug. 1848.

6. CA HP 9, 15 Jan. 1848.

7. Ibid., 20 May 1856, 6 July 1856, 7 Sept. 1856, 4 Jan. 1857; BRMG 1858, 118; BRMG 1862, 106. Kleinschmidt once visited Jonker when his headquarters were at Okahandja and noted: "To my great surprise I found that his two daughters who used to stay at Rehoboth with their mother for long periods ... had practised several of our songs in Dutch and Nama with a great part of the youth here." BRMG 1862, 44.

the Kaptein did not hesitate to order thousands of bricks to be made over a period of almost two years for the construction of a chapel and school.<sup>8</sup>

## 6.2 THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED MISSION STATIONS FOR KOMMANDO LEADERS

The ideological aspects which made the connection to a missionary or Christianity so desirable, were linked to the kommando structure. Sometimes these links were very direct indeed. An alliance with a missionary was advantageous for Kapteins and their raads for a variety of reasons which often were entirely unrelated to the preaching of the gospel. For instance, a mission station was a military centre as well, in that the church was used as a 'keep'. The missionaries noted that Jonker's stone chapel "could also be used as a fortress".<sup>9</sup> In the 1860s, the church at Gibeon assumed very similar functions.<sup>10</sup>

Missionaries also played crucial roles not only in establishing but in maintaining permanent settlements. These were sustained by missionary gardens. In the early years of missionary involvement other members of

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8. BRMG 1847, Feb., 11. The same was true for Berseba.

9. BRMG 1862, 22.

10. BRMG 1865, 179.

the community made gardens as well.<sup>11</sup> These agricultural endeavours were often the object of considerable financial outlays by the missionaries. For example, Samuel Hahn, working at an outpost of Bethany, bought two Cape ploughs with eight oxen each and had sown three morgen of wheat and barley.<sup>12</sup> The advantages of such stable settlements were obvious. Firstly, they acted as a protection against raids through the increased organisational capacity for defence. Also, Kapteins were usually careful not to antagonise the missionaries because of their contacts with other Europeans, especially traders. Secondly, they were vital to the co-ordination and maintenance of commodity exchange. Additionally, the men had more freedom to pursue raiding and hunting excursions as the women and servants of the settlement were being 'looked after' by the missionary. Kleinschmidt noted once that on such an occasion he had to bother himself "with the unruly women and the rabble" and "do the job of a Kaptein" for four weeks.<sup>13</sup>

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11. See Chapter 4.

12. BRMG 1849, 317.

13. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 224.

As far as the trade nexus with the Cape was concerned, missionaries could be of use in many other ways.

A resident missionary secured access to commodities. This was a decisive advantage because kapteins often could not rely on the punctual arrival of itinerant traders. Usually a missionary would attract such an itinerant trader in the first place because his person guaranteed the trader's security. Secondly, his own access to commodities from the Cape or even Europe was available to the Kaptein of the place through adding his orders to those of the missionary. Furthermore, the missionary would act as a trader himself. Tindall, the missionary at Amraal's place, noted: "When the natives are in want of an article, they apply to a trader or a missionary for it."<sup>14</sup> Before 1840, it seems that missionaries were the prime suppliers of guns and ammunition. At Jerusalem in 1818, Ebner regretted the fact that he could not provide Titus Afrikaner with a supply of powder and lead as abundant as that provided "by the earlier teachers".<sup>15</sup> Also, he was rather critical of the desire of the chief of the Bondelswarts for a missionary "because it seems to me that he is more interested in powder, lead and tobacco than in the teachings of the gospel".<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Schmelen

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14. J. Tindall: The Journal, 92. On the interlinkage between missionaries and trade, see Loth: Mission, 31-34.

15. J. Ebner: Reise, 298 (footnote), 298.

16. Ibid., 173.

recorded the necessity "to furnish some of my people with arms".<sup>17</sup> Even in later years, the missionary provided access to arms and ammunition. For example, when the export of guns and ammunition from the Cape was strictly prohibited due to the Frontier Wars, it was Kleinschmidt, the missionary, who provided Kaptein Swartbooi with some gunpowder.<sup>18</sup> Vollmer did the same for Kaptein Oasib.<sup>19</sup> Later, Vollmer even occasioned some kind of "internal scandal" in missionary circles when he lobbied at the Cape for a considerable supply of ammunition for Oasib.<sup>20</sup>

#### 6.2.1 The Missionary as Trade Nexus Specialist

A missionary was of additional use to the Kapteins in their dealings with the Cape. He acted as their informant on prices and imparted useful skills such as reading and writing in Dutch and Nama. Typically, the missionary Scheppmann reported that a messenger from the Topnaars at the Bay had requested a missionary with the words: "I am a stupid Namaqua and we are all stupid,

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17. CA LMS Journals, Schmelen, 1812, 22.

18. BRMG 1855, 92.

19. Quellen 5, 15, Sep. 1854.

20. RMS KP 1861, paragraph 7.

but now we wish to have a teacher so that we may develop our minds" (so dass wir zu Verstand kommen).<sup>21</sup> The messenger was probably referring firstly to the Kaptein's wish to be informed about prices and secondly to his wish that the children should be instructed in Dutch, the language of the Cape traders. This insistence on instruction in Dutch led to frequent quarrels with the missionaries who realised clearly that Christian principles could not easily be taught in a foreign language. They were not prepared to teach in Dutch only but insisted on Nama as well.<sup>22</sup> Vollmer once complained about this and added that "instruction in Dutch was desired so that the people could deal better with the traders and could say to them: for this sheep I want so and so many knives, etc."<sup>23</sup>

However, the missionary was often required to assist even more directly in dealings with traders. Thus Kleinschmidt once provided a very vivid account of an incident in Rehoboth. Kaptein Swartbooi decided to change the terms of barter, and wanted to pay the trader only half of the usual rate for certain goods. He asked Kleinschmidt for support in this. When the missionary refused, Swartbooi walked through the village

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21. Moritz Scheppmann 1846, 240.

22. BRMG 1859, 23.

23. Quellen 5 April, 1858

complaining loudly about the uselessness of missionaries. When he solicited consolation from an old aunt, she threatened to hit him if he did not leave her house immediately. Before retiring to his hut, Swartbooï denounced Kleinschmidt's wife who was busy in her kitchen.<sup>24</sup>

#### 6.2.2 Christianity as a Tool for Political Control

Most importantly, however, the missionaries and their ideologies were transformed into a tool for political control, filling the vacuum left by the decline in 'traditional' sanctions (such as kinship) which had lost their power. Referring to the Afrikaners in 1815, Ebner noted: "It is only the baptised who are allowed ... to use the gun."<sup>25</sup> Later he remarked that non-baptised people bitterly complained about their inferior social positions.<sup>26</sup> Another example is the Ryksboek that was developed by the people of Bethany.<sup>27</sup> As I showed, this and similar constitutions were far-reaching attempts to create legal and administrative structures that were not only informed by Old Testament notions of good and evil, but also provided sanctions for class

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24. BRMG 1859, 22-24.

25. X Ebner: Reise, 132.

26. Ibid., 200-201.

27. As indicated, this was paralleled by constitutions in Berseba, Rehoboth and Warmbad. See Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

distinctions. They sought to entrench patriarchy and secure the reproduction of social hierarchies as though they were part of the natural order. This was mainly due to the fact that those with a sufficient number of servants and followers to look after their cattle at outposts could spend time with the missionary as learning to read and write and to commit large portions of Scripture to memory were tedious and time-consuming processes. Knudsen once reported proudly that his disciples at Bethany knew the catechism, the Ten Commandments, the generation register from Adam to Jesus, the legend of creation, the 12 sons and tribes of Israel, the 10 plagues, all prophets and the list of books in the Old and New Testament, by heart.<sup>28</sup> In addition, this knowledge had to be retained and refurbished from time to time. Yet, as I showed earlier,<sup>29</sup> it was only by such hard-won accomplishments that members of a congregation could become church elders or reach other positions of social importance.

### 6.2.3 The Missionary as Doctor, Pharmacist, Social Worker and Psychologist

I indicated previously how health services had disintegrated when old social relations were transformed.<sup>31</sup>

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28. Quellen 3a, 10 Feb. 1844.

29. See above, Chapter 4, Chapter 5.

30. BRMG 1869, 115.

31. See above, Chapters 4 and 5.

However, a kommando leader who wanted to maintain a certain number of followers could do so by providing the settlement with a system of health care through the missionary. The missionary would act as a doctor, instruct and appoint nurses and community health workers. Under Kleinschmidt in Rehoboth, special huts for sick and infirm people were erected, and women were appointed who would take care of them.<sup>32</sup> Such women would sometimes assume counselling functions as well.<sup>33</sup> Often, the missionary would also run a pharmacy. Jonker once explained to Missionary Schöneberg why he wanted him to settle at Otjimbingwê. He said: "Traders come and go, but the missionary stays, and then we know from where to get our medicines."<sup>34</sup>

Missionaries also rendered invaluable service to the kommando groups by acting as explorers and pioneers. Their journeys were always made in alliance and co-operation with the Kapteins,<sup>35</sup> who profited by finding new pastures and water holes. At the same time,

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32. BRMG 1849, 5-6.

33. For evidence of this in Berseba and Bethany, see BRMG 1854, 122-123; BRMG 1859, 357.

34. BRMG 1854, 236. On the missionary as pharmacist, see also Ridsdale: Scenes, 269; CA HP 9, 6 May, 1845, 15 May 1846; 11 August 1849.

35. Hahn's and Kleinschmidt's travels to the north of Windhoek were an exception to this, see also Chapter 7.

these trips were mostly financed by the missionaries' society.

#### 6.2.4 The Missionary as Provider of a Moral Code

However, it seems that for the groups under discussion, the significance of missionary teachings and worship practices was mostly in the emotional/moral sphere. As I shall demonstrate, this indicates clearly that old structures and securities had faded away to make room for the kommando organisation in the whole of Namaland.

Women showed a greater interest in having a missionary than men.<sup>36</sup> They also responded strongly to missionary teachings.<sup>37</sup> Jonker's wife Beetje stayed in close contact with Hahn over a number of years, Amraal's wife and other women apparently were the motivating forces behind this group's settlement at Wesley Vale with a missionary.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the women at Bethany decided

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36.. David Christian's wife was reported to have pressurised her husband so that they would stay at Bethany, BRMG, 1856, 4; the same was said about Anatje, Willem Swartbooi's wife, BRMG 1849, 3. J. Alexander once noted in a letter to Hahn: "It was especially the women who always cried for a missionary". JBRMG 12, 27.

37. For a typical description of weeping and breakdowns, see Ebner: Reise, 247-248.

38. Cook: The Modern, 61.

to make more than 80 mats to cover the church roof. The responses to church services were intensely emotional and Knudsen once reported: "The people were overcome by weeping so strongly that the singing almost stopped and only one woman stayed in church (but all the men; they do not cry so easily) ..." <sup>39</sup> This can not be fully accounted for by the fact that women had easier access to missionary teachings and had a greater need of protection when the station was depleted of men. Rather, it tells us something about the subordinate position of women in the kommando groups. It also says something about emotional conditions in the kommando groups and thus provides a key to understanding the power positions which missionaries in 19th century Namibia acquired, often by default.

Although significant, we must not over-emphasise the fact that it was the women rather than the men who showed such intense emotional responses. As is true for patriarchal structures in general, women are usually allowed more emotional receptivity and sensitivity than the men. This is especially so when the community is primarily organised on military principles (as was the case with the kommando groups). Thus, women tend to exhibit general emotional needs and often consider their

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39. Moritz Knudsen. 1845, 157.

fulfilment as more important than men.

My analysis of these groups in Chapters 4 and 5 indicated a great looseness of group boundaries, as well as instability. Whatever little security existed could apparently only be derived from raiding and plundering. This could not be systematised and provided a hopelessly inadequate guarantee for the groups' reproduction. In terms of the pressures leading to the formation of the kommandos, there was no firm moral or ethical code to serve as existential base. This, of course, came to be true for Nama groups as well when kinship ideologies had lost their power. Any inspirational vision of the past or of the future was lacking. In the same way, there was no firm productive within the interstices of the community to sustain the political and administrative superstructure (which, in Jonker's case, was actually quite sophisticated).

Where did this leave the people, and especially the women who had to socialise the children and carry out special functions in the spiritual reproduction of the community? What tradition and 'culture' should they pass on to their children? It was not possible to raid other people's morals and ways of emotional satisfaction in the same way as their cattle could be raided. Here the missionary became important. The

groups of Namaland (unlike many other communities which emerged in the course of South African history) did establish continuity and tradition, and this was partly due to their involvement with a European missionary. He offered a coherent moral code,<sup>40</sup> a strong vision of a peaceful future (where commodity exchange would lead to self-sustained growth and general wealth) and in this he satisfied deep-seated emotional needs. We must see the missionary's role here as that of a psychiatrist/ community development worker who performed vital social functions which could not easily be discharged in any other way at that time.

For example, the typical celebration of Whitsuntide at Rehoboth involved a whole week of intensive counselling. Kleinschmidt commented: "I do not exaggerate if I say that I have sat the whole week from morning to evening, to listen to confessions of sins, complaints and anxieties, feelings and experiences; then I had to console, to reprimand, to correct ..."<sup>41</sup> This was followed

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40. This was laid down in the constitutions adopted by many groups as I argued in the preceding chapter. It seems to have been most effective only when the missionary was present. Thus, at Berseba several young men were once 'excommunicated' because they had behaved 'indecently' while missionary Krönlein was away at the Cape. On his return, he discovered their deeds because the girls had fallen pregnant.

41. BRMG 1863, 104.

by the administration of the Lord's Supper to underline the spiritual cleansing and refreshment, and a day of singing elaborate choruses, praying, repentance, etc.<sup>42</sup>

Religious concepts are vital for the reproduction of a community. Where they are absent or weak we hear of desertion, not only male desertion but female desertion as well. Thus, Andersson noted while travelling to Ovamboland in May 1851: "There is a great number of women going to the Ovambos. Galton says about 80. Some of these go there to sell their belts for which they get beads, etc., in exchange. Others will stop there as servants".<sup>43</sup> If necessary, religion had to be 'imported'. This was what the leaders of the communities had been doing when they acquired a missionary.

A major driving force behind this 'importation' was the women. This was one occasion when women participated in and influenced the decision making of the leaders. Thus, Kleinschmidt reported a conversation with Jonker who said to him: "I have held council, not by myself, but with my people, indeed with the women as well who have asked that a missionary ... should come to us."<sup>44</sup>

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42. Ibid., 104-108.

43. WA AP 1, 25 May, 1851.

44. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1842, 257.

Yet, the acquisition of a missionary was organised and implemented by the Kapteins and their raad only. If large sectors of the community benefitted from the social functions he performed, these functions were still class-based. It was in the rulers' interest to maintain a framework, to tighten group boundaries and to satisfy women's demands. The missionary's skills were an 'asset' which the Kapteins were able to offer to their followers and especially to their womenfolk in order to ensure the reproduction of regular surplus labour extraction.

Women were crucial here, because the products of their labour were not locked into the spiralling demands of the Cape nexus.<sup>45</sup> Thus the missionary found himself in a position of considerable political power.

Kleinschmidt, for example, was allowed to interfere in punishments and the administration of social sanctions soon after settling down with Swartbooi.<sup>46</sup> H. Loth has also demonstrated this clearly. However, he omits the consideration that the missionary's power was rooted in the nature of the Kommando group, not in his own person.

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45. For this point, see chapters 4 and 5.

46. BRMG 1849, 9.

### 6.3 THE WIDER POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ACQUIRING A MISSIONARY

#### 6.3.1 The Rejection of Missionaries as Colonial Agents

The power position of missionaries led, however, to conflicts. It created an ambivalence in the character of the alliance between the rulers and the missionary, because acquiring a missionary meant for the Kaptein the creation of a rival power. The need for the services of a missionary and the concomitant violation of all the values represented by the chief through raiding and plundering provided an arena for intense conflict which fills the records. Here was a contradiction that was never resolved. The establishment of gardens under missionary guidance was an attempt to offer an alternative to raiding. Besides that, the powerful position that was conceded to a European missionary once he had been established was related to the penetration of merchant capital and the colonial expansion at the Cape. For these reasons, the missionaries were repeatedly rejected by Kapteins even though many advantages could be derived from their presence.

Jonker Afrikaner had a sharp perception of the political

dangers represented by missionaries.<sup>47</sup> This he expressed in the following way: "You are bought by others to tame us. You build a house and appear friendly and then the traders come, people shoot birds and look for spiders (explorers) and the copper diggers. You want to do with us what you did with the people in Little Namaqualand - take our land away."<sup>48</sup> On other occasions Jonker called the missionaries "landseekers who cannot get fed in their fatherland, traitors, preachers of lies, blasphemous twisters of the gospel..."<sup>49</sup>

Jager Afrikaner had destroyed the mission station at Warmbad in 1812. Schmelen had to leave Bethany in 1822 because a civil war threatened to develop around him and Knudsen was forced by David Christian to leave his mission in 1850. Apparently he was even flogged although this has not been substantiated. In these and other cases<sup>50</sup> we find a two-sided relationship between the

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47. Thus, although missionary Hahn was stationed at Neu-Barmen and not in Windhoek, Jonker's contacts with him were close and frequent, consisting in letters, present and visits. See CA HP 9, diaries 1, 3 and 4.

48. BRMG 1856, 132.

49. BRMG 1855, 62.

50. To be listed in Chapter 9.

rulers and the missionaries. This must not be seen as primarily based on later missionary attempts to consolidate their power positions by controlling and even monopolising trade.<sup>51</sup> Rather, it was linked to the contradictions inherent in the political, social and economic organisation of kommando groups in Namaland.

### 6.3.2 The Missionary as a Political Leader Within Kommando Groups

The conflicts between the desire and need for a missionary and the political threat which he constituted, became particularly clear in a series of events at Rehoboth in the mid-1850s. In accordance with what was in essence an alliance with the ruling group, missionaries often stressed those aspects of the Christian religion that would support the Kaptein's power, such as codes of conduct or the tolerance of suffering. In the case to be related below, essentially democratic tenets of Christianity came to the fore, however, and the missionary became the voice of 'oppressed' groups within the community. Splits in the group came to centre around <sup>the</sup> missionary and Christian issues which were powerful enough to constitute a serious threat to the Kaptein's power.

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51. Loth argued that this happened when the Missionshandelsgesellschaft was founded in 1870, see Loth: Mission, 31-34.

For the people associating with Willem Swartbooi, soon each raiding expedition came to be a serious political and emotional inconvenience after they settled at Rehoboth in 1845. In 1852 a cattle raid coincided with Kleinschmidt's journey to the Cape. On his return he was assured that all those who had participated in the raid were now excluded from the congregation. This he accepted and open conflict was averted.<sup>52</sup> In 1853, a raid was camouflaged as a trading expedition and Willem Swartbooi delivered several major speeches in his own defence to the missionary.<sup>53</sup> In each case the danger of a potential split of the Swartboois into two factions, for and against raiding, was patently feared by the Kaptein.<sup>54</sup> This pattern recurred. In 1854 Swartbooi planned to raid Jonker but Kleinschmidt advised him not to do so, significantly, mainly because of lack of ammunition. After a heated argument, Kleinschmidt left the station. The Kaptein was now strongly criticised by some members of his raad. He had to recall the missionary and make apologies for what happened. The expedition against Jonker which had not been abandoned, however, turned out to be a very half-hearted affair and had no apparent effect.<sup>55</sup>

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52. BRMG 1853, 311.

53. BRMG 1854, 58. For more detail concerning the true nature of this 'trading expedition', see B. Lau: 'Critique', 35.

54. BRMG 1855, 24-29, 51-58.

55. BRMG 1853, 311; BRMG 1855, 58.

A few months later Swartbooi proposed to 'look for another spring' near Otjimbingwe, the headquarters of the copper diggers at the time.<sup>56</sup> Kleinschmidt, suspecting a raid, was able to put pressure on him and ensured that the Kaptein was not followed by more than half the male population of Rehoboth. Moreover, this group frequently halted on the road to discuss the issue with the result that they did not get beyond a few miles from Rehoboth and soon turned back. The Kaptein felt obliged to apologise profusely to Kleinschmidt, apparently under great emotional stress.

At the same time, a serious split involving geographical separation, occurred around another matter of intense missionary concern, namely the question of monogamy. This split, more than the others, highlighted the nature of the conflicts.<sup>57</sup> This was probably not unrelated to Oasib's final attempt to claim Swartbooi as an ally

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56. See below, Chapter 7, 1855.

57. These conflicts, the desire for alternative places of settlements and raids, were part of other developments characterising the mid-1850s, especially Kaptein Oasib's last attempt to mobilise against Jonker Afrikaner on the basis of kinship rights. See below, Chapter 7.

in wartime on the basis of old kinship structures (which suited the Kaptein well at the time). Swartbooi had tried to reintroduce polygamy, together with some of the old judges. He took on five other wives and the judges also wanted to take more wives. They appointed new judges to their ranks "of which they did not have anything to fear ...". Kleinschmidt also added: "... the young men, eager to get married, could see to it themselves where to get a wife from ..." <sup>58</sup> Then, at nightly sessions, which were meant to remain unknown to the missionary, girls and women had to appear before the panel of judges in order to ascertain whether they would agree to the reinstatement of polygamy. They were offered special scarfs and were asked: "Do you want to fill in the form of the Kaptein?" Many refused to take the scarves and to answer the question. They were then badly beaten up. Kleinschmidt learnt about this when the girls went to his wife and showed her their bruised backs. The women who refused were called "those who fill in the form of the missionary". On one occasion the girls had to appear in front of Kaptein Swartbooi himself who told them that everything was happening according to his instructions. When the judges asked Willem Swartbooi's wife: "Did you hear that?", she answered "Yes, but he is only a worldly

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58. BRMG 1855, 378.

Kaptein, our king Jesus is more powerful".<sup>59</sup> Shortly after this she was expelled from Rehoboth by her husband and returned to settle with her family in Bethany.

Kleinschmidt automatically became the spokesman of those ranged against the Kaptein when he wrote the latter a letter in favour of the 'rebels'. The next Sunday he noted: "There were only a few men at the church service but many women and all the youths, these now want to be closer to the missionary..."<sup>60</sup>

Significantly it was the women and 'children', the uninitiated young men who belonged to that section of the community with least rights, not being allowed to participate in the decision-making processes.

The Kaptein's son David made himself the leader of the rebellious group. When Swartbooi and his followers left the station in an attempt "to keep the polygamy law in force", David did not follow them, although his father had ordered him to do so.<sup>62</sup> This conflict extended over several years. In 1857, the Kaptein returned to Rehoboth temporarily but forbade the women

59. Ibid., 379.

60. Ibid.,

61. BRMG 1856, 347.

62. BRMG 1856, 183 (26 April, 1856); BRMG 1859, 148.

to wear dresses instead of their 'native' aprons.<sup>63</sup> Soon, he moved away again, but, as the missionary sources stress, with the smaller part of the community.<sup>64</sup> The conflict apparently ended with a victory for the women and the adult youth in that the Kaptein let David know that the attempted reintroduction of polygamy would be abandoned. Everybody was again to gather at the station. Kleinschmidt commented that Swartbooi's "people had forced him to move to the station; they had obliged him to accept his son David as a co-ruler ..."<sup>65</sup> It does not seem as if the Kaptein was moved by a desire to hear the gospel.

In conclusion, it would be valid to view the missionary's role as an integral part of the social dynamic of the kommando groups.<sup>66</sup> On the one hand, he acted as a focal point to attract followers and dependants, thus connecting into the pre-capitalist aspects of accumulation. On the other hand, his presence was inextricably linked to aspects of commoditisation and the involvement with the Cape trade nexus. This made the links between the missionaries and the Kapteins so intricate and ambivalent. These issues will re-emerge in my treatment of the 1860s in Chapter 9.

63. Quellen 20, 27 Sept. 1857.

64. BRMG 1856, 183; BRMG 1859, 148.

65. BRMG 1859, 149; BRMG 1859, 24.

66. See above, Chapter 3.

THE CANCELLATION OF NAMA/ORLAM DIFFERENCES  
AND THE EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVE PATTERNS  
OF POLITICAL CONFLICT IN NAMALAND

1842 - 1859

In the preceding chapters we have established the terms on which we must view the development of political relations in Nama- and Damaraland from about mid-century onwards. I demonstrated that after a period of conquest and original alliances Nama and Orlam came to establish communities based on the kommando dynamic. Less than a decade after this, all attempts to base political relations on the old differences between Nama and Orlam, were given up, and new patterns of conflict emerged. Jonker's relations with Herero-speaking chiefs played a crucial role in this process.

7.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALLIANCES AND TRIBUTORY  
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HERERO-SPEAKING CHIEFS  
AND THE AFRIKANERS

One of the most striking (and politically most successful) features of the Afrikaner's relations with Herero-speakers was that they managed to establish and maintain alliances with several Herero-speaking chiefs in the

1840s. This was in spite of the fact that the relations between Orilams and Namas with their guns and horses, and the southward-pushing Hereros with their shields and assegais were intensely hostile at the time. When Alexander asked Jonker whether it was possible to travel in Damaraland at all, Jonker actually replied: "It is impossible, no one would take a message ... for any reward; for the messenger would be sure of death among a people so wild and so exasperated against us for turning them out of this country".<sup>1</sup> The missionaries noted in 1853: "When a Herero sees a Namaqua with a gun, he won't hesitate; he gets such a terrible fright that he forgets all resistance and only tries to escape."<sup>2</sup>

The most famous Herero chiefs who struck an alliance with Jonker were Chief Tjimuaha and his son Kamaharero, and Ka hitjine. However, Hahn's records of the station at Neu-Barmen in Damaraland (where he was stationed on Jonker's sufferance alone)<sup>3</sup> indicate that there was a whole network of Herero-speaking chiefs and headmen who co-operated with Jonker. The following typical remark by Hahn confirms that non-hostile, regular relationships were maintained between the

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1. Alexander: Discovery, II, 158.

2. BRMG 1853, 35.

3. See below, footnote 21.

Afrikaners and certain Herero chiefs. Hahn mentioned that on July 29, 1849, "Harujezu, a small Omuhherero chief who stays at Jonker's place, came with a party of his people and two of Jonker's servants to Omuini ouge (sic). We hear that the latter has sent people to Jonker ... to ask whether he could move to him ..."<sup>4</sup> Also, Jonker had allies among influential Herero-speakers who were part of the eastern Herero, the Mbanderus.<sup>5</sup>

The nature of these alliances was also related to matters of social and political organisation within and among Herero-speakers. However, this cannot be explored here in any detail.

The terms of these alliances and tributary relationships were precise and their implications were clearly perceived by the missionaries. The Herero chiefs had to take care of numbers of Afrikaner cattle. They had to assist the Afrikaners with their knowledge of

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4. CA HP 9, 29 July 1849. A little later, Hahn reported of another "of the rich Hereros" who had moved to Jonker's place, Ibid., 15 Oct. 1849. Two years later, it was the rich Herero chief Kairama who also decided to move to Jonker's place after giving him many head of cattle, Ibid., 22 Aug. 1851.

5. Moritz Hahn 1846, 209.

of their country,<sup>6</sup> and with Afrikaner exploitation of Herero dependants.

Thus Kleinschmidt noted that Tjimuaaha and Jonker were good friends, even though Tjimuaaha had to give Jonker oxen if he requested them.<sup>7</sup> Hahn once reported that Jonker came to Neu-Barmen, and Tjimuaaha showed him the kraals of his followers which Jonker was free to 'plunder'.<sup>8</sup>

Moltke's claim that Jonker and Katjimuaaha had maintained a kind of "robber partnership"<sup>9</sup> bears some relevance here. An additional major advantage which Jonker derived from his alliances with the Herero was raiding expeditions to Ovamboland and attempts to establish new alliances there. Without the help of his Herero-speaking allies he could not possibly have pushed that far north, especially where knowledge of the country was concerned. His Herero-speaking allies also served as a protection on the long trek through Damaraland. The first raid was undertaken by Katjimuaaha's people and Jonker's cousins on his behalf, in 1858. Apparently the kommando came back "with a formidable booty".<sup>10</sup> Soon thereafter Jonker was called by one Ovambo chief

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6. For example, Kahitjene's son was reported to have joined Jonker in serving as a guide on recent "plundering expeditions", see WA AP 2, 9 Feb. 1852.

7. BRMG 1863, 341.

8. CA HP, 9, 25 May 1852.

9. See overleaf.

to 'help' him against another. He went up in July 1860 and came back in April 1861, together with some of Amraal's people.<sup>11</sup>

In return, Herero-speaking chiefs were issued with guns.<sup>12</sup> Their own cattle posts were not raided, and they had a chance to enrich themselves during the frequent raids. The Herero chiefs being unconcerned with the accumulation of goods for their exchange value, were apparently content to leave the procured cattle to Jonker and his men, while they claimed the assegais of captured men, their ornaments and other possessions. The Herero chiefs also captured children. This is evidenced by a major raid that was carried out by Jonker and most of his men, Adam Kraai and his followers, David Afrikaner from Jerusalem, some Mbanderu and his allies, Kahitjene and Katjimuaha.<sup>13</sup>

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9. J. Von Moltke: 'Der Mythos vom Unabhängigkeitskrieg der Herero und die Häuptlingswürde Anderssons', AH, 1973, 36.

10. BRMG 1860, 208.

11. BRMG 1861, 317.

12. CA HP 9, 10 Feb. 1847.

13. Ibid., 16 March 1846.

Jonker had other things to offer his allies. One of them was the regular organisation of splendid trade fairs at Windhoek, to which Herero-speakers were possibly invited. These also indicate that Jonker consistently attempted to expand an effective economic system and did not rely on raiding alone. Thus Kleinschmidt in Windhoek noted several times that many Hereros, often total strangers, used to arrive at the settlement. "Upon their arrival they always have cattle and sheep with them in order to exchange them for small axes, arm rings, calabashes, etc."<sup>14</sup>

Hahn recalled that Windhoek became a "trade centre, because the Hereros came with large herds to exchange them for calabashes, tobacco, iron and tin goods, and apart from the Afrikaners, Namaquas (sic) came as well to participate in this advantageous barter. Several smith shops were established, old wagons dismantled and the iron was worked into the simple tools which Hereros sought."<sup>15</sup>

That these trade fairs were held regularly, at least

14. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 227. See also Ibid., 221, 223.

15. BRMG 1862, 38; also Galton: Narrative, 70. Andersson had similarly noted that Windhoek in the early 1840s was a "crowded, bustling market, the whole year round." WA AP 1, 6 Feb. 1851.

in the 1840s, is confirmed by Kleinschmidt's remark that Hereros who came to Windhoek for trading purposes "request women from Jonker while arguing that they could not be without women for the time of their visit ...; Jonker of course refused to comply ... now they bring their own women ..." <sup>16</sup>

The nature of the Afrikaners' relations with Herero chiefs was adequately summed up in a memorandum by the traveller/trader Chapman, to the Cape Government in which he argued that the conflicts of the 1860s should not be seen in the light of a Herero 'war of liberation' as some contemporaries did. <sup>17</sup> "Even all those tribes of Damaras who have been living at or near Otjimbingwe and amongst the Afrikaners have never been slaves. They have always been free to go where they like, and with whom they like ... without ... being in any way interfered with by the Afrikaners. The followers of Maharero, for instance, have never been attacked or plundered by the Namaquas, but on the contrary have for many years past been the instrument employed by the Namaquas for either robbing or plundering, or punishing the tribes of Damaras with whom they had any differences." <sup>18</sup>

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16. Moritz Kleinschmidt 1843, 228. Of course, this evidence is also significant in terms of the relations between men and women in Herero-speaking groups. However, these issues cannot be explored here any further.

17. See also Chapter 9.

18. CA G H 19/10, J. Chapman: 'Memo', Feb. 1865. Also Moltke: 'Mythos', 34.

In this context mention must be made of the population at the two Herero mission stations, Neu-Barmen and Otjimbingwe. As I will show in Chapter 9, they assumed crucial roles in the early stages of conflicts which led to the downfall of the Afrikaners. The populations at Neu-Barmen and later at Otjimbingwe were largely the victims of this collaborative raiding or tribute extracting through Jonker and his allies. Thus, for example, Chapman noted that the Herero-speakers at Otjimbingwe were not 'slaves' of the Afrikaners. Rather, these people were the remnants of tribes formerly destroyed or broken up and plundered by Kamaharero himself, while fighting on his own account, or in the ranks of the late Jonker Afrikaner."<sup>19</sup> They were so-called 'Ovatjimbas', which means impoverished, without cattle, and victimised by their 'patrons'. With Jonker's consent they were provided with a place where they could subsist without cattle herds through missionary gardens and other support at Neu-Barmen,<sup>20</sup> and through the opportunities afforded by the function of trade routes at Otjimbingwe. The settlement at Neu-Barmen was entirely dependent on Jonker<sup>21</sup> and all rights to the

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19. x CA G. H 19/10, Chapman: 'Memo', 1865. For a similar statement, see BRMG 1853, 39.

20. Ibid., 4 July 1847. Hahn added that sick people were fed at his expense.

Footnotes 21 and 22 overleaf.

water and grazing and the settlement of Otjimbingwe were also considered to be in Jonker's hands. (Jonker's reasons here will be examined below.) The relations between the missionaries at these places and their inhabitants have been analysed by several writers in greater detail and cannot be explored further here.<sup>22</sup> The process of victimisation of Herero-speakers was serious enough to lead to an almost total withdrawal of vast numbers of Herero-speakers from the central area. Thus, the missionary conference of 1856 noted that the language of the Hereros was being forgotten and superseded by a Nama/English/Dutch jargon, and that "The nation as far as we know it, has ceased to exist; there are only individuals left knowing no law nor order, who wander about the country very

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21. For instance, Hahn was constantly supplied with slaughter cattle by Jonker. See CA HP 9, 26 Jan. 1846, 6 April, 1857. If he wanted to establish gardens, he had to apply to Jonker for land, Ibid., 20 May 1856. Additionally, he was dependent on Jonker's power in matters of administration. Thus, he used to order a judge from Jonker's place to hold court at Neu-Barmen, Ibid., 1 Jan. 1858. As he claimed, Herero-speakers at the station would only listen to him once he threatened to "tell Jonker about it" if they did not, Ibid., 22 May 1845. Otjimbingwe was also supplied with food by Jonker, BRMG 1853, 37.

22. For example, see Werner: 'Investigation', 72; also F. Lehmann: 'Jonker Afrikaner und die Herero-Missionare seiner Zeit als "Häuptlinge wider Willen" (1844-1861), Südwest Afrika; Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, Heft 11, Leipzig 1961.

miserably."<sup>23</sup>

7.1.1 The Afrikaners' Early Struggle to Remain in Control of These Relationships, 1845-1851

Jonker was fully aware of the importance of his monopoly access to these relations with Herero-speakers. He guarded his rights very jealously. His struggle for control as far as the reproduction of exploitative relations with Herero-speakers can be demonstrated clearly.

Although contact with a missionary was important enough for him to let Hahn remain at Neu-Barmen and Rath at Otjimbingwe, Jonker was extremely anxious to prevent Europeans from exploring Hereroland and Ovamboland lest they should supply Hereros with guns. He was also determined to prevent the establishment of any relationships between European missionaries and Herero chiefs independent of his control. The following paragraphs will elucidate this further.

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23. RMS KP 1856, paragraph 10. Interestingly, these 'miserable' individuals would often be women. Schöneberg noted from Neu-Barmen: "A few days ago a group of whores arrived here; I do not know from where. They are all run-away and expelled women, a miserable lot ... They quarrel day and night ... There is nobody here who could even try to silence this rabble. All station inhabitants are actually nothing but a collection of rabble." BRMG 1853, 252-253.

The extensive trade fairs at Windhoek in the early 1840s could not be kept up by Jonker and his men.

Their search for surface water for their cattle obliged them to leave Windhoek and to migrate between water holes in the area east and north of Windhoek.<sup>24</sup>

Hahn's establishment at Neu-Barmen had the advantage that it was stable and could assume the role of a trade centre under Jonker's control. This centre played an important role in Jonker's network of alliances with Herero chiefs. Hahn noted in 1850: "A big party of rich Hereros came today with 60 - 70 head of cattle to buy tobacco here. Such trading parties come weekly, sometimes daily. The main articles of this local trade are: tobacco and calabashes. Other articles such as scissors, axes, arm rings, and ostrich eggshells are also sought after. The rich Hereros on the other hand bring, apart from their cattle, fat, meat, beads traded from the Ovambos, wooden and woven vessels, etc."<sup>25</sup>

Hahn's position at Neu-Barmen held definite advantages for the Afrikaners. Yet it was potentially threatening

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24. For the difficulties of kommando groups to maintain permanent settlements, see Chapter 4.

25. CA HP 9, 9 March 1850. Unfortunately, nothing is said about Jonker's involvement in this.

because he was close to a number of Herero-speaking chiefs. The Afrikaners had to make persistent efforts to prevent Hahn from making independent contact with such chiefs. Jonker had already tried to prevent Kleinschmidt and Hahn from visiting the 'Damaras' by refusing to give them horses and an interpreter.<sup>26</sup>

In 1846, Hahn asked Kleinschmidt at Rehoboth for some riding oxen as he intended to travel further north.

However, Jonker intercepted and took the oxen so that Hahn could not proceed.<sup>27</sup> Jonker also sent him a message stating that "I was not allowed to go to the Ovaherero, because I only intended to search for springs which he (Jonker, B.L.) wanted to exploit first".

When Hahn insisted on going, Jonker said he would accompany him. In the end the trip did not take place.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, in 1852, Hahn planned his first trip into Ovamboland,<sup>29</sup> without asking Jonker. Tjimuaaha and his followers at Neu-Barmen told him "openly that they didn't want me to go as Jonker, upon hearing of my departure,

26. Quellen 20, 25 and 26 Dec. 1842; also Hahn: 'Alt-SWA', AH 1961, 105.

27. BRMG, Feb. 1847, 11.

28. CA HP 9, 7 May 1846.

29. On the Herero-mission as a base for the opening of mission stations in Ovamboland, see Chapter 9.

would surely come and attack and kill them."<sup>30</sup> A little later Jonker probably informed by Tjimuaaha, wrote Hahn a letter forbidding him to go to Ovamboland.<sup>31</sup> Hahn departed nonetheless, together with Rath and Kolbe. Jonker complained to Schöneberg at Otjimbingwe saying that "He was the Kaptein there and without his permission no one was allowed to travel inland to other peoples from there. He could not and would not allow that".<sup>32</sup>

However, the Afrikaners' power was not sufficient to maintain such tight control for very long. Galton had pressurised them sufficiently by threatening them in the early 1850s with annexation by the Cape.<sup>33</sup> He had then been permitted to travel northwards. Similarly, Hahn and a party succeeded in travelling to Ovamboland in 1857 against Jonker's will.<sup>34</sup>

Jonker's need to control the missionary's relations with Herero-speakers was expressed in various other ways. Once he denounced the missionaries and said

30. CA HP 9, 8 April 1852.

31. CA HP 9, 11 May 1852.

32. BRMG 1853, 249. The missionaries started their trip nonetheless but had to return soon because Rath became ill with fever.

33. See Galton's letter to Jonker, in WA AP 1, Oct. 1850 (no day).

34. CA HP 9, 15 May - 11 September 1857.

that "he would and could not tolerate missionaries among the Hereros: the Hereros were his servants whom he needed for war and whom he couldn't allow to sit around with the missionaries to listen to heterodoxies ..."<sup>35</sup> And he was serious about this. Thus, one of his closest allies, Tjimuaha, tried continuously to get a missionary for himself but was entirely unsuccessful. Once he wrote a letter to 'Omuhonge' Kleinschmidt: "We always used to be afraid of Kaptein Jonker to prevent us from requesting a missionary, as he did with Kahitjene and others who desired God's word. But now we have spoken to him and he said that

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35. BRMG 1852, 62. The Kaptein of Bethany and Jan Booï were also very eager to prevent exploited groups from making contact with missionaries. They forbade S. Hahn to visit a Hau-khoi village. Hahn himself suspected that the Kapteins were rather more interested in plundering and 'suppressing' those Hau-khoi than letting them be served by a missionary, see Quellen 3a, 21 Sep. 1849. Hau-khoi themselves were probably quite aware of the relations between social status and involvement with a missionary. Thus Kleinschmidt's evangelising efforts were once met with the following metaphor by a Hau-khoi: "What you are telling me I don't understand", he said, "because my ears are blocked by the dust of the veld where we have to dig for roots every day". CA HP 9, 10 Aug. 1856.

he would not prevent us from taking a missionary ..."<sup>36</sup>  
 He even asked Hahn to go to the Cape Governor with  
 him.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, Hahn reported how Titus Afrikaner (who had  
 moved from Blyde verwacht to join Jonker in 1845)  
 spied amongst the Hereros at Rehoboth. He enquired  
 about precisely what they were taught by the missionary  
 and asked if they believed these doctrines.<sup>38</sup>

Tjimuaha on the other hand, was always careful or  
 lucky enough not to overstep the lines of his alliance  
 with Jonker, as another chief and ally, Kahitjene,  
 had done.

This interesting case which shocked the Europeans at the  
 time, has been commented upon by writers before.

For example, Mears simply described the relations  
 between Jonker and Kahitjene as those of attack and  
 counter-attack.<sup>39</sup>

Goldblatt made Jonker's attacks

36. Quellen 30, 15 Oct. 1859. He was very interested  
 to have a missionary indeed. He built a church  
 on his main werft, see CA HP 9, 17 March 1852;  
 also he made regular gifts of slaughter cattle  
 to Hahn, Ibid., 6 April 1851.

37. Ibid., 28 March 1859.

38. Ibid., 15 Jan. 1848.

39. W. Mears: Wesleyan Missionaries in Great Namaqualand  
 1820-1876, Cape Town 1968, 18

and pursuits of Kahitjene appear as actions of revenge for some men allegedly killed by the latter.<sup>40</sup> In Vedder's account, the connection between Kahitjene and Jonker is not mentioned at all; they are only touched upon in a quote from Galton's account.<sup>41</sup> However, it appears that it has never been evaluated in the light of Tjimuaha's abovementioned letter. Considered in this light, the evidence indicates that Kahitjene had made independent attempts to acquire a missionary. This threatened the basis of Jonker's hegemonic position in Namaland. As previously mentioned, the presence of a missionary would mean, among other things, access to guns and ammunition entirely outside of Jonker's control.

Hahn's diaries produce a body of evidence which shows clearly that it was this and no other issue which was at stake in Jonker's attacks on Kahitjene and on the newly established mission at Schmelen's Hope. Kolbe was sent out specifically as a missionary to Kahitjene which was a political move and happened behind Jonker's back, and for these reasons was never openly contemplated in the missionary records.

On April 15

On April 15, 1849, Hahn recorded rumours that Kahitjene

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40. I. Goldblatt: SWA, 24.

41. H. Vedder: Early Times, 247-249.

wanted to separate from Jonker and take revenge for relatives of his whom Jonker's men had allegedly killed while on a raid. Two weeks later Kahitjene visited Hahn at Neu-Barmen. He was very friendly and offered gifts of slaughter cattle. Then he breakfasted with Hahn and asked for one of the missionaries at Neu-Barmen to come and stay with him.<sup>42</sup> Hahn promised that this would be done as soon as Kahitjene settled down at some permanent headquarters. As a return present Hahn gave the chief, significantly, powder and lead. When, in the evening, Kahitjene's people came to purchase more ammunition, Hahn declined to give it to them.

After having sent more presents in the shape of oxen,<sup>43</sup> Kahitjene was visited by Hahn at his main werft. Although Hahn, in his diary, did not state clearly where the settlement was situated, his travel route suggests that it was very near Schmelen's Hope.<sup>44</sup> Jonker, when he heard of this visit, sent a furious

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42. CA HP 9, 15 April 1849, 28 April 1849. Kolbe and Rath arrived at Neu-Barmen at about the same time, to support the Herero mission, Ibid., 23 April 1848.

43. Ibid., 28 May 1849.

44. Ibid., 6 June 1849.

and accusatory letter to Hahn, claiming that Hahn had incited Kahitjene to fight against him because Hahn apparently had presented Kahitjene with some guns.<sup>45</sup> It also transpired in the letter, that another Herero headman or chief on Jonker's order, had taken one of Kahitjene cattle posts. Jonker then offered to allow Kahitjene to recover the cattle.<sup>46</sup> In this way Kahitjene was warned not to overstep the limits of his alliance with Jonker.

On March 22, 1850, Missionary Kolbe settled at Schmelen's Hope. Hahn noted that "the station is full of rich Ovaherero who come because of the trade."<sup>47</sup> Five months later Hahn learnt that Jonker planned to attack Schmelen's Hope. He immediately sent messengers with the news to Kahitjene "who stays at Schmelen's Hope."<sup>48</sup> Kahitjene immediately transferred most of the herds from his cattle posts to Neu-Barmen and took refuge there himself. Soon afterwards, Jonker and his kommando ransacked and devastated Schmelen's Hope. The missionary settlement was destroyed and Kolbe left Damaraland.

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45. Ibid., 22 July, 1849.

46. Ibid., 22 July, 1849,

47. Ibid., 22 May, 1850.

48. Ibid., 21-25 August 1850.

Two months later Hahn reported that Jonker had organised a massive punitive kommando. Significantly, this was a communal effort by Oasib and some followers, Amraal's men, members of the Veldskoendraers and Jonker's people - together they had raided at least 30 cattle posts belonging to Kahitjene and Katjikuru.<sup>49</sup> Kahitjene's followers were scattered and his cattle seized. He, devoid of support, was killed a few months later by another Herero-speaking chief.<sup>50</sup>

This story demonstrates several points very clearly. Firstly, it shows crucial aspects of Jonker's struggle for control in Damaraland. Secondly, it stresses once more how important missionaries had become on a political, economic and social level. Thirdly, it emphasises that Jonker needed collaborators for the reproduction of his power position in Damaraland, and that he found them on his terms. What he had to offer was greatly desired by many, even if it meant accepting the Afrikaner's paramountcy. This was participation in exploitative relations with Herero-speakers. It conferred participation in a system of

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49. Ibid., 30 November 1850.

50. See Galton: Narrative, 187. Galton noted that after Kahitjene's separation from Jonker he "had been a marked man with the Hottentots ... He was the only friend among the Damaras that the missionaries ever had ...".

surplus labour extraction that would yield servants, herds and, most importantly, cattle.<sup>51</sup> These allies he found irrespective of whether they were Orlam or Nama. Therefore, it was precisely the Afrikaner's extraction of Herero surplus labour which contributed decisively to the emergence of a new focus of conflict and alliances. At the basis of this process and determining it at the same time, was the reproduction of the kommando structure among Nama groups. This was traced in Chapter 5. Gradually this new focus supplanted the historically founded conflicts between Nama and Orlam. This will be demonstrated in the following paragraphs.

#### 7.1.2 Jonker's Nama and Orlam Allies, 1845 - 1851

The Afrikaners' 'collaborators' in surplus extraction from Herero-speakers had been both Nama and Orlam from at least the 1840s onwards. One of their closest allies, who adhered most unambivalently to the Afrikaners under Jonker, was the Orlam Amraal.<sup>52</sup> Amraal never

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51. Jonker's first offer was arms and ammunition. Thus, Vollmer noted that Jonker had sent three men with loads of powder to Piet Kopper and his group, see Quellen 5, 6 Feb. 1857.

52. Hahn, for instance, noted that Amraal was to be part of the conference between Oasib and Jonker mentioned above (see chapter 3 ). Amraal was late and highly indignant that they had not waited for him, see CA HP 9, 22 April, 1858.

contested Jonker's hegemony . He was the only Kaptein, apart from Jonker, who had Herero-speaking cattle herds , servants and 'allies' who would furnish tribute.<sup>53</sup> These were drawn from the eastern section of Herero-speakers, the Mbanderus. There is no indication that Amraal's exploitation of Herero-speakers was ever a cause of strife between him and Jonker and his men. Other close allies of the Afrikaner's were groups of Veldskoendraers around Kaptein Hendrik or Hendrik Nanib and the Fransman Hottentots, later called the 'Kopperschen' or Piet Kopper's people. These were all original Nama groups. Even the missionaries noted that one aspect of these relations was that these allies were not interested in controlling access to Herero surplus labour as Jonker Afrikaner did; they merely participated in the spoils.<sup>54</sup>

7.2 CHANGING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE: FROM NAMA/ORLAM DIVISIONS TO DIFFERENCES IN ACCESS TO COMMODITIES, 1845 - 1859

7.2.1 Early Rivalries Between Nama and Orlam

From the early 1840s (and possibly before that) until

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53. J. Tindall: The Journal, 90, 96, 141.

54. RMS KP 1852

late 1856/early 1857, the relations between Jonker and his men and the Gai-//khaun under Oasib were characterised by the combination of conflict and alliance we noted in very early Nama/Orlam relations. They alternated between co-operation and mutual tolerance, rivalry, hostile threats or even skirmishes.

Oasib did not leave Jonker's hegemony uncontested. In the early 1840s he carried out raids on Jonker's Herero-speaking allies, especially Kahitjene. Thus Kahitjene was badly hit by the Gai-//khaun in the 1840s. In a revenge expedition, he was prepared to leave Amraal's and Jonker's people unmolested, but planned to attack Oasib and his men.<sup>55</sup> Oasib, apparently, also attempted occasionally to persuade Amraal to join him in raids against Herero-speakers but was unsuccessful.<sup>56</sup>

Oasib made frequent attempts to extract surplus labour from Herero-speakers in the same way as Jonker, but independent of him.<sup>57</sup> Significantly Oasib also raided Amraal's Herero allies.<sup>58</sup> Kleinschmidt noted in 1846

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55. J. Tindall, *Op.cit.*, 95.

56. Only some of Amraal's men accompanied him, against the Kaptein's will, see *Ibid.*, 115. At other times, relations were tense, *Ibid.*, 101, 114.

57. *Ibid.*, 84, 85, 97, 98, 101; also CA HP 9, 9 March 1846.

58. This was the case with Herero-chief Kanjack, see T. Tindall: The Journal, 126. Kanjack was one of Amraal's subordinates, *Ibid.*, 129.

that the Gai-//khaun were very active in "plundering among the Damaras. Jonker did not want to tolerate this and so war almost broke out."<sup>59</sup> Jonker also appealed to Hahn to prevent the Gai-//khaun from raiding, emphasising that he, Jonker, after all only raided those who had stolen cattle from him!<sup>60</sup> Some Veldskoendraers, not yet allied to Jonker and still attached to Oasib, also went on a big kommando. Apparently they were pursued by Amraal.<sup>61</sup> In 1848 Jonker even had to cut short a tribute-raising or 'plundering' tour north of Otjikango because Oasib and his associates had plans to burn down Windhoek.<sup>62</sup>

In this, Oasib was assured that so far Jonker had not established firmly knit alliances with old Nama chiefs. Furthermore, he also relied on Willem Swartbooi, head of the 'little Gai-//khaun'<sup>63</sup>. Although he could not win the Rehobothers' active participation against

59. Quellen, 20, 12 March 1856.

60. CA 9, 12 December 1846.

61. J. Tindall: The Journal, 135-136.

62. CA HP 9, 28 Feb. 1848.

63. This is the translation of the old Nama name of the Swartboois, the //khau-gôan. See Chapter 2.

Jonker,<sup>64</sup> he could still share in the advantages of Swartbooi's cordial relations with a missionary. Thus he had access to a smith's services and a forge, and a regular supply of commodities from the Cape through the traders at Rehoboth. His relations with Swartbooi were close enough to support joint ownership of cattle posts.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the Swartboois would take Oasib's horses to a region near the Gamsberg under their control. There they were safe during the disease-ridden summer months.<sup>66</sup>

Jonker and his men, at the same time, carefully avoided embarking on open hostilities with Oasib and his followers. They only attempted to win Swartbooi for their side as an ally or 'collaborator'.<sup>67</sup> However, they succeeded in these attempts to an even lesser extent than Oasib. It appears that the Rehobothers'

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64. In the JBRMG 19, 1848, 53, it was stated that Oasib wanted to involve the Rehobothers in open conflict against Jonker but was unsuccessful. On another occasion, it was noted that Oasib tried to get "help against his enemies" from Swartbooi which the latter refused to render, see BRMG 1849, 14.

65. BRMG 1860, 213.

66. BRMG 1851, 42.

67. CA HP 9, 28 Feb. 1848; see also BRMG 1852, 31.

energies were directed towards involvement in the Cape nexus through a missionary rather than through competing with Jonker for access to Herero surplus labour extraction. They were quite indifferent to sharing spoils of this extraction on Jonker's terms. Their position of relative independence<sup>68</sup> must be accounted for by the fact that successful relations with a European missionary gave them significant advantages vis-a-vis both Oasib and Jonker.

These conflicts had an ambivalent character and were not open. At times the Gai-//khaun were actually called Jonker's allies.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Hahn noted in 1849 that Jonker had made an agreement with Oasib and his followers.<sup>70</sup> In addition, during a time of crisis in 1850, Jonker and his kommando was supported not only by Amraal's men, but also by a kommando sent by Oasib, as mentioned earlier.

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68. For example, it was claimed that next to Jonker Afrikaner, Oasib was the most powerful man in the country; yet he allowed the Rehobothers special rights and privileges "as those who are more cultivated" due to their missionary involvement. See BRMG 1852, 327. See also Chapter 7.

69. BRMG Feb. 1847, 14; CA HP 9, 6 March 1848.

70. CA HP 9, 6 March 1849.

### 7.2.2 The Final Mobilisation of Nama Political Identity 1852 - 1856

This situation changed drastically in the 1850s when Oasib made a final bid to overthrow the Afrikaners. The timing of this climax in relations between Oasib and Jonker was probably related to the arrival of European copper diggers who greatly intensified existing conflicts.<sup>71</sup> Oasib's attempts rested on the original Nama/Orlam difference. He tried to re-establish old tribal allegiances. This indicates that in spite of all assimilations, these distinctions continued to play a role right into the 1850s. Oasib realised the unviability of his Nama mobilisation in 1856/1857. As a result, he and his associates finally focussed their energies on the exploitation of Herero-speakers on Jonker's terms. From then onwards, the relations between groups in Namaland entirely ceased to be patterned on the basis of the original distinctions between Nama and Orlam.

During the years 1850/1854, Oasib and his associates and the Rehobothers emerged in a strong and unambiguous alliance against Jonker and his group. This becomes obvious in their strong propaganda against him.<sup>72</sup>

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71. See Chapter 8.

72. CA HP 9, 2 Oct. 1853.

However, it was also reflected in their actions.

In 1853, the Rehobothers launched a major raid into Damaraland. They stayed there for nine weeks and came back with many head of cattle.<sup>73</sup> Shortly after the excursion into Damaraland, Swartbooï and his men were reported to have made moves to visit, raid or even occupy Otjimbingwe.<sup>74</sup> Otjimbingwe, controlled by the Afrikaners, was not only fertile, but strategically situated as far as all trade from Walvis Bay inland was concerned. It was also the headquarters of the copper diggers. Furthermore, they had plans to attack Tjimuaha, one of Jonker's most important allies,<sup>75</sup> an undertaking which would have been unheard of a few years earlier.

While none of these plans were actually carried out, Oasib and his men had been occupied against Jonker in different ways. They in fact began to attack the Afrikaner's cattle posts and were involved in skirmishes.<sup>76</sup> Shortly before this, Jonker had had difficulties with Topnaar followers from the Bay. Instead of following

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73. BRMG 1852, 23.

74. BRMG 1859, 188.

75. BRMG 1859, 234.

76. Quellen 5, 24 May 1854.

his orders, many had deserted to Oasib and Swartbooi. Others returned to the Bay.<sup>77</sup>

When Jonker set out on a punitive raid on some Topnaars, Oasib left Hoachanas with a large number of people and moved to Rehoboth. Together with Swartbooi and the run-away Topnaars, he assembled a large kommando against Jonker. Amraal was not prepared to join them against Jonker.<sup>78</sup> Still, when they sallied forth to challenge Jonker's kommandos, they had mustered a considerable strength of 30 men on horseback and about 400 on oxen, plus "gun carriers and servants".<sup>79</sup>

A day of fighting with Jonker did not achieve any major results. However, it did initiate a phase of open conflict marked by cattle raids, shootings, and other engagements. This continued for about two years. At one stage, when Swartbooi was absent, Rehoboth itself was looted by the Afrikaners.<sup>80</sup> The Rehobothers and Oasib suffered continuous small-scale losses which weakened them considerably. Their weakness could be

77. BRMG 1854, 15; see also the description in BRMG 1855, 24-29; BRMG 1854, 15. It is, however, not quite clear whether Topnaars went to Swartbooi instead of Jonker, or simply did not follow Jonker's orders, or 'took refuge' at Rehoboth after Jonker had carried out a punitive raid against them.

78. Amraal had a missionary; he never openly claimed to be on Jonker's side. See Chapter 9 for more detail.

79. BRMG 1855, 24-29.

80. BRMG 1856, 102.

attributed to the inadequate gun powder stocks had by Kleinschmidt and Vollmer.<sup>81</sup> Unlike Jonker, they had no access to the illegal importation of gunpowder as they were relying on their missionaries.<sup>82</sup>

Coinciding with the years of strong alliance with the Gai-//khaun, members of the council in Rehoboth tried to re-establish the old laws of polygamy. They also tried to re-introduce the 'native' dress for women and forbade the wearing of European clothing. In this way, the political struggles were transferred to other levels of social and political organisation.

The split along Nama-Orlam lines did not only involve central Namibia. Jonker and his men had been trying to get the assistance of the Orlam group under Kido Witbooi. They were unsuccessful because Oasib and many of his followers occupied territory between Kido Witbooi's settlements and Windhoek. They had therefore been able to intercept letters, and they also issued strongly worded threats.<sup>83</sup> Jonker had attempted to induce his relatives in Blydeverwacht as well as those among the groups at Bethany and Berseba, to fight against the

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81. BRMG 1855, 51.

82. The Cape Government had prohibited trade in arms and ammunition due to the Frontier Wars.

83. Quellen 30, Witbooi to Jonker, 21 Jan. 1856, and Kleinschmidt's comments to this letter, Ibid.

the Rehobothers and Oasib's kommandos.<sup>84</sup> Oasib, at the same time, tried to motivate his old Nama associates, the Bondelswarts, to move against the Orlams at Bethany and Berseba.<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, Paul Goliath of Berseba was not only 'claimed' as an ally by the Afrikaners on the grounds of historical relatedness, but also by Oasib. Allegedly he occupied territory belonging to the Gai-//khaun.<sup>86</sup>

### 7.2.3 The Failure of Nama Mobilisation. The Emergence of New Political/Economic Distinctions, 1857 - 1859

As it turned out, the five groups in the south did not make a move at that stage for or against the Afrikaners. The Bondelswarts largely remained aloof from the conflicts in Namaland. They could afford to do so, primarily because of their position as 'border police' which was a source of income and protection from the Cape Government.<sup>87</sup> The communities of Berseba and Bethany were strongly supported by their missionary in their desire not to get actively involved.

The new front was beginning to take shape. Political

84. BRMG 1855, 51.

85. Quellen 3b, 6 June 1854.

86. BRMG 1853, 57.

87. See Chapter 5.

conflicts were increasingly being patterned along the line of participation in Herero exploitation on the one hand, and close relations with a firmly established missionary on the other. They were two sides of the same coin; the increasing commoditisation of the production process. Competition for resources and social and political power was coming to focus on access to commodities from the Cape rather than on different 'ethnic' or historical origins.

(i) Access to Commodities Through Exploitation of Herero-speakers

Even in those years of a final and intense Nama mobilisation against Orlam groups, the dividing lines were not clear cut. The process of reshaping the terms of reference was still not well defined. Thus, at the same time as Oasib and his men appealed to the Kaptein of the Bondelswarts and worked so closely with the Rehobothers, other Nama groups were either split or were becoming closely related to the Afrikaners. There was at least one Orlam group who had thrown their lot in with Oasib and Swartbooi at that stage, namely Jan Booi and his men. These were firmly attached to the Rehoboth community and their missionary<sup>88</sup>

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88. JBRMG 26,21.

and joined forces with Oasib's kommando.<sup>89</sup> Thus, although no exact dates are available, at least a section of the people under Willem Fransmann, later Piet Kopper, had moved up to the Windhoek area and joined the Afrikaners in the early 1850s,<sup>90</sup> and so had the Kaptein of the Veldskoendraers.<sup>91</sup> The Topnaars under Piet Haibib, as indicated above, were rather deeply divided. Some stayed with the Afrikaners, others with the Rehobothers, others returned to the Bay.

The tendency to move away from ties and attachments of an earlier age very soon came to be the rule. By late 1856/early 1857, the old bonds between the Gai-//khaun and the 'Little Gai-//khaun' were finally broken. This was also true of other Nama affiliations. The precise reasons for this timing are not quite clear. Probably it had become obvious by then to the Kapteins that the old affinities between groups of Veldskoendraers, Fransmann'schen, Gai-//khaun and Bondelswarts had lost their power and meaning. Furthermore, it might have become clear to Oasib that Willem Swartbooï was not quite the follower Oasib desired due to the power which his successful alliance with a missionary gave him.<sup>92</sup>

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89. BRMG 1854, 234; BRMG 1855, 24.

90. BRMG 1854, 188; also W. Mears, Missionaries, 20.

91. See below, Chapter 9; also above, ftn. 49. W. Mears, Missionaries, 20, noted that the settlement of Veldskoendraers at Schans Vlakte was not very permanent as they left it to move closer to the Afrikaners.

92. BRMG, 1852, 327.

Oasib shifted away from those old ties and threw his lot in with Jonker and his men, together with a large number of followers and dependants. As the agreement of 1858 (noted above) showed, this he did largely on Jonker's terms. Thus Kleinschmidt noted in July 1856 that Kaptein Swartbooi intended to move away from Rehoboth again for fear of Jonker "and he also wanted some distance from Oasib because those two were now one against him".<sup>93</sup> Kreft reported in a letter from December 12 that Oasib's and Nanib's (of the Veldskoendraers) kommandos had communally undertaken a raid into Damaraland.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, Hahn remarked in March 1857 that Jonker Afrikaner had been on a major raid as far north as the Kaokoveld. He was accompanied by Oasib and many of his men, Amraal's kommando and Nanib with many followers.<sup>95</sup> From then onwards, power struggles between Oasib and Jonker no longer occurred along 'ethnic' lines.

(ii) Access to Commodities Through Bonds with the Missionary

However, it is important to stress again that these developments did not suddenly clear away ambiguity and

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93. BRMG, 1857, 89.

94. Quellen 3b, 12 Dec. 1856.

95. CA HP 9, 3 March 1857.

uncertainty from the relations between the various groups. The conflicts of the 1860s show very clearly that the lines of struggle continued to be those that had emerged by 1857. Yet the decade between 1855 and 1865 was characterised by a complex series of agreements, diplomatic missions, contracts and treatises. These mainly involved the missionaries as well as the southern Kapteins of Berseba, Bethany and Gibeon (which came to be Witbooi's headquarters).<sup>96</sup>

These efforts were mostly concerned with attempts to break Jonker's monopoly over the extracting of surplus from Herero-speakers. Apparently they were not effective at all,<sup>97</sup> but they did initiate a process of experimentation with diplomatic, i.e. non-violent ways of conflict-solving under missionary guidance. These assumed vital functions in the late 1860s as we will see in Chapter 9. Procedures, formulations, their possible effectiveness or uselessness, and the like, were established.

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96. See, for instance, the agreement between the 'southern Kapteins' in 1856, BRMG 1856, 366; the 'peace' of 1856, BRMG 1856, 230; the 'Traktat of Hoachanas', see appendix; the frequent visits and missions of David Christian to Hoachanas before 1858, Quellen 3b, Dec. 1857 (no day).

97. The peace treaty of Hoachanas is a good example here, see also BRMG 1856, 336.

The emphasis of political relations based on needs of commodity exchange reflected the progressive weakening of pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and control.

At the same time, these diplomatic endeavours served to tighten group boundaries. The missionaries themselves were quite conscious of their roles in this context. As early as 1849 the Rhenish Mission Konferenz explained to their society that they wanted to have a general peace conference involving all the Kapteins: "You may rest assured ... that we do not concern ourselves with politics unnecessarily, but in this case we may not be silent, as it is only through our mediation that ... unity will come between the Kapteins who until now hate each other viciously."<sup>98</sup>

As has been argued in this chapter, the missionaries nonetheless added to the polarisation of forces which had been emerging. At its core, however, was the penetration of merchant capital and the ever-increasing dependency on the Cape nexus, and not 'ethnic' or other historical differences.

In the next chapter I shall take a closer look at the progressive emergence of this source of conflict.

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98. RMS KP 1849, 40.

In examining trade patterns, the importance of trade, the way traders were manipulated but also became increasingly manipulative, I shall demonstrate how some of the pressures of commoditisation and underdevelopment considered in Chapters 4 and 5 manifested themselves and how the people of Namaland became colonised long before the first German soldier stepped on Namibian soil.

TRADE AND IMPOVERISHMENTIN NAMALAND8.1 GENERAL OUTLINE OF TRADE FEATURES DURING THE PERIOD 1815 - 1870

Any treatment of trade and relations with Europeans in pre-colonial Namaland will be ridden with certain problems. These are substantial enough to have kept other writers in the past from doing any more than touch on the subject.<sup>1</sup> A major impediment to collecting data on trade is that traders rarely kept diaries or wrote letters. Furthermore, as most of the trade in Namaland was conducted by way of barter, book-keeping was of no consequence. In addition to this, there are not even general statistics or figures compiled by a government agency at any one stage in the pre-colonial period. This means that with the best of intentions, it will be extremely difficult to quantify trade and to make definite statements about changing terms of trade.

For these reasons, the following remarks should be taken as a prelude to the next chapter and as linking

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1. See, for instance, J.H. Esterhuyse: South West Africa, 10-11; R. Moorsom: 'Proletarianisation', Chapter 3; I. Goldblatt: SWA, Ch. 8.

it with whatever has been said previously rather than as a comprehensive treatment of the trade situation itself.

#### 8.1.1 Contents of Trade

Obviously the exchange of cattle for arms and ammunition played a crucial role in the trade between Namaland and the Cape from very early onwards. However, it appears that at least until the 1840s and 1850s the exchange was much broader based than this. It involved a variety of other items, especially as far as imports were concerned. For example, the Rhenish missionaries in 1845 tried to establish a trade link between Namaland and Germany. They explained the local situation to their society in these terms: "The only trade of any scale here is in cattle, sheep and goats, and hides. Other articles such as honey, rubber, elephant tusks are negligible, at least at the moment. Ostrich feathers could possibly be exported if acceptable prices were paid." In contrast, the articles desired in Namaland were numerous and sophisticated: "for example,

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2. WA AP 2, 23 Jan. 1853.

3. BRMG 1856

4. RMS KP Aug. 1845, 20.

5. References to the exchange of cattle for muskets or ammunition can be found in the Schmelen records, see chapter 4. Also AMS Journals Kitchingman 1820, 15; J. Ebner: Reise, 175.

German cotton is sought after but not other German materials, and of English materials, only those from the Lewick factory in England. Then very coarse powder, not fine; lead, tin, guns with firelocks, i.e. English ones, as long as possible ... also soldier's guns."<sup>6</sup>

Their detailed list of sought after items that any trading venture in Namaland should stock is instructive. Of 48 different articles, 15 were materials and sowing kits; six were domestic utensils of iron or metal (like pots and pans); 19 were items needed for smithing, building, repairing wagons, or any artisan's work. Recommended was the stocking of 10 000 - 15 000 nails, axes and compounds used for soldering.<sup>7</sup>

As previously mentioned, even European furniture items were brought by traders and exchanged for cattle.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the importation of Cape brandy became increasingly important. Trader Ohlsson, for instance, noted that during the 1870s an annual average of 400 gallons of gin and 600 gallons of brandy had been imported.<sup>9</sup> Even if these figures exclude local spirits

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6. RMS KP Aug 1845.

7. Ibid., appendix.

8. cf. below, chapter 4.

9. ABBNA 1879, Ohlsson memo, 20 May 1878.

production (and also conceal possible changes in the relationship between local production and imports), they certainly establish spirits as a major item of exchange.

However, it seems that the emphasis of trade until the 1860s centred increasingly on the exchange of cattle, tusks and ostrich feathers for arms and ammunition. Jonker Afrikaner once received Missionary Hahn in a hut that was void of items of furniture, domestic utensils, and articles of clothing. Hahn was quite perplexed<sup>10</sup> although, as the missionaries never tired of reporting, the settlement at Windhoek had been decaying ever since the mid-1840s. Jonker may well have had hidden storage places, but Hahn's experience does seem <sup>to indicate</sup> that in times of mounting pressure, all the European 'appenditures' would become secondary while access to arms and ammunition remained absolutely crucial. And these were times of pressure. As we shall see, the majority of references from the 1850s onwards to trade are either unspecific or deal with trade in cattle, tusks and ostrich feathers for guns, powder, lead and possibly horses. It was only after the Afrikaners' control

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10. CA HP 9, 3 Aug. 1852.

11. See, for instance, Hahn who once even insinuated that the moral decay at Windhoek had gone so far that people were using the church as a big toilet, CA HP 9, 6 March 1858; also Ibid., 13 Oct. 1845.

over Damaraland and more northerly areas was broken, and lung-sickness had made the cattle trade less lucrative, that the trade in tusks and ostrich feathers substantially increased to reach peak value in the 1870s. Significantly, by then it was controlled by European traders and Herero missionaries alone.

#### 8.1.2 Scale of Trade

Trade with Cape or other European agents was never small-scale. When the traders aligned themselves with the missionaries to usurp Jonker Afrikaner's power position, large profits were at stake because of both the physical extent and the quantities involved in this trade. In the Cape Monthly Magazine, an anonymous writer noted in the 1850s: "Indeed, it is a common saying among the boers that there is a hole in Great Namaqualand through which the oxen come out of the ground, otherwise the country could not produce or provide sustenance for the immense herds which have been brought up for so many years to the colony."<sup>12</sup> Missionary Knudsen noted in 1850 that traders had passed through Bethany who had exchanged at Windhoek, Rehoboth and Bethany more than 3 000 head of cattle.<sup>13</sup> Andersson noted in 1845 that "The cattle trade with

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12. Ku'eep: 'Sketches and recollections of Great Namaqualand', Cape Monthly Magazine 1, 1857.

13. Quellen 3a, 16 March 1850.

Great Namaqualand, alone, has latterly yielded eight to ten thousand head of horned cattle, and a host of sheep and goats annually."<sup>14</sup>

Individual traders apparently left Namaland with droves usually numbering between 200 and 1 500 head of cattle and large numbers of sheep and goats. Thus, Galton noted that "a steady export of Damara oxen goes on southwards to our (Cape, B.L.) Colony in droves of 200 - 800 head of cattle."<sup>15</sup> Kreft also recorded a drove of 700, and five further herds of cattle passing through the veld of Bethany. One of these numbered more than 1 000 cattle, the others between 200 - 400.<sup>16</sup> With Andersson, the system became more centralised, as I will show but the figures stayed roughly the same. Thus, in 1860, Andersson registered three of his traders

14. C.J. Andersson: Lake Ngami, 37, emphasis original.

15. F. Galton: The Narrative, 71.

16. Quellen 3b, 16 April 1853 and 10 June 1853. These figures exclude the sheep and goats which were part of the droves. In the BRMG 1854, 18, it was noted that the traders usually returned to the Cape with herds of 450 - 800 oxen. Also, Andersson once sent a herd of 1 400 head of cattle, Quellen 3b, 3 March 1861.

returning to Otjimbingwe from trade trips inland with 600, 250 and 220 bartered oxen respectively.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Hahn noted in 1863 that Andersson himself had gone to the Cape with 2 000 cattle and "at least 3 000 sheep".<sup>18</sup>

The amounts of ammunition brought by the traders were equally enormous. Thus, a normal purchase (which may have occurred several times a year) seems to have been minimally around 600 lbs. of powder per Kaptein. Hahn once met a trader at Otjimbingwe with 500 - 600 lbs. which he was confident "Jonker will all buy".<sup>19</sup> A little later the trader was indeed fetched by five wagons from Jonker. R. Ridgill, missionary at Warmbad, made several applications for gunpowder from the Cape for Chief Bondel and 66 individuals. He requested

17. WA AP 3, 2 Feb. 1860; ibid. 14 March 1860; Ibid. 17 March 1860.

18. Quellen 30, 5 Feb. 1863. Trade with St. Helena does not seem to have been extensive then. The few references I came across do not refer to herds larger than 50 oxen, BRMG 1845, 73; WA AP 3, 15 July 1858. Also, it appears that the prices were not higher than Cape prices, compare Ibid., 14 July 1858 and 17 Nov. 1858.

19. CA HP 9, 14 Feb. 1853.

600 lbs. and also 1 200 lbs. of lead.<sup>20</sup> Krefth once recorded that three traders landed at Angra Pequena with a load of 20 000 lbs. of powder. One of them went straight to Jonker with 3 000 lbs.<sup>21</sup> Andersson wrote that if the Walfish Bay Mining Company (whose manager he was at the time) would send as much powder as he had suggested, a storage house should be built at Walfish Bay "capable of holding ten or fifteen tons".<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Willem Fransman once made a trip to Walfish Bay with no fewer than 300 oxen to purchase ammunition.<sup>23</sup> Considering the fact that at about the same time David Christian and some of his men went to Angra Pequena with 19 oxen, and some sheep and goats, to purchase "coffee, sugar, tea, tobacco, powder and lead and a small barrel of brandy"<sup>24</sup>, 300 oxen must have bought a huge amount of gunpowder.

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20. C.O. (Cape) 4379, R. Ridgill to Civil Commissioner, 24 Sep. 1855.
21. Quellen 3b, 9 Nov. 1860. Also, Trader Morris "Rollie Diep Step" as he was nicknamed by Namaland people, arranged apparently once to have 1 400 lbs. of coarse powder sent to Walvis Bay, WA AP 2, 18 Aug. 1851.
22. WA AP 9, Letter to Searle, 4 March, 1857.
23. BRMG 1852, 309.
24. Quellen 3b, 26 July 1853.

The trade in ivory and ostrich feathers was slowly gaining momentum in the 1860s, reaching the climax only in the 1870s. In the 1860s, the Gobabis people under Amraal returned from a hunting trip with 6 000 lbs. of ivory.<sup>25</sup> Andersson, listing his assets in 1862, had ivory and hides he valued at £4 500.<sup>26</sup> Hunters apparently rarely came back from the hunting veld with less than 2 000 pounds, and sometimes they had up to 8 000 lbs.<sup>27</sup> Trader Chapman noted in 1865 that "saving the last two years, the export of ivory from Walvis Bay had already reached fifteen to twenty thousand lbs. per annum ...".<sup>28</sup> This we must consider as a modest estimate. Calculating the selling price of ivory at the Cape in the early 1860s at around 6 shillings per pound,<sup>29</sup> this amounts to a money value

25. BRMG 1863, 279.

26. WA AP 4, 1862, ca. Jan.

27. Palgrave was reported to have come back with 2 137 lbs., WA AP 5, 24 March, 1864; another trader, Grendon, with 2 600 lbs., Ibid., 21 June 1864. Green once came back with not less than 8 700 lbs., WA AP 3, 2 Dec. 1859. Similarly, Hahn succeeded in sending 1 183 lbs. to the Cape which he had procured in only three months, RMS KPB II Hahn on Otjimbingwe, May 1868.

28. CA GH 19/10. Chapman: 'Memo', 1865.

29. WA AP 3, Green's Journal (n.d.)

of at least £20 000. This was a considerable sum for the handful of merchants who by then were gaining control of this trade. Ostrich feathers came to be almost as profitable, as soon as the northern hunting veld was 'opened' to Europeans (i.e. as the Afrikaners and their allies' hegemony was destroyed). They fetched between £3 - £4 per pound in the Cape in the late 1860s and Missionary Hahn especially seems to have derived a good profit from this trade. He repeatedly sent reports about his exploits to his society, sometimes mentioning batches of up to 73 lbs. that had been sent to the Cape.<sup>30</sup> The scale of profits and prices becomes obvious in Tables a and b.<sup>31</sup>

### 8.1.3 Capitalisation of Trade

The actual conduct of this trade was highly capitalised, especially as far as transport went. Major expenses

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30. For example, he noted: "The batch of ostrich feathers sent before the last one fetched £201 net profit ... My last 13 pounds will hopefully fetch more." BRMG 1866, 290. At another place he remarked that one of the traders employed by the mission brought 73 pounds of feathers back to Otjimbingwe, RMS KPB II Hahn on Otjimbingwe, May 1868.

31. These figures give a very rough but illuminating indication of the profit margins of traders and indicate the kind of expenses in which every kommando group was involved. The compilation of the tables has been exceptionally

Footnote 31 continued:

difficult because the sources do not discriminate between prices in oxen, sheep, sterling or rix-dollar. The rixdollar had been legally fixed at 1s 6d in 1825 and supplanted by sterling, so it existed only as a fictitious unit of accounting. (For rather obscure reasons, this fictitious unit was raised in Namaland to the value of 3s by the Europeans involved. However, as this happened at both ends of the transactions, it does not need to concern us here any further.) As far as the sterling currency was concerned, however, it was also fictitious in Namaland because all trade was conducted by way of barter. Thus, the 'money value of an ox' has been calculated from evidence such as stock-taking missionaries who had to account for their possessions in money terms, or more direct remarks like 'Prof. Wahlberg wanted to give goods in the value of £2 for an ox ...'. Sometimes, the sources will refer to sterling prices and add how many oxen or sheep had to be given in payment of such a price.

The other major difficulty in establishing lists and tables when we deal with barter is obvious in the tables themselves, namely the tremendous variation in prices. There is nothing that can be done about that, because not only did prices differ depending on place and the person of the trader involved, but the goods differed a lot in kind and quality. For example, ox wagons came in different sizes and were always second-hand because the trader would first sell his load and then his ox-wagon. As to guns, it seems that at least by the 1870s if not before, the old firelock guns had been largely supplanted by a series of more sophisticated types of guns, like percussion guns, Westley Richards, Suiderrifles and precious double barreled rifles, Afrikanischer Heimatkalender, 1965/66, 91.

The prices have been calculated from the following sources:

BRMG 1866, 292-293; 1864, 182; 1855, 260;  
 1852, 312; 1864, 182; 1863, 279;  
 WA AP 2, 15 Aug. 1851; 18 Aug. 1851; 5 Oct. 1851;  
 10 Oct. 1851; 11 Nov. 1851; 5 March, 1852;  
 27 Nov. 1852; 6 Feb. 1854;  
 WA AP 3, 15 July 1858; 23 May 1859; 17 Nov. 1859;  
 Green's Journal, under 2 Dec. 1859; WA AP 4, Green  
 to Andersson 24 May 1864; WA AP 5, 21 June 1864,

Continued overleaf

Footnote 31 continued:

WA AP 6, 31 Aug. 1866, WA AP 9, Letter to Searle, 4 March 1857; Quellen 30, 5 Feb. 1863; Ibid., Heimreise 1873 (n.d.); 20, 22 Sep. 1843; 3a, 6 Jan. 1844; 16 May 1850; 3b, 10 June, 1853; 26 July 1853; 5, 18 June 1849; Moritz Hahn 1842, 167; Moritz Scheppmann, 1845, 238; Cook: The Modern, 147; RMS KP March, 1856 and 16, Ibid. May 1868; RMS KPB II and IV, Hahn on Otjimbingwe, May 1868; Mears: Missionaries, 10; F. Galton: The Narrative, 80; WA A.178, notebook, 1869; Y. Irle: Die Herero, Gütersloh 1906, 164-169.

TABLE a : SCALE OF AVERAGE PROFITS\*

Money value of an ox	Namaland	Cape or St. Helena
1840s	£1.10 - £2.11	£15
1850 - 1855	£1.6 - £2	£2 - £3
1855 - 1859	£1.6 - £2	£14 - £16
1860s	£1.6 - £4	£8

\* see footnote 31 for references.

TABLE b : LIST OF PRICES IN OXEN (Namaland)\*

	1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s
1 horse	6 - 8	8 - 12	10 - 16	8 - 30
1 gun	2 - 8	up to 20*	12 - 15	15 - 30
1 wagon	40	50	20 - 40	45 - 60
powder (per 5 lb)		1 - 3	1	1

\* see footnote 31 for references.

were incurred through the purchase of arms and ammunition.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, no Kaptein or raadsman seemed to have been able to sustain this trade without wagons and horses. Wagons were very expensive but nonetheless they were extensively used.

On one occasion Amraal and his people were reported to have left for an elephant hunt with 20 wagons and 110 horses.<sup>33</sup> In the 1840s, wagons cost about 40 oxen or £60; in the 1860s, about 50 oxen.<sup>34</sup> In the 1860s the money value of an ox had risen so that a wagon which then cost between £80 and £90, could be bought for 30 oxen or less. However, lung-sickness had been decimating cattle resources in the 1860s and thus it should not be concluded that the terms of trade had actually changed to the advantage of the people in Namaland.

This was not the sum total of expenditure incurred on wagons. Wagons had to be maintained, and in a country like Namaland large amounts had to be spent on repairs. The Konferenz noted in 1849 that missionaries had recently bought 13 wagons of which seven were already unusable.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, a new wagon wheel could cost the exorbitant price of £26 - £28 at the

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32. See Table b.

33. BRMG 1863, 277-278.

34. See Table b.

35. RMS KP April 1849.

Cape in the mid-1860s.<sup>36</sup>

The use of horses was equally costly. Firstly, it appears that horses were far more expensive than firelock muskets, costing in mid-century between 8 - 12 oxen each (about £20).<sup>37</sup> More importantly, though, the turnover of horses was massive. In Namaland horses were prone to a deadly disease called horse-sickness during the months of November and December. According to Tabler, this was an acute, febrile, infectious disease of equines peculiar to Africa.<sup>38</sup>

There were few places where horses were safe from this disease throughout the year. One was Keetmanshoop where Tseib settled with his followers in the 1850s; another was the Gamsberg near Rehoboth and apparently the Erongo Mountains were also free from this infection. The Gobabis men once lost all their 110 horses (plus 100 oxen) during a hunting expedition. In this case, their profits of almost £900 from ivory were all spent on covering these losses,<sup>39</sup> demonstrating clearly that the high degree of capitalisation was not necessarily to the advantage of the local people, even if wagons, guns and horses certainly increased the productivity of hunting and cattle raiding. The contrary was often true. As I have emphasised,

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37. See footnote 31.

38. E. Tabler: Pioneers of SWA and Ngamiland, Cape Town, 1973, 130.

39. BRMG 1863, 278-279.

the expenses and risks involved threatened the profits. Thus in the case of the Gobabis kommando, the months spent in the hunting veld were made fruitless by the loss of their horses.

## 8.2 THE PROFITABILITY OF CAPE-BASED VENTURES IN NAMALAND, 1840 - 1860

### 8.2.1 Trade in Guns, Horses and Wagons

In the following section I shall briefly consider the value of goods sent out of the country. The profits made by the traders through the unequal exchange involved in barter as well as the exploitation of the copper mines were important facets of the Namaland trade. A glance at these facets will facilitate our understanding of the economic relations between the Kapteins and the traders, which is examined in greater detail elsewhere.

Traders' profits seem to have been immense. Andersson once remarked that by exchanging 5 lbs. of coarse powder for a large ox trader Morris made only about a 2 000 per cent profit, "since I have found by my own experience that the cattle trade with the Cape is not so lucrative as I at first supposed. The expenses are

very great."<sup>40</sup> However, while the profits from ivory and brandy cannot be estimated, as no figures are available, it appears that in general the cattle trade never yielded more than 1 500 per cent gross profit. On the other hand, it is safe to assume that profits were never under 100% - none of my figures suggest that. Thus, Hahn noted in a matter-of-fact way that one of the traders who went out from Otjimbingwe on his trading excursions (supplied by the mission) was paid 42 per cent commission.<sup>41</sup> Andersson once offered a young man, as inducement to work for him, half of each wagon load traded by way of payment.<sup>42</sup>

These figures give a clear indication of the extent of surplus labour appropriation to which Namaland and Damaraland were subjected through trade with the Cape. The country was drained of productive resources for the whole period discussed here, and even beyond, in spite of the fact that the Afrikaners and their associates issued certain controls up till 1865. In contrast, attempts by Europeans to exploit copper deposits along the Swakop River and near the coast were short-lived, as this enterprise proved nowhere near as profitable as trading. However, judging from the terms of contract established with certain

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40. WA AP 2, 15 Aug. 1851.

41. RMS KPB II, May 1868.

42. WA AP 3, 24 March 1854.

Kapteins, the profits could have been enormous under more favourable political circumstances.

### 8.2.2 The Copper Ventures

Various mining companies based at the Cape started prospecting and mining during the mid-1850s. At least five sites were mined then, all by the Walvis Bay Mining Company.<sup>43</sup> These ventures had ceased to operate by the late 1850s. Only at Rapoensberg (in the Bethany territory) was a copper mine opened and mined during the 1860s and early 1870s.<sup>44</sup> Even that enterprise was short-lived, incurring heavy losses.<sup>45</sup> These mining ventures never went beyond small-scale operations.

For example, the missionaries noted in 1854 that a ship had arrived with a company of eight men, three horses, four ox-wagons and six to seven wagon loads of goods to start mining copper.<sup>46</sup>

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43. These were: Ebonie, Matchless and another unidentified mine. WA AP 3, Letters to Searle; then Oub or Aub, CA HP, 23 July 1859. Another mine near Angra Pequena was worked for two years only, Quellen 3b, 10 Sep. 1853, 14 April 1855. Interestingly, this mine was worked on a concession for which David Christian had received nothing "beyond some window frames and doors for his house". CA G H 21/19, question No. 956.

44. J.H. Esterhuyse: SWA, Cape Town, 1968, 10-11.

45. Ibid.

46. BRMG 1855, 199.

A litter later, Andersson, the manager of the Walvis Bay Mining Company, complained about the shortage of skilled labour. He pointed out to his superiors that with only one trained miner and three labourers he had already mined ore to the value of "at least" £700.<sup>47</sup> Under optimal work conditions it was hoped that 300 tons of ore could be shipped annually from Namaland. This did not materialise, however.<sup>48</sup>

Although his efforts had not proved rewarding, Andersson felt impelled to point out that some profits were made, "... that is, the quantity of ore removed from this country is greater than the amount of goods received by Kaptein Jonker from the Cape".<sup>49</sup>

Different mining leases had been obtained from different Kapteins, thus exacerbating existing power struggles between those Kapteins. The terms of these contracts were so vague that they were invariably disadvantageous to the various Kapteins. Jonker was apparently promised goods to the value of £1 per ton of ore extracted, and Andersson assured his company that "Jonker is the best friend you have in this country ..."<sup>50</sup> But what goods! He once received

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47. WA AP. 9, Letter to Searle, 27 May 1857.

48. Ibid., letter to Searle, 28 Sep. 1857.

49. Ibid., letter to Searle, 28 April 1857.

50. Ibid.

an organ which reached Windhoek in a totally dilapidated state and which "produces nothing but half whispering half stifled sounds ...".<sup>51</sup> Kaptein Oasib also received the promise of £1 per ton of copper ore exported "from his country".<sup>52</sup> Another deal was made with Willem Swartbooi of Rehoboth by the same mining company. "The Kaptein was promised a share in the profit (4 percent) and a substantial gift. In return, he granted not only the digging of copper but the pasture, water and fuel necessary for continuous working all over his territory", the missionaries commented.<sup>53</sup>

It is not at all clear how these contracts were administered. There was little guarantee that the Kapteins would receive their dues in terms of these contracts. The terms of the Bethany contract in the 1860s were particularly damaging to the Kaptein. Spence, manager of the Pomona Mining Company, insisted that under this grant by David Christian, the latter was indeed paid £1 royalty for every ton of ore extracted.<sup>54</sup>

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51. Ibid., letter to Searle, 28 Sep. 1857.

52. Quellen 5, 15 Sep. 1855.

53. BRMG 1855, 375.

54. CA G H 21/19, q.no. 976.

In no way did this diminish the value of Spence's very considerable concession. It provided that David Christian's "whole territory was made available to these treasure hunters in the 'small print', while the people were made to believe that it was only a strip of territory along the coast and the abovementioned copper mountain".<sup>55</sup> Besides the only evidence that David Christian ever received any income from such vast concessions is limited to a reference in missionary records to an old general's hat that he was given as a present by the copper mine managers!<sup>56</sup>

These copper enterprises failed for a variety of reasons. The quality of the ore and the extent of the deposits appear to have been the least of them.<sup>57</sup> There were, for example, constraints inherent in the operation of specific companies related to financing and the general development of capitalism at the Cape. These need not concern us here in great detail. We may note, however, that here, as in Little Namaqualand,<sup>58</sup> or a few years later at Kimberley, prospecting and

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55. Quellen 3b, Sep. 1863. See also map 1

56. BRMG 1869, 152.

57. Andersson, the mine manager, actually claimed that the ore held up to 30 per cent copper, WA AP 9, letter to Searle, 4 March 1857.

58. See, for example, Smallberger: Copper Mining in Namaqualand Cape Town, 1975.

initial mining enterprises were all undertaken on a very small scale indeed, buoyed up by the hope of expansion which would follow upon immediate high returns at the pioneering stage.

One major obstacle to the achievement of this aim in Namaland was the cost and difficulty of transport and communications with the Cape base. The transport of copper ore from Aub or Otjimbingwe to Walvis Bay by ox wagon proved to be outrageously high. The missionaries noted that the transporting of one batch of ore, with little more than a quarter ton of ore per wagon<sup>59</sup> from Otjimbingwe to the Bay cost the company £20.<sup>60</sup> Taking into account that the number of ox wagons available were increased from 12 to 15 by Andersson in 1857<sup>61</sup> about four tons per transport could be conveyed. To maintain this flow they would need up to 300 trek oxen (which were more expensive than slaughter oxen).<sup>62</sup> Scarcity of drivers, dryness of territory which made

59. Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa, Vol. 10, 569.

60. BRMG 1856, 131.

61. WA AP 9, letter to Searle, 27 May 1857.

62. Quellen 3a, 6 Jan. 1844.

transport impossible or even more costly (because of a higher turnover of oxen), as well as inadequate or non-existing roads, added to the expenses and difficulties.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, there were no established lines of communication between Namaland and the Cape (or Europe, for that matter). Kleinschmidt once noted that the mine at Aub could not be worked because all connections with the Cape were broken.<sup>64</sup> Similarly Andersson often pleaded to his superiors that general knowledge of the localities were insufficient to facilitate efficient working.<sup>65</sup>

There were technical difficulties, too. Thus, (as was known from the whole of Namaland and Damaraland), there were powerful streams of water close to the surface which often made work at the Matchless and Ebonie mine impossible.<sup>66</sup> Also, the ground at Matchless was apparently so hard that the miners had to use 50 lbs. of blasting powder per week.<sup>67</sup>

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63. WA AP 9, letter to Searle, 4 March 1857. Also, repair works for wagons were costly and thus a blacksmith's shop had to be set up in Otjimbingwe with a double forge to curb some of these costs, Ibid., letter to Searle, 28 April 1857. On roads that were made or had to be repaired, see Ibid., letter to Searle, 27 May 1857.
64. BRMG 1856, 90.
65. WA AP 9 letter to Searle, 4 March, 1857.
66. Ibid., letter to Searle, 4 March, 1857.
67. Ibid., letter to Searle, 27 May 1857.

In addition to this, it appears that, for once, European entrepreneurs could not successfully exploit the political power struggles and divisions among the inhabitants of Namaland. Although this was attempted, as the three similar contracts with the three Kapteins in the area show, it seems that the Walvis Bay Mining Company derived no advantages in this case. The contrary was true. There were frequent quarrels between the miners and Jonker's men at Otjimbingwe and Neu-Barmen especially about cattle.<sup>68</sup> At these settlements, cattle thefts and rather large-scale raids by both Swartbooi and Jonker occurred as well as at other settlements of the copper diggers.<sup>69</sup> Other losses were sustained with large quantities of ore disappearing overnight, and the like.<sup>70</sup> Apparently, the directors of the Walvis Bay Mining Company even applied to the Methodist Church to send a missionary to Jonker Afrikaner, offering to carry all transport costs plus a salary of £50 per year.<sup>71</sup> It seems that the loss of time and cattle in these conflicts was considerable for the copper company. Although he certainly exaggerated grossly in this

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68. BRMG 1859, 104.

69. JBRMG 26, 18; BRMG 1856, 132.

70. WA AP 9, Letter to Searle, 27 May 1857.

71. Mears: Missionaries, 10.

context, it is appropriate to refer briefly to Esterhuyse's judgment that copper mining had to be finally abandoned in 1859 due to "the high expenses and Nama riots".<sup>72</sup>

At the same time that the managers of the copper companies came to take a part in the political struggles of Namaland, they were also (probably unknowingly) involving Kaptein Jonker and his allies in a specific contradiction. This did not help their attempts to work copper profitably at all. On the one hand, Jonker was their "best friend" and had certainly a definite interest in them as they constituted another advantageous link with the Cape. However, the copper working soon showed itself to be potentially dangerous to an important prop of the Afrikaners' hegemonic position, i.e. their ability to hold groups of Herero-speakers in subjection. I demonstrated how forcefully Jonker fought any attempt by Herero chiefs to gain access to the acquisition of guns beyond his control. However, it was precisely through working for the copper companies that such an independent avenue of access to arms and ammunition could be found. For instance, missionaries once noted: "It could well be that the material position of the Damaras will improve through the copper workers. Those who go to them (to work, B.L.)

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72. J.H. Esterhuyse: SWA, 10.

are easily accepted, very much to Jonker's vexation. Some Damaras are employed already in the mines and the Englishmen hope that they will be good miners soon."<sup>73</sup>

The danger was mitigated by the fact that the majority of the Herero-speakers were not cattle owning chiefs, nor were they attached to one.<sup>74</sup> They actually appear to have been a rightless and rather miserable lot.

Hörnemann noted that "there may be many working for the copper diggers, but apart from food they don't earn anything,<sup>75</sup> are treated brutishly and are ... out of the mission's reach ..."<sup>76</sup>

Still, things could always change, especially in the event of success. The mine could expand and the workers be better paid. The threat was undeniably there and probably influenced Jonker's actions. The 'danger' was always kept on a very modest scale. Andersson once noted in his routine reports on Matchless that "my staff of men on the mine at this time

73. Quellen 30, Kleinschmidt, Vollmer and Eggert to Society, 28 Nov. 1855.

74. See my notes on the populations of Neu-Barmen and Otjimbingwe, Chapter 7.

75. Apparently 'native' workers earned more in the Bethany copper mines, see BRMG 1855, 279.

76. BRMG 1856, 310

is four miners and three labourers, one smith and one carpenter, as also 14 Damaras".<sup>77</sup> If operations remained on that scale, Jonker had not much to fear. Still, the desire to contain this threat or at least control the situation more fully was probably an important element in the conflicts with and around the copper diggers.

### 8.3 THE ENTRENCHMENT OF DEPENDENCY ON THE CAPE NEXUS

Thus far, I have largely dealt with quantitative aspects like the scale of trade and the degree of capitalisation involved. In the next paragraphs I shall examine the social relations organising this trade, and their dynamic, over time. This will enable us to assess more clearly the implications of incorporation into the Cape nexus for the groups discussed here.

The figures indicating the enormous profits made by traders over several decades suggest that no Kaptein succeeded in changing the terms of trade to his advantage. Thus a certain degree of 'victimisation' inevitably prevailed. In trying to answer the question why this should have been so, one could refer to the

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77. WA AP 9, 28 Sep. 1857.

close alliance between European traders and the various Kapteins and their raads. Thereby the real victimisation could be delegated to the lower echelons of the various communities. (One wonders, for instance, how much the bywoners at Rehoboth and the Windhoek area ever saw of the goods and presents which Swartbooi and Jonker received from the Walvis Bay Mining Company.) Although this is most certainly a valid consideration, it is not entirely convincing. Why should the Kapteins not have gained even more?

There are two aspects which must be examined in greater detail. Firstly, as was shown in the preceding chapters, the traders and the Kapteins did not meet as individuals, let alone as equals, in some neutral social and political space. Rather, the Kapteins and their raad's power was dependent for reproduction on the trader's supply functions. The trader himself could naturally find other markets for the disposal of his goods. This was even more possible as up to the mid-1860s his abilities to take and exploit the country's riches for himself were severely limited through the control exercised by the Afrikaners and their allies. Besides, as was argued earlier, the social forces represented by traders operated in such a way as to increase this inequality and dependency contrary to all attempts by the Kapteins to control them. This situation will be examined in the following pages.

Secondly, the alliance between the Kapteins and the traders was only as strong as their own position. However, their position was based on a number of specific skills necessary to gain access to means of production outside of the community's production resources. As I demonstrated earlier, such skills were available to many and not restricted to the ruling group. If a man exchanged two oxen for a gun and powder, he had gained a measure of independent access to the principal means of production. The Kaptein's power was at all points limited, due to this structural overlap of production/exchange relationships which made it next to impossible to exert tight control over access to means of production.

In the trade relations with the Cape, both these aspects of social organisation were expressed very clearly. As we will see, trade could not be controlled effectively; neither 'externally' nor 'internally'.

### 8.3.1 The Kapteins' Struggle to Keep in Control of the Trade with the Cape

I shall start by briefly considering the difficulties that the chief had in controlling trade 'internally'.<sup>78</sup>

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78. See my analysis of difficulties of control in the kommando, Chapters 4 and 5.

We hear of Jonker complaining to Galton that "many of his Bergdamara and Namquas have of late broken loose, killing the Bergdamara (i.e. other Hau-khoi, B.L.) and carrying away their cattle. He thought that if he could prevent them from buying gunpowder he would be better able to keep them in order". Galton suggested a system of 'internal licensing': gunpowder and lead by order should only be sold at his place and nowhere else in his territory, and only "under a certain fine". Jonker apparently was "much pleased and asked Galton to write out a few rules, etc., which he would send to Mr. Morris who is now stopping at Rehoboth".<sup>79</sup>

Andersson recorded what became of such attempts a few days later. Morris came to Jonker's place and Jonker requested him to hand in a list of prices of his goods he wanted to trade, but Morris refused and left immediately to trade his goods with Oasib and his followers. Jonker was not able to prevent this.<sup>80</sup>

The traders could not be forced to sell their goods at fixed places to strictly selected people only.

Oasib himself once thought of using the missionary's power over his congregation to control the distribution

79. WA AP 2, 16 Aug. 1851.

80. Ibid., 19 Aug. 1851. Also, Kleinschmidt once commented on a conflict about prices between Willem Swartbooi and an itinerant trader, noting that the latter intended to leave for Amraal's place in the hope of a better deal, BRMG 1859, 22.

of guns. Thus, Tindall reported in 1847 that Oasib was worried by "deserters and unruly 'subordinate chiefs'". He added that Oasib "requested me to use my influence to prevent the parties concerned getting horses, guns and ammunition".<sup>81</sup>

In another case, Kapteins Oasib and Amraal planned to control trade movements in their area differently. Vollmer reported that they wrote letters to all Kapteins and asked for two things: Firstly, that licences be issued to anybody who might want to trade, and secondly, that no trade be conducted with members of the Gai-//khaun and Gobabis people who came without such a pass.<sup>82</sup> Here, as in other attempts at controlling the flow of trade, the same set of factors denied success to the Kapteins.

Firstly, 'countrywide' cooperation was impossible to achieve as there was no basis for alliances on this scale. Willem Swartbooi, for one, explicitly refused to cooperate. Nor is there concrete evidence that these attempts at control met with any noticeable response in other communities.<sup>83</sup> This was probably

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81. J. Tindall: The Journal, 111.

82. Quellen 5, 14 Oct. 1854.

83. Ibid., 11 November 1854.

a benevolent missionary project doomed to failure from the outset. Certainly there was never an administrative framework, reaching beyond the realms of individual Kapteins, that would have been essential to success. On the contrary, group membership was undefined and became increasingly blurred as kinship structures lost their cohesion. However, it is significant that both Oasib and Amraal responded to such suggestions or ideas. This indicates that the problems of control were considerable indeed, and that they knew of no better solution. Who traded when, and with whom, at what place, was certainly not entirely arbitrary. Yet the various Kapteins and their raads were obviously not in a position to exercise the kind of controls which they felt were desirable and necessary. This was partly related to the nature of the kommando group as I analysed it in Chapter 4. Moreover, it was specifically the emerging opportunities for every Kaptein to compete for the same commodities in the same way which must account for these difficulties.

Similar dynamics became obvious when the struggles to control the trade 'externally' are examined. Throughout the decades under discussion, the Kapteins applied four main means to break the monopoly over the supply of necessary commodities held by traders, be they itinerant or, as later, located at fixed distribution centres.

Most prominent here were efforts to exploit competition among the individual, unorganised traders. This was done by establishing and maintaining as many trade links as possible. Thus, from the beginning of the century onward, we learn that the various groups in Namaland traded at Angra Pequena; at other smaller, natural harbours along the coast, at Walvis Bay, at Warmbad, across the Orange River with "unprincipled" Boer farmers, with Trader Fryer at Konkins Bay or with a resident missionary himself.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, it is striking that even in mid-century and later, there is no evidence of total reliance on any one trader or one supply route.

The second prominent means of maintaining some control, related to the first, was to travel to the Cape, or at least to Little Namaqualand.<sup>85</sup> This practice was not only prevalent before the 1840s but continued when

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84. LMS Journals, Schmelen 1815, 17-18; Ibid., 1821 - 1822, Sept. 1821; Ibid., 1819, 6.

B. Shaw: Memorials, 136.

J. Ebner: Reise, 133; G. Thompson: Travels, 291.

Moritz Kleinschmidt, 1842, 246.

E. Cook: The Modern, 154; J. Tindall: The Journal, 31.

85. E. Cook, op.cit., 104, 112; TLMS III, 432.

itinerant traders arrived regularly and even settled at some places. Independent trips to the Cape, to Walvis Bay, across the Orange River and to Angra Pequena continued to be important for the various Kapteins.<sup>86</sup> What does emerge is that the cost and effort involved in making regular trips to the Cape or to other outlets, creating a feasible alternative to dependence on itinerant traders, became too high in the long run and could simply not be met.

There were other ways in which Kapteins hoped to manage relations with the Cape to their advantage. One was retaining specialists who could inform them about prices, as well as about the supply and demand situations at the Cape; another consisted on levying high fees for the use of roads, water and pasture.

Specialists and informers played an important role. Green explained in the late 1850s that "the natives" generally knew the value of ivory "only too well" and would

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86. There are a great many references to Kapteins and others travelling to different trading outlets. See, for example, BRMG 1849, 195; 1855, 54, 208; 1852, 309; 1854, 22; 1856, 7; 1863, 211-212; Quellen 3a, 14 Aug. 1849; Quellen 3b, 26 July 1853; 6 June, 1854, 11 Aug. 1854, 2 May 1855, WA AP 2, 21 Oct. 1851.

not take beads and "other trash" but only guns.<sup>87</sup>

Missionaries were known to complain about the riff-raff from Griqualand who knew about prices and would "incite the people against the traders".<sup>88</sup>

In a similar vein, Andersson was impressed by the extremely knowledgeable and well-educated Malay man from the Cape who was in Jonker's service as an interpreter.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, Jonker seized the first opportunity he had to ask a knowledgeable European who was sympathetic to him (as none of the missionaries were), namely Sir Francis Galton, "if there was no way of getting things from the Cape at a lower rate than what the traders who come into the country ask. He said the prices they demand are so enormously high that it is not in their power to buy things that they may be in the greatest want of .. He said Mr. Morris only offers five pounds of coarse powder for a very large ox ..." <sup>90</sup> Evidently the missionaries themselves were part and parcel of the Kapteins' struggle against monopolies of trade and information held by the traders from the Cape.<sup>91</sup>

87. WA AP 3, Green's Journal (n.d.)

88. BRMG 1859, 25.

89. WA AP 2, 15 Aug. 1851.

90. Ibid., Galton, interestingly, advised him to become a trader in his own right.

91. At this stage, mention must be made of trading parties reaching Namaland from the east, from Bechuanaland and Griqualand. Trade links between the two areas appear to have been fairly well-establish even if it is not quite obvious how regular they were.

Lastly, traders sometimes had to pay fees and duties. However, it is not clear how widespread such practices were before the 1870s.<sup>92</sup> Possibly such assertion of chiefly power vis-a-vis traders was only available to Jonker. Jonker was known to have asked for fees if people wanted to use his roads through the Auas mountains and to Walvis Bay.<sup>93</sup> He attempted to control trade more effectively by asking traders who were on their way to Lake Ngami to pass through his place which, by then, was known as Okahandja, and pay a thoroughfare 'tax' of 50 lbs. of powder per wagon. Kleinschmidt noted that "shortly before that he had done the same with five other wagons."<sup>94</sup>

Taken together, these attempts by the Kapteins and their raads to exercise control over trade and the traders proved ineffectual. The attempts were invariably on a puny scale and never went beyond an individual group. Thus, the exploitation of competition among the traders could always be matched by the traders' exploitation of competition among the various groups in Namaland. Furthermore, these attempts

92. CA G. 50-77. Palgrave: Report Ann. III, T. Hahn to magistrate, 21 Oct. 1872; CA G. H 18/12, A. Andersson to Governor 21 March 1872.

93. See Baines: Explorations in South West Africa, An Account of A Journey in the Years 1861 and 1862, London, 1864, 63

94. BRMG 1862, 48.

were so inadequate that they failed to prevent matters from deteriorating for the Namaland kommando.

### 8.3.2 The Gradual Deterioration of the Terms of Trade for Namaland Kapteins, 1845 - 1863

As indicated in Chapters 4 and 5, the kommando groups were inherently dependent on supplies from the Cape which made Namaland a captive market for a few itinerant traders. This fact, combined with the importance of access to commodities in the achievement of positions of political leadership (and the difficulty in maintaining tight control of such access), placed the Kapteins into an extremely vulnerable position vis-a-vis the Cape traders. The traders in their turn were quick to recognise and exploit these weaknesses, especially through the extending of credit to people increasingly deprived on independent resources.

The credit system must be seen here as elsewhere<sup>95</sup> as one of the most powerful ways in which subordination was entrenched and reproduced. By extending much needed credit, the traders were able to manoeuvre themselves into a position of power which they had not previously

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95. For example, in the compound system at mines in southern Africa, see C. Van Onselen: Chibaro, London, 1976, 161, ff.

enjoyed. This clearly exposes traders as agents of social forces which had become 'locked into' these communities, thereby sustaining a process of ever-increasing dependence on specific goods. This form of commoditisation was indeed "the acid in which the structures of non-capitalist society are dissolved".<sup>96</sup> The image of 'locking-in' is powerful and adequate because no newly emerging forces within and around these groups could possibly be released to topple the old order and thus do away with factors like the credit system completely. Social energies potentially released through higher productivity were absorbed by having to meet the pressures of indebtedness. It also becomes obvious at this point that certain political and economic courses of action had to be taken to counter debts. Control slipped out of the hands of Kapteins and their raad and passed into those of the traders and missionaries who acted as agents of capitalist penetration. No investment of industrial capital nor formal political domination was needed to achieve this.

The credit system evolved at a fairly early stage in Namaland. Jonker and his raadsmen were known to have already incurred heavy debts with Trader Morris in the early 1840s.<sup>97</sup> In fact, it was suggested by

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96. Kay: Development, 94.

97. Hahn noted that Jonker and his raadsmen owed up to 800 oxen each to Morris, CA HP, 16 March, 1846.

contemporaries that his series of 'raids' on the Mbanderu in 1846 was a direct response to pressure from Morris.<sup>98</sup> Galton noted that at Jonker's place a lively trade was conducted. Cattle, and goods manufactured at Windhoek were exchanged for goods from the Cape. He commented that this "did not last long; the traders sold their goods on credit; Jonker and the others became deeply in debt, and as the only way of paying it off involved themselves once again in the endless Damara quarrels". He concluded that "of late years the news of a trader's wagon being on the road has been the sign for a general raid upon the Damaras".<sup>99</sup> In 1856, the missionaries recorded that people from Berseba proposed to earn extra income by transporting loads of copper to Little Namaqualand in order to pay off their debts.<sup>100</sup>

Similarly, the men of Amraal's group were eagerly awaited by a trader (who had even arrived at Gobabis two weeks before them) after coming back from a six months long hunting excursion. He wanted to "sell

98. Ibid.

99. F. Galton: The Narrative, 70-71.

100. BRMG 1856, 109. The missionaries also noted that the necessity for barter and exchange with the Cape traders increased as credit was given and debts were incurred, BRMG 1854, 19.

his powder and cash in his debts".<sup>101</sup> Was it not primarily this debt which made the men leave in the first instance? Kreft at Bethany noted that the credit system was deeply entrenched: "I know people who have bought new wagons without possessing a single ox for payment".<sup>102</sup> We must not be in any doubt about the traders themselves; they knew very well what they were doing. At one stage, traders at Bethany offered brandy to everybody<sup>103</sup> so as to create a dependency which was not there before. This initiated a conflict among the people at Bethany which raged for decades<sup>104</sup> and has even been considered sufficiently dramatic to inspire part of a novel.<sup>105</sup>

Another important aspect of this particular dynamic of trade was that the divisions between the groups were intensified. The 'equalising' effects of being involved in the same network and being pressurised by the same social forces in very similar ways, were

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101. BRMG 1863, 279.

102. Quellen 3b, 26 May 1861.

103. Ibid., Sep. 1863 (no day).

104. BRMG 1856, 7-12; Quellen 3b, 26 July 1853, Sep. 1863, 29 Dec. 1864, 18 April 1865, when David Christian was even forced by his raad to sign a paper saying that he would never touch brandy again.

105. Uwe Timm: Morenga, München, 1978.

off-set by an ever stiffer competition for commodities. This corresponded exactly to the rising level of dependency on these goods. Admittedly, competition in itself may not uncritically be accepted as a causal factor for social processes. As concerns the Namaland kommando groups, there were at least two further factors which emphasise why divisions between groups of people never ceased to be important during the period covered here.

The first is that the Kapteins were competing for means of production which were to be found outside of the original communities. Therefore, their incorporation was principally possible for every group in question. The establishment of exploitative relations with Herero-speakers or the purchase of guns, were practicable for every Kaptein. Possibly more importantly, those means of production were not reproduced independently by the people who made use of them. As previously noted, in the case of resources such as ivory and feathers, surface waters and pastures, these were not reproduced at all but were in fact declining. This increased their 'scarcity' infinitely. In the case of cattle acquired from Herero-speakers, reproduction rested on structures of political control which could not be maintained without ammunition and horses from the Cape. These commodities were primarily accessible,

not only to every Kaptein, but even to those who wanted to become Kapteins.

This leads us to the second factor. The struggle for control did indeed become increasingly harder for the various Kapteins vis-a-vis the agents of merchant capital. However, before the 1870s, they had not yet lost control. As far as access to the northern hunting veld, Herero cattle and two trade routes to Lake Ngami were concerned, it was still the Afrikaners and their allies who controlled them. Those Namaland Kapteins who sought to wrest that power out of the Afrikaners' hands by concluding alliances with missionaries from the 1850s onwards, hoped to win it for themselves.<sup>106</sup>

In the next chapter I shall demonstrate more clearly how far the Afrikaners' powers of control determined political divisions between the groups and led to a heightened sense of competition among Namaland Kapteins.

In the final chapter I shall examine how, and more especially why, in the 1860s independent access to principal means of production was largely taken away

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106. See Chapter 6.

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from the Afrikaners by a trader-missionary alliance. For the following decades, traders, missionaries and colonial administrators took over central control functions which had formerly been in the hands of the Afrikaners. They were never restored to any Namaland Kaptein again. The Kaptein's subordination was not complete. Yet, when the power of the Afrikaners and their allies was broken, a new historical epoch began and an old one had ended.

THE TRADERS' AND MISSIONARIES' 'WAR  
OF LIBERATION'

The developments of the 1860s have never been adequately assessed in Namibian historiography. The various battles and conflicts are either dealt with highly selectively<sup>1</sup>, or we are informed about a whole series of fights but learn very little about why they took place at that time and in that form.<sup>2</sup> As we shall see, within the context of the preceding argument, these struggles take on a new significance quite different to anything that has ever been previously suggested.

Heinrich Vedder was among the first to interpret the violence in Namaland as a "Herero war of liberation". Ever since then this view has been echoed by other writers. In the more modern historiography this interpretation is sometimes accorded inverted commas, (or preceded by a 'so-called'<sup>4</sup>) but not always<sup>5</sup>.

As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, the so-called 7-year 'war of liberation' of 'the Hereros' was a war of

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1. See for instance Loth: Mission, 56-74; W. Werner: 'Investigation', 84-92; R. Moorsom: 'Proletarianisation', chs. 2 and 3
  2. H. Vedder: Early Times, 325-391; I. Goldblatt: SWA, 31-39
  3. H. Vedder; op.cit., 325-359
  4. H. Loth, op.cit., 56; J. von Moltke: 'Mythos', AH 1973, 33-44
  5. I. Goldblatt: SWA, 31-34

liberation indeed, not however, of 'the Hererors' but of the traders as well as the missionaries. The minor involvement of Herero-speakers had a merely mercenary character; they were tools rather than political actors in their own right. The real 'freedom fighters' were the traders and the missionaries.

What they fought for was freedom from the limitations and controls which the Afrikaner's independent power position imposed on them. Their true allies were not Herero-speakers but all those Kapteins of Namaland who were equally interested in undermining Jonker's power. It is partly due to a historiographic tradition expressed in rigidly 'ethnic' or even 'racial', terms that the notion of a 'Herero' liberation from 'the Namaquas' yoke could have persisted for so long. Another reason for the longevity of this myth lies in the sources themselves. It was the traders and missionaries who created this myth in the first place because it suited their purposes. The disguise of a "Herero war of liberation" was so much more conducive to enlisting support from the Cape and particularly from the German missionary establishment, than any direct involvement in violent strife could have been no matter how just such conflict may have appeared. The records do not speak with the voice of those who lost the first round in the struggle against colonialism.

## 9.1 GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE INTERESTS INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICTS

### 9.1.1 The Position of the Afrikaners Before the Outbreak of Violence

Let us briefly consider the nature of this struggle as far as the two contending parties were concerned. The preceding chapters indicated the position of the Afrikaners and their allies, headed by Jonker until his death in 1861. Their political stature remained remarkably powerful, even if it was already crumbling at the base. The relatively small group of highly trained military men had succeeded in establishing control over vast territories beyond the borders of the Cape Colony. The missionaries, although maintaining a firmly anti-Jonker attitude throughout the years under question, could not fail to marvel at these achievements at time. Kleinschmidt once expressed his wonderment that such a "dwarf-like" figure as Jonker Afrikaner could have reigned over the vast territory stretching from the Orange to the Cunene...<sup>6</sup>

The ambivalent nature of the Afrikaners' rule has also been indicated. They (and many other leading Orlam families) possessed political insight and shrewdness won by a long history of struggle against the servile roles imposed by Dutch or British colonialism (which they never

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6. BRMG 1862, 100

ceased to fear). Yet they themselves imposed similar slavish roles on 'natives' beyond the colonial borders. This ambivalence was encapsulated in their war slogan of the 1860s:

"Africa to the Africans, but Namaqualand and Damaraland to the Hottentots", they said.<sup>7</sup>

Their awareness of the nature of colonialism was clearly expressed in Jonker's assessments of the missionaries. He always suspected them of being agents of this colonialism.<sup>8</sup> Once, he even said to Hahn that he would accept a missionary if he promised never to bring surveyors to the Afrikaner territories. Hahn noted that "of course" he could not make such a promise.<sup>9</sup> There was much at stake for them in these conflicts, because the loss of control over monopoly access to tribute and taxes from Herero-speakers would erode their power base.

#### 9.1.2. The position of Namaland Kapteins

A group of Kapteins had emerged as the Afrikaners' allies in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>10</sup> They participated in tribute extraction from Herero-speakers on Jonker's terms. They included Jan and Jakobus Boois, Amraal Lambert from Gobabis and his men, Oasib and his followers, Hendrik Zes of the Veldskoendraers with his associates, Piet Kopper and some

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7. BRMG 1869, 12-13

8. See chapter 6.

9. CA HP 9, 8 March 1853

10. See chapter 7.

of the 'Topnaars' from the Bay. The other Kapteins, as we saw, had tried to consolidate their position, and to gain access to the Cape nexus, via an ever firmer involvement with individual missionaries. Their concern was to break the Afrikaner's monopoly over access to the cattle herds of Herero-speakers as well as their power to control access to the northern and eastern hunting veld (through Amraal). This was the only veld remaining by the 1860s where ivory and ostrich feathers could be procured. Their position is clearly borne out by the largely ineffectual treaties of the 1850s, and notably the 'Traktat van Haochanas',<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the primary dividing line between the Namaland kommando groups was participating in or being excluded from the appropriation of Herero surplus on Jonker's terms.

### 9.1.3. The Traders' Situation

As far as the large-scale trading interests established by Anderson and Green were concerned, I demonstrated in the last chapter what was at stake for them. The northern hunting veld contained considerable riches of ivory and ostrich feathers and the cattle trade had been an immensely profitable business for almost two decades. All this could be exploited much more easily if control was

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11. See chapter 7, also Appendix B.

wrenched out of the Afrikaner's hands. It is not quite clear whether traders like Andersson were actually thinking that the cattle they obtained almost exclusively via Namaland kommandos (who had 'procured' it from Herero-speakers) would be cheaper to obtain directly from those Herero-speaking groups themselves. Their course of action indicates that they probably did.

9.1.4. The Interests of Missionaries, with Special Reference to Carl Hugo Hahn

When we talk about the missionaries' interest in these conflicts, it will become apparent that there was only one missionary who engaged full-time in trade and politics. That was Carl Hugo Hahn. Nevertheless, he was the acknowledged head of all the missionaries. Therefore he must be considered as representative, even if there were other missionaries in Namaland who were only marginally interested in trade and politics, and only in so far as it effected their missionary activity directly. Thus for a number of years the missionaries, as represented by Hahn, came to be consciously and actively involved in the violent conflicts of the 1860s.

Their interests may not have been quite as blatant as those of the traders, but they were nonetheless perfectly clear. Their desire to see the Afrikaners' power undermined rested

on the insights gained during almost 20 years of completely unsuccessful attempts at missionary work among the Hereros. Jonker Afrikaner had successfully prevented missionaries from establishing alliances with Herero-chiefs or exploring Damaraland. Even where he could not directly deny them reconnaissance trips through Damaraland, his position in relation with Herero-speakers did so indirectly. Hereros had probably come to assume 'naturally' that every European encountered in Damaraland was a friend of Jonker's as nobody went there without his permission, and therefore should be avoided. At all events, they withdrew into the far interior and left the central area depleted of people. The missionaries consistently responded to this situation by expressing their fear that the Herero nation faced extinction or had been largely annihilated.<sup>12</sup> As far as the desire of Herero chiefs to make use of contacts with a missionary went, Kahitjene probably served as a most deterrent example.<sup>13</sup>

Hahn's involvement in the conflicts needs further elaboration. Neu-Barmen was considered "entirely useless" as a stepping stone for the Herero mission by Hahn himself.<sup>14</sup> Otjimbingwe, the other mission station in Damaraland, was a trading centre rather than a mission station. Its inhabitants were called "a collection of riff-raff".<sup>15</sup> By 1853 the missionary Konferenz had already asserted to

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12. RMS KP 1856, paragraph 10.

13. See Chapter 7.

14. CA HP 9, 10 Nov. 1856.

15. BRMG 1853, 252-253.

their superiors that with Jonker's power unbroken, the Herero-mission could not exist<sup>16</sup>. Yet, the Rhenish Mission Society continued to pour money into the undertaking under these conditions for almost 20 years. By doing so, the society pursued its interest in 'opening up' Ovamboland. This, however, required a firm base in Damaraland.

The traveller Galton had provided Hahn with promising reports about an agricultural and politically centralised people further north. After Hahn's abortive trip north with Rath and Hörnemann in 1852 the idea of the Herero-mission was abandoned. As the missionaries noted in 1859, it was revived three years later only in view of a possible thrust into Ovamboland<sup>17</sup>. After his disastrous and entirely unsuccessful journey into Ovamboland in 1857, Hahn was heavily criticised for his "waste of money" by mission representatives in Germany. Shortly afterwards he was expelled from the Rhenish Mission Society for "confessionary reasons".<sup>18</sup>

He only returned after years of lobbying in Germany for the consolidation of the missionary's independent position through trade. Thus he intended giving it concrete foundations that would protect it against threats from the Afrikaners. He

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16. RMS KP 1853, paragraph 13

17. BRMG 1859, 102

18. See H.H. Diehl: 'Hahn', 107

had successfully convinced his society that missionary work in Damaraland would be fruitful if the missionary provided not only the teachings of the Gospel but also a store with desired commodities such as guns and ammunition. He hoped to give Herero-speakers independence from their chiefs (who were often allied to Jonker) through offering jobs at the mission station as craftsmen, etc.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly it is at this point, and especially in the case of Carl Hugo Hahn, that we must see the missionaries not only in their roles as teachers, community workers and even as speaking out for the oppressed. Rather such motives and interests exposed the missionaries' links with the approaching imperial age. They give an indication of missionaries' roles as pioneers of colonial conquest, even if other functions they fulfilled did not point in these directions (such as doctors, community workers, etc.)<sup>20</sup>

Although Hahn provided much of the driving force behind missionary involvement, other missionaries were equally involved, even if not primarily for the same reasons, but often by default. I previously indicated that the missionary had assumed a considerable degree of political

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19. This was expressed in his idea about a 'mission colony', see Quellen 30, 5 Febr. 1862, See also T. Sundermeier: 'Die Kolonisationsidee C.H. Hahns', AH, 1963.

20. See chapter 6

power within these groups. Amongst other things, he assisted the Kapteins to achieve and maintain access to the nexus of commodity exchange with the Cape in various ways. Thus, he constituted an alternative to aligning with Jonker on Jonker's terms. Now we can perceive even more clearly the emergence of a second dividing line between the groups which largely coincided with the first. This was the direct involvement with a missionary. The missionary came to be the symbol for the complex set of social forces emanating from Europe and the Cape which threatened the Afrikaners' hegemony'. In the 1860s, to acquire a missionary meant automatically to decide against Jonker and his allies, and for the traders and other Europeans. Therefore, the struggle often appears to be one between those who were committed to a missionary as against those who were not. The fundamental issue, however, continued to be the Afrikaners' powers to control the northern hunting veld and to extract surplus from Herero-speaking chiefs.

#### 9.1.5 The Participation of Herero-Speaking Chiefs

As far as Jonker's former allies, the Herero-speaking chiefs were concerned, we cannot explore here in any detail what social forces and pressures compelled them to co-operate with the traders and missionaries.

Maherero and others probably seized this opportunity

to shake off the subordination which their alliance with the Afrikaners had always implied. However, it seems that they had no apparent desire to destroy the Afrikaners. As I shall demonstrate, their immediate interests aspired no further than altering the terms of the alliance in their favour.

## 9.2 THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

### 9.2.1 The Depletion of Natural Resources in Central Namibia

Finally, it must be stressed that the 1860s were not just characterised by a series of battles as political history would have it. However, this superficial view cannot be avoided, because although the downfall of the Afrikaners was a long-term social and economic process, as the preceding chapters have indicated, it was the military events of the 1860s that revealed dramatically the true nature of this process. Its basic facets must be briefly recalled at this stage to permit accurate assessment of the timing of the events.

One of the more important aspects of the kommando groups in Namaland was that the reproduction of major productive assets

was not guaranteed but was actually increasingly threatened. I concluded that the groups came to be involved in a process of impoverishment whereby skills became lost and social structures disintegrated. Old cultural practices became so subsidiary next to the military priorities of the kommando that spiritual reproduction had to be taken care of by European missionaries. For many communities the missionaries became a vital cornerstone in times of political uncertainty. Thus social processes lost their 'self-generating' qualities, and dependence on certain imported commodities increased steadily. In some instances, the lack (or loss) of skills geared towards the independent reproduction of the groups could be compensated (for instance, by more imports). The depletion of natural resources of Namaland and the southern parts of Damaraland appears to have been more serious. Surface waters were used up, pastures became exhausted, and game reserves <sup>?</sup> vanished.<sup>21</sup> Large numbers of Herero-speakers with their cattle herds retreated far into the interior, leaving a barren belt between the Kuiseb and Swakop Rivers, and even north of the Swakop. Already, in the 1850s, Jonker Afrikaner had begun to concentrate his efforts on acquiring cattle from Ovamboland as the large resources of Herero-speakers appeared to have

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21. See Chapter 4.

sadly diminished.<sup>22</sup>

### 9.2.2 The Deteriorating Health Situation and the Outbreak of Smallpox

By the late 1850s, the social, political and economic resources of the communities in Namaland were so depleted that two major epidemics (which broke out south of the Orange River) could not be contained and had devastating results. The one, lungsickness, affected cattle and disrupted cattle trade with the Cape for almost 10 years. The other was smallpox. The crippling effect of these epidemics must <sup>not</sup> simply be considered as a consequence of a natural disaster, but rather as an expression of the people's lack of outer and inner resources. Importantly, the spread of epidemics is not simply a function of the virus involved. Rather, its destructive power is determined by the amount of resistance in the attacked organism, by the individual

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22. This is not to argue that they did diminish. All we know is that for a period of some decades people and cattle in Damaraland retreated far into the interior, see above, footnote 16.

and social strength available to fight the virus. An organism, unlike a tree destroyed by a fire, has its own innate strength to defend itself against disease. If smallpox and lungsickness were raging throughout southern Africa at the time (as they did) this indicates that people's resistance was low because their strength had been sapped otherwise. Then there was the consideration that they were no longer resourceful enough to take the necessary steps which would stop the rapid spread of lungsickness among their cattle. Significantly, lungsickness and smallpox did not spread to Damaraland.

The general health situation in Namaland had not been good for some decades. The increasingly military focus in all questions of social organisation did not allow for adequate health services. While some 'traditional' healing methods were still practiced as we saw, some Cape diseases were resistant to them, such as syphilis. This disease was rather widespread and particularly prevalent at places like Otjimbingwe.<sup>23</sup> Cases of a kind of fever or influenza were frequent.<sup>24</sup> Amraal

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23. As far as evidence of the spread of veneral diseases is concerned, see BRMG 1853, 247; BRMG 1824, 236; BRMG 1855, 92, 200. Quellen 5, 23 Nov. 1854; CA HP 9, 13 Oct. 1845.

24. See, for instance, Moritz Hahn, 1844, 193. Moritz Kleinschmidt, 1843, 226; CA HP 9, 6 May 1845; BRMG 1857, 85.

and his followers were once hit very badly.<sup>25</sup>

It does not appear that any epidemic ever gripped the whole of Namaland so severely as did the smallpox in the first half of the 1860s. Apparently, a combination of the abovementioned influenza and smallpox did break out. People contracted one or the other or both<sup>26</sup>. By the mid-1850s it was already raging in Little Namaqualand and Warmbad, and the years 1860/61 saw it spread to Bethany and Berseba. Aggravating factors such as extremely heavy rains after drought conditions making the temperature suddenly cool and humid, accelerated the spread of the epidemic.<sup>27</sup> By 1863 missionaries had obtained vaccine from the Cape and went from place to place to vaccinate people "because the smallpox is threatening to penetrate further and further inland".<sup>28</sup> However, they could not arrest the destructive force of the disease. At Gibeon 110 people died and Gobabis had more than 140 deaths, including almost all adult members of the Kaptein's family.<sup>29</sup>

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25. J. Tindall: The Journal, 105.

26. BRMG 1862, 251.

27. BRMG 1862, 292, 338-340; Quellen 3b, Feb. 1860, (no day).

28. Quellen 3b, Sep. 1863 (no day); BRMG 1864, 195.

29. BRMG 1864, 246, 330.

In these years, the epidemic had also reached places further north such as Hoachanas<sup>30</sup>, Rehoboth<sup>31</sup> and Windhoek.<sup>32</sup>

There were other signs that intense stress characterised the period just before the outbreak of open conflict. In Rehoboth, for instance, the year 1862 saw an enormous revival. The men organised extra prayer sessions, long prayers continued at times for the whole day. There was weeping and wailing during the Lord's Supper and Missionary Kleinschmidt was offered to use of some of their precious horses for a trip so that he could hurry back. The Rehobothers took consolation from the fact that they could at least keep his wife.<sup>33</sup> A general meeting of all Rehobothers even agreed for the first time that the best Christians should be judges and counsellors.<sup>34</sup>

### 9.2.3 Andersson's Establishment at Otjimbingwe and the Outbreak of Lungsickness

At about the same time, lungsickness broke out in the veld of Otjimbingwe. The fact that it broke out around

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30. It was mentioned that half the population of the outpost !Anis died, see BRMG 1864, 246.

31. BRMG 1863, 79.

32. BRMG 1864 195.

33. BRMG 1863, 80-81, 104-108.

34. BRMG 1863, 111.

Otjimbingwe had significant political consequences. Therefore, the settlement at Otjimbingwe merits more consideration.

After the copper ventures had finally closed down in the north of Namaland, the former explorer and manager of the <sup>Mining Company</sup> ~~Walvis Bay~~ Charles John Andersson, decided to purchase all the company's assets in Otjimbingwe (buildings and forges). He established a large-scale trading venture there, with Otjimbingwe as a fixed distribution centre. This was in 1860.<sup>35</sup> Although traders had sometimes previously lived for long spells of time at one place, this establishment was the first of its kind. Not being an itinerant trader for Andersson meant that the dependence on what a Kaptein and his raad had to offer for exchange was greatly reduced. In fact, Kapteins could actually be bypassed in the trade arena, because the presence of his own store meant that the trader became self-sufficient. Even if the operation was only on a small scale, in the long run enough cattle could be collected from various people to justify the despatch of a drove to the Cape.

In other words, the opening of a trading network in Otjimbingwe presented the greatest threat ever to the indigenous control of trade, especially as far as

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35. See Goldblatt: SWA, 31.

Herero-speakers were concerned. Understandably, Jonker Afrikaner set himself against this development right from the start and did not want to allow Andersson to settle in Otjimbingwe.<sup>36</sup> However, his need for regular and secure access to commodities from the Cape far outweighed his willingness to take any drastic steps and Otjimbingwe developed into a very busy place. Andersson had several men under his commission who went out on trading trips, mainly to Namaland, collecting cattle from the Kapteins.<sup>37</sup> When a sufficiently large herd had been assembled, they would send it to the Cape.

By March, 1860, however, the effects of spreading lung-sickness were noticed by Andersson as it became more and more difficult to get cattle.<sup>38</sup> The month before he had complained bitterly that he had "doubled the prices but still the natives hesitate to buy" (from him, paying with cattle, B.L.).<sup>39</sup>

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36. Ibid.

37. See, for instance, WA AP 3 Feb./March 1860.

38. Ibid., 31 March 1860.

39. Ibid., 10 Feb. 1860.

9.2.4 The Building Up of Tensions Between Andersson and Some Namaland Kapteins

Another major difficulty now emerged for Andersson. The Kapteins of Namaland, and notably Jonker, did not want to allow the contaminated cattle to pass through their areas on their way to the Cape. Kleinschmidt noted in 1860 that only Trader Runcie was allowed to proceed from Rehoboth because he could prove that his cattle were not infected by lungsickness.<sup>40</sup>

Jonker had been highly reluctant to let Andersson pass, but finally decided with the agreement of his raad to give permission.<sup>41</sup> In the next year, 1861, Andersson was not so fortunate. Jonker and his kommando were absent in Ovamboland. In January Andersson simply started for the Cape with a drove of 1 400. En route from Otjimbingwe to Rehoboth, Andersson's contaminated cattle herd was attacked and raided by Jonker's closest ally, Hendrik Nanib (or Hendrik Zes) who seized 500 head.<sup>42</sup> The Rehobothers then permitted Nanib to pass through their veld unmolested with the raided cattle. They were subsequently

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40. BRMG 1861, 74.

41. WA AP 3, 18 April 1860, 10 April 1860.

42. BRMG 1861, 312. Another source, however, claims than 5 000 head of cattle had been taken, see Quellen 3b, 3 March 1861.

so hard pressed by Andersson's traders who threatened an attack that Willem Swartbooi sent a letter to Nanib and requested the return of the cattle. The latter actually complied<sup>43</sup> which was something quite without precedent, indicating that the Afrikaners and their allies were on the defensive and reluctant to assert themselves aggressively. This event surely gave impetus towards the progressive building up of hostilities.<sup>44</sup>

When Andersson's drove (now restored to its original strength) arrived in Bethany in June, on the assurance that every head of cattle was vaccinated, the cattle were clearly infected. Andersson was forced to return immediately. Furthermore, because of false assurances regarding the state of the cattle, he had to pay a penalty of 100 sheep to David Christian.<sup>45</sup>

#### 9.2.5 Andersson's First Moves to Establish His Own Fighting Force

Burdened with these complications in acquiring and transporting cattle, Andersson reacted in two ways. He

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43. BRMG 1861, 325; BRMG 1862, 100.

44. A little later Hendrik Zes was called the "deadly arch-enemy of the Rehobothers", see BRMG 1864, 33.

45. Quellen 3b, 23 June 1861.

began to expand support structures for his trade, by training and arming small groups of Otjimbingwe residents. These were mostly Cape men of mixed descent, who came to be known as the 'Otjimbingwe volunteers'.<sup>46</sup> In addition, it seems that attention was slowly diverting away from cattle trade. With lungsickness spreading, the traders were bound to become more interested in other assets of the country: ivory and ostrich feathers. Compared with the thousands of cattle formerly sent to the Cape, this trade could be sustained with relatively few oxen.

Jonker, when he came back from Ovamboland in July, watched these developments with great indignation. He stationed one of his headmen with some followers at Otjimbingwe to keep an eye on the Europeans there. He also began to tax traders' wagons en route to the east very heavily.<sup>47</sup> However, by that stage he was already a dying man. On August 18, 1861 he breathed his last, victim of an inflammation contracted in Ovamboland.<sup>48</sup>

This was good news for Andersson who had no difficulty in identifying his enemies. The restrictions imposed on his venture through the Afrikaners' control of his

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46. BRMG 1862

47. BRMG 1862, 48.

48. BRMG 1862, 43.

moves had even led to military engagements as we saw earlier. He was well aware of the direction of developments. In January 1862, five months after Jonker's death, he noted: "The Hottentots are fearfully jealous of me; they got a notion that I am the only person who benefits by my presence. I am not afraid of any Hottentot ... but I may have to leave the country unless I resort to bloodshed".<sup>49</sup> He continued to make generous presents to the new Kaptein of the Afrikaners, Christian.<sup>50</sup> Yet, when news of severe internal quarrels among the Afrikaners following Jonker's death became known to the Europeans,<sup>51</sup> Andersson happily noted in his diary that there was a "war pending between several of Jonker's parties. Hurrah! I only hope it is true and that they will earnestly set about cutting one another's throats."<sup>52</sup>

It appears that he did not hesitate to help along such developments when they initially failed to produce the desired results. When another consignment of his cattle waiting at the Bay under Latham was plundered in 1862, he sent "a very reputable party" of armed

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49. WA AP 4, 26 Jan. 1862.

50. He claimed the goods had a value of £30 altogether, *Ibid.*

51. See, for instance, BRMG 1862, 45.

52. WA AP 4, 15 May 1862.

Herero-speakers to Latham's assistance. Additionally, he "raised another ... auxiliary corps for Latham headed by Phillipus" (one of the Otjimbingwe Hereros) soon afterwards.<sup>53</sup> He commented: "I don't exactly know whether we have done right in thus arming the Damaras, of course they go in hopes of plunder. The Hottentots if I dare say will feel very sore about this ..." <sup>54</sup> But "the Hottentots" were on the defensive and did not respond to the provocation.

In this year, Andersson had to threaten force whenever his way was barred to get his cattle through to the Cape.<sup>55</sup> He had been assured of help by Abraham Swartbooi, the son of old Willem who expressed his firm alliance with the traders and missionaries in this way. David Christian of Bethany, under pressure from Jan Boois, Paul Goliath and missionary Kleinschmidt, actually allowed Andersson's cattle to pass through the veld of Bethany, whether they were sick or not.<sup>56</sup>

Apparently, Andersson persevered with his overtly provocative course of action. Having returned to

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53. Ibid., 3 and 4 April 1862.

54. Ibid., 3 April 1862.

55. Quellen 3b, 30 August 1862.

56. WA AP 4, 19 May 1862, 28 May 1862.

Namaland in 1863, he was harassed and insulted by one of Christian's men. Andersson promptly shot the man.<sup>57</sup> While reporting the incident to Kaptein Christian, Andersson sent for all Europeans and Hereros at Otjimbingwe who were willing to help him; guns and ammunition were issued to them.

#### 9.2.6 The Outbreak of Open Conflicts and the Battle at Otjimbingwe, 15 June, 1863

Meanwhile, the Hereros at Otjimbingwe were drilled in target shooting.<sup>58</sup> Trader Chapman related: "This gave great offence to the Afrikanery. It was now observable that there was a move amongst the Damara people, and it appears that intrigues commenced between the Damaras at Otjimbingwe, and those in the service of the Afrikaners - messengers were going backward and forward, and the next movement was that some of these Damaras were off with their masters' flocks and herds, and drove them into Otjimbingwe. The owners of the cattle came after them, on horseback, but the Damaras ... protected by one Phillipus (one of Andersson's 'generals', see above) a missionary Damara, showed a bold front, and the Afrikaners, not having expected

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57. C.J. Andersson: Notes on Travel in South Africa, London, 1875, 15-20.

58. See Chapter 7 for a note on the Herero-speaking inhabitants of Otjimbingwe.

resistance in such form, returned".

It was only then that Kamaharero and his associates also decided to drive the Afrikaners' cattle which they were herding into Otjimbingwe.<sup>59</sup>

Kamaharero apparently made it clear to Andersson that they did not intend to steal the cattle, but neither did they wish to work as herdsmen any longer.<sup>60</sup> This meant that they wanted to breach part of the agreement with the Afrikaners. Andersson now wrote to Christian saying that if Christian asked him, Andersson, he should get all his cattle back immediately.<sup>61</sup> Christian ignored this and set up a kommando consisting of Oasib, Piet Kopper and their men, some Topnaars, men from Gobabis, Hau-khoi servants and the "remaining cattle Damaras", altogether 400 to 500 men. They attacked Otjimbingwe on June 15, 1863.

This was the beginning of the traders' 'war of liberation'. Clearly Andersson had been urging the course of events in this direction. In this battle, the Afrikaners, and their allies, were terribly routed. Almost all

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59. CA GH 19/10, Chapman 'memo'.

60. BRMG 1863, 342-343.

61. CA GH 19/10, Chapman, 'memo'.

their riding oxen and powder wagons were captured.

They appear to have lost more than a third of their men, including Piet Kopper and Christian Afrikaner.<sup>62</sup>

On the other side, 60 Herero-speakers were killed.<sup>63</sup>

Andersson had been supported by all the Europeans at Otjimbingwe,<sup>64</sup> their servants, his "auxiliary corps" which had been practising target shooting and probably the group of "Otjimbingwe Volunteers". Kamaharero was not involved in this, nor were any of his men.

The missionaries noted that Andersson had provided the fighters with advice as well as with arms and ammunition.<sup>65</sup>

This advice giving must not be underestimated at all because it was just as important as the ammunition.

It not only involved target shooting but apparently was also of a strategic and tactical nature. This was most important because as we will see later, Herero-speakers even in large numbers, were at that stage hopelessly inferior fighters in comparison with the

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62. Ibid., also BRMG 1863, 346-347.

63. BRMG 1863, 347.

64. As Kleinschmidt noted, the Europeans were not to be underestimated as a fighting force. "They are 40 Whites and with their Cape wagon drivers and those Damaras who are likely to follow them, they can afford to be daring". BRMG 1862, 103.

65. BRMG 1863, 348-349.

Namaland kommandos, practised as the latter were in methods of bush warfare. Importantly, the core of fighting men in so far as they were Herero-speaking, in this and the subsequent battle were those very loose and largely unconnected groups who had been collecting around Otjimbingwe and Neu-Barmen for quite a few years already. They were the victims of Kamaharero and the Afrikaners' heavy taxation policies. Some of them had been working at the mines, others for resident Europeans, while others tried to live by agriculture under missionary guidance. Until the third violent encounter in June 1864, no organised military actions involving established Herero-speaking chiefs were made.

Even though the conflicts had already progressed so far, the Afrikaners showed no desire to pursue this matter further, nor did the Herero-speaking Otjimbingwe residents.<sup>66</sup> This clearly indicates that the Afrikaners were prepared to have that part of the alliance cancelled and concede additional power to Kamaharero, so that he would be an ally on the very same terms as other Namaland Kapteins. These, as we saw, did not herd the Afrikaners' <sup>cattle</sup> or pay taxes. Jan, the successor of Christian, was even reported to be

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66. CA G H 19/10, Chapman 'memo'.

considering formal peace moves but was hindered by internal splits and power struggles.<sup>67</sup> Not so the traders.

### 9.3 THE YEAR 1864

#### 9.3.1 Green's Raid on the Afrikaners and Hendrik Zes' Counter-Raid

Trader Green, this time apparently with more active support from Kamaharero,<sup>68</sup> led a kommando of Hereros in March 1864 against Windhoek with the purpose of raiding the Afrikaners. They gained considerable booty. Kleinschmidt estimated that 3 000 head of cattle were captured, as well as 22 wagons which were destroyed by fire.<sup>69</sup> We must not misinterpret this incident by regarding the Herero-speakers as motivated solely by thoughts of booty, using Green and his resources to achieve their aims. The power and driving force was with the traders. Thus, it was noted by the missionaries that the group of Hereros originally counted 1 500 men. However, only 1 200 - 1 300 were led against Windhoek because more than 200 left after

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67. BRMG 1863, 350.

68. CA G H 19/10, Chapman 'memo'.

69. BRMG 1865; see also Goldblatt: SWA, 32.

Green had their leader executed for "insubordination".<sup>70</sup>

The Afrikaners escaped in time. Soon afterwards a drove of 1 600 head of cattle was sent to the Cape, probably part of the booty made by Green. He himself went to Walvis Bay to board a ship for the Cape. However, this drove was intercepted by some Afrikaners and Hendrik Zes, the warrior king of the Afrikaner allies. After a fight in which several of Green's men lost their lives, the Afrikaners seized all the cattle.<sup>71</sup>

### 9.3.2 Hahn's Return from Germany and the Establishment of an Alliance With Kamaharero

This showed that the action taken against the Afrikaners had so far proved insufficient to guarantee a safe overland trip for Andersson's cattle. A much more aggressive course of action was obviously needed. When the news was broken to him in April 1864 that his cattle were lost, Andersson decided not to board the ship but to return to Otjimbingwe. At this stage, a new factor (in the short term) came into play.

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70. BRMG 1864, 245.

71. BRMG 1864, 245-246.

Hahn was returning from Germany with his society's consent to establish missionaries and missionary assistants as traders and craftsmen in Otjimbingwe in order to support the Herero-mission in concrete, material terms.<sup>72</sup> Hahn was well-acquainted with Kamaharero who had been trying - cautiously, of course, - to get a missionary for himself for about 20 years,<sup>73</sup> in order to establish himself more independently of Jonker.

The question now was whether Green and Andersson should not perhaps try, through Hahn, to involve Kamaharero and his sub-chiefs in their struggle. This was a new and risky suggestion because an alliance with Herero chiefs would mean that the total control that Green and Andersson had so far enjoyed over their private corps would have to be shared. Still at the Bay, Andersson received two letters from Green and Hahn advising him not to enter into such an alliance. Green claimed that Kamaharero was unreliable and "so void of any principle" that Andersson should not attempt

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72. It cannot be established from the available evidence whether Hahn's return was in any way related to the defeat of the Afrikaners at Otjimbingwe in the year before. However, it is likely.

73. On Jonker's relations with Herero-speakers, see Chapter 7.

any association with such people. Still, he noted that the Otjimbingwe Hereros were fully prepared to follow Andersson in battle. He concluded that Kamaharero would have to call his chiefs together which would take time; the people he had called so far "appear rather indifferent about coming in ..." <sup>74</sup>

Hahn, writing in favour of such an alliance, also stressed the risks. He complained to Andersson that "the Hereros" had "no idea of a national feeling, they being the very essence of selfishness". Importantly he added that "had ... I not been continually driving and pushing on, and holding together, they would be scattered all into all directions and none would have th\_ought of doing the last thing for the benefit of the whole community ... Here is not a single Herero worth trusting". "The Hereros can be kept in order only by fear" he added, and consequently advised Andersson that he "ought to have a small army, a few hundred men, quite dependent on you, who would keep them in order and obedience". <sup>75</sup>

Hahn concluded his letter by firmly assuring Andersson of "my and all the missionaries' fullest support" in case Andersson should decide to become commander of the combined forces. <sup>76</sup>

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74. WA AP 5, Green to Andersson, 12 May 1864.

75. Ibid., Hahn to Andersson, 12 May 1864, emphasis original.

76. Ibid.

Eventually the concept of such an alliance was generally accepted, spurred on by heavy pressure from the large-scale mobilisation that the Afrikaners were undertaking at the same time. The contempt for Herero-speakers, as well as fear of them, evident in Hahn's words, was obviously shared by Andersson and Green. After shooting "insubordinate" subjects promptly, Chapman had claimed that both men "openly confess(ed) that before the Damaras could be reduced to order it would be necessary to shoot one half of their number ..."<sup>77</sup>

Andersson tried to minimise the risks he had to face. He had Kamaharero 'elected' as chief of all Herero-speakers by those around at Otjimbingwe. Then he made Kamaharero and some councillors write out and sign a document appointing him "as Regent and Military Commander for the period of his natural life or for as long as he desires to hold office. We promise to be faithful to him unconditionally in all matters concerning his control over the internal and external circumstances of the country. Charles John Andersson is to be responsible only to God and his own conscience."<sup>78</sup>

Even so, the difficulties of mobilisation were considerable. It seems that there was no great interest

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77. CA G.H 19/10, Chapman 'memo'.

78. Quoted in Goldblatt: SWA, 33.

in or enthusiasm for the traders' and missionaries' war. Kamaharero had to write to Swartbooi, his ally, apologising for the delay in setting up the kommando. Green complained that after three weeks of lobbying he had only mustered 150 instead of 400 to 800 people. Some of Green's and Andersson's supporters were drawn from the ranks of former Afrikaner servants. Green wrote to Andersson that Hau-khoi around Otjimbingwe were now to be collected by force as their chief did not seem to be willing or capable of doing so, as he promised. "He is one of the run-aways from the Hottentots (Afrikaners, B.L.) and I guaranteed him protection from the other Damaras ... upon his expressing his willingness to accompany this kommando".<sup>79</sup>

All this was clearly entirely unrelated to a "war of liberation" of Herero-speakers. Andersson and Green had certain long-term motivations like the opening of the northern and eastern hunting veld. Another important goal seems to have been very short-term plunder. Apart from seizing very large numbers of cattle from the Afrikaners and then sending them to the Cape for sale (as noted above), Green once remarked

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79. WA AP 5, Green to Andersson, 3 June 1864. Swartbooi's active participation by sending a kommando was probably due to pressure from missionary Kleinschmidt who was Hahn's closest friend.

casually that he bought a horse from J. Chapman for the enormous price of £40, planning to "pay him in cattle from whatever I may get after the return of the kommando as my share".<sup>80</sup>

### 9.3.3 Military Preparations and the Engagement Between Andersson's Forces and the Afrikaners, 22 June 1864

While Otjimbingwe became a military fort with entrenchments and other earthworks, regular target shooting and strategic classes<sup>81</sup>, the Afrikaners and their friends had been mobilising ever since Green's raid in March of the same year. They sent out messages to other Namaland Kapteins "to come and help them, Andersson and the missionaries wanted to take the country away".<sup>82</sup> The actions of the kommandos came to be focussed strictly on the missionaries and the traders. This in itself is a significant reflection of the nature of Herero involvement.<sup>83</sup> For example, Jan Jonker's son wrote a letter to Governor Wodehouse in 1869 after their struggle had been lost. In it

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80. WA AP 5, Green to Andersson, 24 May 1864.

81. BRMG 1864, 181.

82. BRMG 1864, 178.

83. This was expressed by missionary Brincker in 1863 already, see BRMG 1864, 177. Andersson once quoted Jan Jonker as saying to Hahn: "... you preach war to the Damaras when you have only or should only have come amongst them to preach and teach them peace and good will." WA AP 5, 12 Nov. 1864.

he asked for a missionary. With reference to Hahn's activities in Otjimbingwe, he insisted that a German missionary would be unacceptable, "because it is not possible for a teacher to instruct people while he likes trade better than the bible".<sup>84</sup>

The offensive started by the Afrikaners when they took Andersson's cattle in March 1864, was seriously delayed. This was to prove a great disadvantage because it gave Andersson and Hahn all the time they needed to set up and prepare a very large kommando against the Afrikaners.

One of the immediate obstacles to the success of their mobilisation efforts was the substantial effort that had to be diverted to preventing Herero-speaking and other dependants from deserting to Otjimbingwe.<sup>85</sup> Another difficulty proved to be the reaching of consensus among the allies. By the beginning of 1864, a large force of about 600 men (150 of them on horseback) were collecting around Rehoboth, consisting of Afrikaners, Topnaars, and Oasib's and Hendrik Zes' men. They threatened to attack Rehoboth. However, apparently they could not agree whether they should first attack Rehoboth and then Otjimbingwe, or

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84. CA G H 19/10, Jan Jonker to Governor, 22 April 1869.

85. BRMG 1864, 178.

the other way round. When the decision went in favour of Rehoboth, a considerable number of the kommando from the Gai-//khaun went home for entirely obscure reasons.<sup>86</sup> Thereafter, it took the allies some weeks to reassemble. They did not have enough time to attack Rehoboth before clashing with Andersson's army.

In the meantime, Andersson had managed to muster about 2 500 men. "About 600 of these were furnished with firearms of all sorts of sizes", 1 000 had assegais and spears, and the rest had knobkierries, bows and arrows.<sup>87</sup> After a festive farewell service when Hahn addressed the departing army in front of the new 'national flag',<sup>88</sup> they began to march to Rehoboth to collect another kommando, and then to meet Jan and his friends. On the way, which took more than two weeks, their only provisions were ransacked from Hau-khoi villages. For example, Andersson recorded on June 21 that they "more or less surprised some Bergdamara-werfts but got little for our pains - a few hundred sheep and goats".<sup>89</sup>

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86. BRMG 1864, 292, 332-335.

87. WA AP 5, 8 June 1864 - 22 June 1864.

88. T. Baines, who happened to witness this event, made a drawing of it. A good reproduction is in J. Wallis: Fortune My Foe, London, 1936, 320.

89. WA AP 5, 21 July 1864. Later in the same day they were lucky enough to "get" "50 - 60 nice cattle and about 400 sheep and goats and are now provisioned for a week or so". Ibid.

The forces engaged on 22 June, 1864, and the Afrikaners retreated after a day's fighting. They may not have actually been defeated, but neither did they emerge as victors.<sup>90</sup> Andersson received a major wound in his leg which did not heal and slowly sapped his strength away. He realised his assets in Otjimbingwe and died from a fever only a few years later in Ovamboland, in 1867.

#### 9.3.4 The Destruction of Rehoboth

After this engagement, the Rehobothers knew that they were in a very precarious position indeed. They decided to leave Rehoboth altogether and to move closer to Otjimbingwe. On their way, however, they were surprised by an Afrikaner kommando, had their cattle taken, their wagons burnt, several men wounded and others taken prisoner (who, however, later escaped).<sup>91</sup> Kleinschmidt and his family walked through the bush for four days, to Otjimbingwe, where Kleinschmidt died soon afterwards from exposure. Apparently he had also been inconsolable about the routing of 'his' Rehobothers.<sup>92</sup>

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90. BRMG 1864, 376.

91. WA AP 5, 22 Aug. 1864, also 8 Oct. 1864.

92. BRMG 1864, 137-145. The Rehobothers, however, regrouped at Ameib a few years later, see BRMG 1868, 295.

9.3.5 Andersson's War

By October of the same year, the myth of a "Herero war of liberation" had gained full stature. Andersson now began to talk of "the war of independence of the Damaras".<sup>93</sup> He insisted on this interpretation from then onwards. A little later he recorded a long conversation with Kamaharero who apparently told him "that Abraham Swartbooi (old Willem's son, B.L.) is unfriendly to me and every other white man. Speaks of wanting payment for the people killed in the war which was my war and not theirs!!! How sick I am of this humbug".<sup>94</sup>

The 'independent Damaras' appear to have become rather frightened, even intimidated by their experience of the confrontation in June and the spectacle of the powerful Rehobothers in retreat. Kamaharero and his followers had deserted Otjimbingwe and its surroundings and communications between him and the Europeans seem to have broken down.<sup>95</sup> Thus, when the Rehobothers (who were located temporarily near Otjimbingwe after regrouping) wanted to go on another kommando in November to attack Jan Jonker and his allies, they

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93. WA AP 5, 25 Oct. 1864.

94. WAAP 6, 7 June, 1866. Emphasis in the original.

95. WA AP 5, 21 Jan. 1865.

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failed to convince any of the remaining Otjimbingwe Hereros to join them. By late December the news of a "Hottentot kommando" of about 200 men heading for Neu-Barmen reached Otjimbingwe.<sup>96</sup> By that time all Hereros had abandoned Otjimbingwe. The Europeans became very frightened and Andersson noted that "Mr. Hahn thinks with me that every white man will now try and make the best terms he can with the Hottentots".<sup>97</sup>

#### 9.4 THE FOCUS OF THE WAR SHIFTS AWAY FROM DAMARALAND

There was another reason for this assessment of the situation. The same kommando that had beaten the Rehobothers now attacked Gibeon. The Witboois under Kido had settled with a missionary just the year before, which meant, as I indicated, that they, though old friends of the Afrikaners, had put themselves on the other side of the frontline. Although they had not yet been actively engaged against the Afrikaners, they also had not helped them to fight Andersson's army. It also appears that the Kapteins in the south (all with missionaries) had indirectly taken the field against the Afrikaners by concluding

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96. Ibid., 26 Dec. 1864.

97. Ibid., 30 Dec. 1864.

mutual agreements not to allow any traders from Angra Pequena or the Cape to pass through to the allies.<sup>98</sup>

The attack against Gibeon initiated a series of skirmishes between Gibeon (later supported by kommandos from Berseba while David Christian insisted on his 'neutrality') and the Afrikaners with their associates. This first time, in early December 1864, the Afrikaners' attack seemed by way of a warning. Their violence was focussed entirely on the missionary. The fight took place around his house, not at the werft, and the fire was aimed at him for a whole day. He was only slightly wounded, though.<sup>99</sup> Apparently no cattle posts were raided and no other booty taken, and the kommando retreated after two days.

#### 9.4.1 Intrigues Against Traders

The missionaries and the traders had, however, been needlessly afraid because the Afrikaners had not succeeded in replenishing their provisions of ammunition. They withheld from attacking Otjimbingwe, vulnerable though it was. This was due to Hahn's and others' intrigues which will be considered below.

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98. BRMG 1865, 178.

99. BRMG 1865, 179.

Andersson might have been a very powerful trader, but he certainly did not hold a monopoly. Throughout the years under discussion there were traders who remained loyal to their old clients and continued to provide the Afrikaners with arms and ammunition. One of them, Trader Smith, was threatened with detention by Hereros who were blocking his way to the Afrikaners in 1864. Another one, Iversen, at Arries (near Windhoek) made strong statements indicating that in the event of Smith's detention, he would then place himself at the head of the Namaquas and bring him (Smith, B.L.) 'out' or die in the attempt".<sup>100</sup> Apparently Andersson's methods were finding imitators.

On his return to Otjimbingwe, Iversen brought a letter from Jan Jonker. Andersson commented: "They (the Afrikaners, B.L.) expect old Smith with lots of goods and may only be delaying their attack (on Otjimbingwe, B.L.) until he is extricated. What a sell if the Damaras were to detain Iverson also!".<sup>101</sup> It does not seem as if the Afrikaners ever received the much needed goods. When Iversen and Stewardson (another of the Afrikaners' traders) left Otjimbingwe with one of Smith's wagons, Andersson noted in not really flattering words: "Mr. Hahn told me the other day that

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100. Ibid., 31 October 1864.

101. WA AP 5, 12 Nov. 1864.

it was an understood thing that in the event of Stewardson and Smith proceeded via Barmen (sic) the Damaras were to stop them, whilst if they went by the Mine road the Rehobothers were to cut them off! What damned treachery! Why not stop the poor people at once ... What raskallity!".<sup>102</sup>

#### 9.4.2 The Afrikaners at Gobabis

Instead the Afrikaner kommando directed its steps to Gobabis. The Gobabis people are an interesting case because this was the only group who had always been allied to Jonker, yet had been committed to a missionary in ways very similar to Rehoboth or Bethany. In these times of polarisation it seems that they got the worst of both sides. Amraal and his son had died of smallpox at the end of 1864. Shortly afterwards, the Mbanderu, the eastern section of Herero-speakers, who had been involved in servile relationships with Amraal's men, raided Gobabis and seized whatever they

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102. Ibid., 14 Nov. 1864. Iversen, having been thoroughly indoctrinated by Hahn about the nature of Jan Jonker and his group, apparently left for some other destiny. 18 months later he was employed by Hahn as a tradesman and agent of the Rhenish Mission Society at the Bay. Shortly after he began his new job, he was killed by the Afrikaners, see RMS KP 1866, paragraph 3; BRMG 1868, 243.

could get. They retreated first to Neu-Barmen, then further inland.<sup>103</sup> As the Afrikaners' hold over subordinate Herero-speakers weakened, so did that of the Gobabis people. Shortly after this raid by Mbanderus (in December/January 1864/65), Jan Jonker and some associates marched into Gobabis, being unable to attack Otjimbingwe due to lack of ammunition. Interestingly they did not come to help Andries Lambert and his council against the Mbanderus. They only came to raid and plunder the missionary's and his assistant's houses with all their assets such as ivory and a herd of cattle raised to cover missionary expenses.<sup>104</sup> Their intentions against the Gobabis leadership remained rather hostile. As the missionaries noted: "now Jan Jonker Afrikaner is almost the Kaptein of Gobabis".<sup>105</sup> The Gobabis people split up after this. Some allied themselves with Jan, others went to join Kido Witbooi and his men,<sup>106</sup> but apparently they never took the field against the Afrikaners in any way.<sup>107</sup>

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103. BRMG 1866, 276, 247-248; see also T. Sundermeier: Mbanderu, 17-31.

104. BRMG 1866, 154. Even before all of the missionary's assistant's cattle was stolen by some of Oasib's men, see BRMG 1865, 277.

105. BRMG 1866, 154.

106. BRMG 1866, 47.

107. BRMG 1866

#### 9.4.3 More Conflicts in the South

After intercepting a trader with a load of ammunition on his way to Gobabis in March 1865,<sup>108</sup> another attack was made by the Afrikaners on the Gibeon group who had not responded to the first warning. A number of cattle posts were now raided by the Afrikaner kommando. Men from Gibeon and Berseba (with full missionary support) promptly started in pursuit of this kommando and captured six horses, 22 riding oxen, guns and some lead. Soon after that they raided a rather large 'enemy werft'.<sup>109</sup> This indicates that raids and counter-raids, unlike before, were now proceeding under missionary supervision.

#### 9.5 THE SECOND ATTACK ON OTJIMBINGWE

Oasib and his kommando, being closest to Gibeon and Berseba, suffered most from these skirmishes. Still, many of his men joined the Afrikaners for another major attack on Otjimbingwe in September 1865. Hendrik Zes and his followers followed suit. The ambivalence and importance surrounding missionaries can be seen clearly in the prelude to this attack. The kommando moved against Neu-Barmen where missionary Brincker

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108. H. Vedder: Early Times, 370.

109. BRMG 1866, 35-36.

was stationed. They stayed there for several days, ransacking the place thoroughly. Brincker's life was apparently only saved by Jan Jonker who, by that stage, probably doubted that he could win this war without missionary support.<sup>110</sup> As Brincker noted, the attack on Otjimbingwe took place on a Sunday, in the afternoon. "This was contrary to the Nama's usual habits for it was customary for them to attack in the early morning. Hendrik Zes had, however, insisted that the baptism of blood should take place on a Sunday afternoon".<sup>111</sup>

This time things went very badly indeed for the Afrikaners. The Rehobothers (not Kamaharero) had sent a large kommando to the defence of Otjimbingwe and Oasib's men apparently took to flight after the first shots, and so did the rest of the kommando. They were pursued and in the ensuing fight Hendrik Zes was killed, 33 wagons burnt and another eight captured.<sup>112</sup> This was a crippling blow. Jan now tried to get a missionary so as to ensure access to ammunition and other goods, but, as Brincker commented: "They cannot get one, because they have no peace, no country, no cattle anymore; indeed, their ammunition is finished and they cannot buy anymore ..."<sup>113</sup> Jan's next

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110. BRMG 1866, 47.

111. Quellen, 28, Brincker 1865.

112. WA AP 6, Hahn to Andersson, 2 Nov. 1865.

113. BRMG 1866, 40-41.

move was to visit 'neutral' David Christian in a final attempt to win him as an ally (and thus access to trade goods via Angra Pequena). He told David that they had to do away with the missionaries if things were to go better. David Christian replied clearly and revealingly: "I might have ... given in to alcohol but I am not yet as far down ... as to do something against our teachers. If I still manage it is only because of them".<sup>114</sup>

#### 9.6 OASIB'S DEFEAT

For the next two years it appears that Jan Jonker and some of his men, though not all, retreated from the battlefield into more eastern regions.<sup>115</sup> In these two years, the focus of conflict moved away from Otjimbingwe and Herero-speakers and turned towards

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114. Quellen 3b, 15 March 1866.

115. BRMG 1867, 49. There is very little evidence on what happened to the women and children while the men were engaged in skirmishes all over the country. Weber once stated: "The poor women and children, with the remaining men are like the hunted and chased game". BRMG 1867, 102-103.

the more southerly regions of Namaland. There was a most complicated and continuous process of reshuffling of forces, alternating between hostile clashes, reconciliations and attempted alliances, followed by sharper clashes. The degree of violence increased. A climax came with the utter defeat of Oasib, who in all this was the Kaptein most representative of the Afrikaners' side. While we cannot examine this phase in all its detail, it does seem that fundamental to these conflicts were deep splits within and between the groups of Bethany, Berseba and Gibeon. There was a war party and 'the better minded' in all the three places. Some of Kido's men in particular were not always sure whether they should stand by their alliance with the missionary (the 'better minded') or possibly join Oasib's kommandos (the 'war party').

Weber noted that the situation in Namaland by late 1866 was growing "worse and ever more complicated ... Almost everywhere quarrels and feuds emerge. Here in Berseba too not everything is peaceful anymore. About 8 - 10 men have rebelled against the authorities (the raad, B.L.) and collected followers. 14 days ago there was a fight between Berseba men and rebels ..."<sup>116</sup>  
 The same was reported of the Gibeon group where an

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116. BRMG 1866, 376.

"evil minded party" had formed.<sup>117</sup> Weber felt compelled to say that "the war in Namaqualand is only a war for cattle, sheep and goats and that is precisely why it is so boring and of such sad and complex consequences".<sup>118</sup> Missionary Vollmer, who had been with Oasib intermittently over the past years found himself right between the grinding fronts and did not survive.<sup>119</sup>

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117. BRMG 1867, 356. This missionary terminology indicates that there were people in the community who questioned their leaders' firm commitment to the missionaries.

118. BRMG 1867, 106-107.

119. Although Oasib had clearly allied with the Afrikaners, his one-time missionary Vollmer returned to Hoachanas after he had been away for some time. Oasib had to move into a hide-away because he was threatened by a kommando from Gibeon and Berseba and Vollmer had to go with him, although he was ill at the time. After an engagement with the Witboois and people from Berseba, Oasib and his men had to escape quickly and left Vollmer behind. He was found by Witbooi and P. Goliath, who took care of him, but he died shortly afterwards. His widow now had to stay with the Witbooi's kommando and could only reach Gibeon after Oasib was completely defeated. See BRMG 1867, 225-233.

The degree of violence increased alarmingly. While previously skirmishes had concentrated on cattle, as with the kommandos sent against Gibeon, the very people who had vigorously opposed the official introduction of the death sentence 20 years earlier,<sup>120</sup> were now carrying out executions. In a series of engagements between Oasib's and Kido's kommandos, the latter once executed 30 of Oasib's men who had been taken prisoner, while the Gai-//khaun kommando shot seven prisoners at Gibeon. This was over and above the people who were killed in battle.<sup>121</sup>

Shortly before that, late in 1866, the composition of the opposing forces had changed to Oasib's disadvantage in that Kaptein Tseib, one of his former sub-chiefs, decided to accept a missionary at his 'headquarters' at Zwartmorast. This meant he was lost as an ally.

In October 1867 Oasib and his men had been compelled to take flight after a skirmish with a Gibeon and Berseba kommando. The latter pursued them and at a place near Rehoboth managed to overwhelm Oasib's kommando so conclusively that they were able to take

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120. See Chapters 4 and 5.

121. BRMG 1867, 105.

"all the cattle, sheep and goats, wagons and domestic utensils".<sup>122</sup> Oasib died very shortly afterwards and his son Barnabas began to sue for peace.<sup>123</sup>

#### 9.7 THE LAST ATTACK ON OTJIMBINGWE

Although Barnabas agreed to a 'peace treaty' with the southern Kapteins, he rejoined the Afrikaners' forces. Jan Jonker, having recovered apparently, attacked Otjimbingwe together with his allies for the third time on December 13, 1867. As Hahn noted, they had been "without doubt" supported by "many from the south" (i.e. anti-missionary people from Berseba, Bethany and Gibeon), "because the Red Nation, Jan Afrikaner and Jan Boois could not lead such a number of people into the field".<sup>124</sup> They were fairly successful and Hahn claimed they had poisoned their bullets. After dusk they went to Anawood, near Otjimbingwe, and rested, providing themselves well with cattle and 30 bushels of grain. A large part of the captured cattle were sent to Barnabas' cattle posts. Jan Jonker took a cart which he found at Anawood and went to Walvis Bay. On his way he raided a trader at Salem, took all the missionaries's provisions which were stored on the Swakop River awaiting

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122. BRMG 1867, 232.

123. BRMG 1867, 359.

124. BRMG 1867, 301.

distribution further inland, stripped the shop belonging to Andersson's widow at the Bay and destroyed the missionary printing press at Rooibank. Other Afrikaner parties essayed to raid Herero-cattle posts, just as in former times.<sup>125</sup>

In the meantime something entirely unexpected had happened. As Hahn explained, for the Hereros at Otjimbingwe, especially Maharero and Zeraua, this battle had been a defeat. They were demoralised because, after so many defeats, the Afrikaners had almost taken Otjimbingwe. Then, a few days later, on 22 December 1867, a kommando from Otjimbingwe surprised Jonker's kommando in Anawood. The Afrikaners and their allies were entirely defeated, in what Hahn called a "blood-bath".

This occurred after Andersson's death. But his friend and ally Hahn was then active and reckoned that the Afrikaner kommando would never have been routed at Anawood had it not been for his incitement of the Otjimbingwe men. Chiefs Kamaharero and Zeraua had become very anxious. "Nobody would have undertaken anything against the Namaquas if Green and I had not requested the young men (at Otjimbingwe, B.L.) to do so. Independent of the frightened chiefs, about 800

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125. BRMG 1866, 131-135; see also BRMG 1868, 243-245.

started for Anawood and initiated the massacre."<sup>126</sup>

The Afrikaners did not recover from this blow.

Immediately after this, Herero-speakers began to abandon Otjimbingwe. Eventually the entire Herero-speaking community moved away in the wake of a 'pagan reaction'.<sup>127</sup> (This cannot be explored here any further). At about the same time, the Afrikaners and their associates collected once more around Rehoboth. The missionaries and other Europeans now without any Herero protection, felt more threatened than ever in all the war years. Petitions were sent to the Cape and to London; Fabri, Hahn's colonial-minded friend of the Society, even petitioned the King of Prussia.<sup>128</sup> An English warship was sent from the Cape to be stationed at Walvis Bay.<sup>129</sup> However, the kommando did not attack Otjimbingwe. They could no longer afford to offer battle without the hope of booty in the form of cattle, and there were no more cattle at Otjimbingwe.

Large numbers of Herero-speakers and their herds were beginning to concentrate around Okahandja, Kamaharero and Jonker's old headquarters. The number was

126. BRMG 1869, 260. My emphasis.

127. BRMG 1868, 243. See also Sundermeier: Mbanderu, 51.

128. Goldblatt: SWA, 40.

129. BRMG 1868, 357-358.

estimated to be around 20 000.<sup>130</sup> Towards the end of 1868 the Afrikaner kommando prepared to raid this place, but the chiefs at Okahandja had been forewarned by Hahn. For the Afrikaner kommando this skirmish meant a final defeat. They could only escape, abandoning most of their remaining possessions.

#### 9.8 THE 1870 'PEACE' CONFERENCES

When we take a brief look at the 'official' confirmation of the downfall of the Afrikaners and their allies, we again see clearly that Kamaharero and the Afrikaners had not been inherently antagonistic towards each other. Their alliance and friendship was broken up by traders and missionaries who exploited the one fundamental difference between them, namely that Kamaharero had herds of cattle, and the Afrikaners did not.

A series of moves between the various Kapteins and the missionaries to negotiate peace had been unsuccessful. Jan Jonker arrived unexpectedly at Okahandja with a very large kommando of about 1 000 men on May 17, 1870, to meet Kamaharero. Hahn was not present and Jan and Kamaharero, with the assistance of missionaries Brincker, Diehl and Irle, quietly renewed their old alliance

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130. BRMG 1869, 261.

on slightly different terms. In Goldblatt's words, "Jan Jonker was proclaimed as Kamaharero's co-regent"<sup>131</sup>. However, the basis for such "co-regency" as far as the Afrikaners were concerned, had been eroded completely: any claims that the Afrikaners had to political power had been negated. When Hahn arrived at Okahandja, he succeeded in negotiating a second 'peace treaty' whose terms defined the Afrikaners' diminished power status in writing. He stated "that Kaptein Jan Jonker Afrikaner has obtained no right whatsoever to interfere or meddle with the affairs of the Herero people or their land nor with foreigners living in or travelling among them."<sup>132</sup> Apparently it was also at the time of finalising the Afrikaners' defeat, that Hahn, in a final bid to prevent Jan and Kamaharero from renewing their alliance, obtained permission from Kamaharero to ensure that the Basters settled in Rehoboth. The Basters had migrated to Namaland in the late 1860s coming from the Cape. Their settlement at Rehoboth successfully acted as a "buffer" between Jan and Kamaharero.<sup>133</sup>

This treaty merely set the seal on a situation that had already been in existence for at least two years.

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131. Goldblatt: SWA, 44.

132. Ibid., 46. My emphasis.

133. Quellen 30, 8 March 1873.

The toll had been heavy. Years of warfare had devastated Namaland. When Hahn left for the Cape in 1873, he noted when travelling through the devastated regions: "How different it looked around here hardly 10 years ago! The war had enough incredible consequences - Namaland always gave you the impression ... of a sparsely populated country; but now it's just about frightening; everything seems to be extinct, as in a large charnel-house".<sup>134</sup>

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134. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The downfall of the Afrikaners marks the beginning of colonial conquest and leads from one historical epoch into the next. Yet, the social process in Namaland and Damaraland did not stop, nor did it even pause slightly. By way of conclusion I shall take a cursory glance at the decades following 1870. My aim here is to point to new questions arising from arguments presented in this thesis. Hopefully they may facilitate a better understanding of the years up to 1907.

Most Namaland Kapteins were utterly impoverished by the beginning of the 1870s. Those who had not been involved directly with a missionary were abandoned by most of their followers. Hahn, for instance, on his trip to the Cape, met Hulda, wife of Barnabas of the Gai-//Khaun, near Rehoboth. He noted that Barnabas' followers were "completely impoverished ... The tribe is still rather numerous but entirely scattered..."<sup>1</sup> Jan Jonker who finally acquired a missionary (although not an English one as he had wanted)<sup>2</sup> apparently was too poor to support him.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he was virtually living on his own when the missionary arrived.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873.

2. See chapter 9

3. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873

4. RMS KPB IV, June 1871

The situation among Topnaars at the Bay was similar.<sup>5</sup> Hahn was led to believe in 1873 that the 'Namaquas' were really hunter/gatherers and not pastoralists at all.<sup>6</sup> Palgrave, Special Commissioner from the Cape, who was sent up in 1876, most interestingly found only 1 500 'Namaqua' inhabitants in Namaland but 3 000 'Bushmen' and 30 000 'Bergdamara'.<sup>7</sup> This was a significant assessment, not only as far as the degree of impoverishment among the groups went, but it is also an interesting reflection on the still popular 'tribal' classification. We shall return to the question of classification a little later.

After the 'Peace Conference' of 1870, peace prevailed for about a decade. The reasons for this were most probably related to the tremendous expansion of trade. The traders had won their war, and this was subsequently of use to them. New opportunities had been opening up ever since the restrictions placed on the exploitation of the northern and the eastern hunting veld by the Afrikaners and their associates, were lifted. Traders were able to supply Herero-speaking chiefs with as many guns and ammunition as the traders deemed necessary. Thus, the new situation was

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5. CA G. 50-'77 Palgrave: Report, 6-7

6. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873.

7. CA G. 50-'77, Palgrave: Report, 83. This estimate was probably not adequate, see figures on population estimates, ch. 4.

qualitatively different from when the role of traders had been merely that of supplying the kommando groups with what they required. Subsequently, their role became an extractive one as nobody any longer had the power to restrict them from exploiting the country's products or resources directly. They hunted ivory and ostrich feathers, then sold them at the Cape. This had not been possible under the Afrikaners who kept tight controls on the exploitation of the northern and eastern hunting veld. Now, Kapteins only tried to profit from the new situation as much as possible.

Hahn's attempt to monopolise this new trade by forming the Mission Trading Company,<sup>8</sup> must be seen in the context of newly emerging conflicts between traders and the missionaries who still feared for their success in Damaraland. However, this attempt at monopolisation quite possibly also represented renewed endeavours to prevent the Afrikaners and their associates from making use of any new avenues of supply. The kommandos were no longer a fighting force, and this suited both the missionaries and the traders. It soon appeared that although the Mission Trading Company did not operate at a loss, it could not expect to achieve a monopoly position either. It certainly had no major effect on the evangelising efforts of the missionaries in Damaraland.<sup>9</sup>

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8. Quellen 30, Hahn to Society, 25 March 1870. See also Loth: Mission, 32.

9. In mid-1871 there were still only 69 adult Herero-speakers in Otjimbingwe who were baptised, see RMS KPB V, 1871.

The remarkable expansion of trade can be easily demonstrated. In 1878 Palgrave reported that there were five wholesale and retail stores in the area, and about 100 wagons and other vehicles "engaged in trading and hunting pursuits".<sup>10</sup> He further noted that Otjimbingwe had a population of about 2 000 people.<sup>11</sup> Theophilus Hahn, a trader himself, mentioned that "there are about 3 000 regular ostrich hunters in this country" and 30-40 traders.<sup>12</sup> The missionary Hahn noted that in 1873 a trader Grendon was building a big house for himself in Okahandja. Another had built a house and a big store in Windhoek. About Rehoboth (where the Basters were now settled), he noted: "The store in the centre of the place is a pretty building and towers above everything; it yields a lot of income for the people and their wealth increases by the hour."<sup>13</sup>

The Namaland Kapteins' participation in the trade had moved away from cattle (which they no longer could extort from Herero-speaking subordinates) to ivory and ostrich feathers. Together with European hunters, traders and missionary agents, they went into the northern and eastern hunting veld. Palgrave stated that the annual export from the territory consisted mainly of 34 000 lbs of ivory and 5 000 lbs of ostrich feathers but only 3 000 oxen. He added: "The gross value of each year's export may be

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10. CA BBNA (Cape) 1879, Palgrave to Secretary, 1 July 1871.

11. CA G. 50-77, Palgrave: Report, 12.

12. Ibid., Hahn to Magistrate, 21 Oct. 1872, Ann.11

13. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873.

estimated at £ 45 000..."<sup>14</sup>

As far as imports were concerned, in the second half of the 1870s these included annually 1 000 guns, mainly to Hereros, 39 600 lbs of coffee; 51 000 lbs of sugar and 10 000 lbs of soap.<sup>15</sup> Yet the main recipients here were Herero-speakers; Namaland Kapteins were impoverished and were no longer able to control the trade.

Palgrave commented about Andries Lambert and 300 men staying north of Gobabis at the time that they had no cattle and lived by hunting.<sup>16</sup> As far as the eastern hunting veld was concerned, extra money could apparently only be made by Kapteins through charging licence fees for hunting and trading. Theophilus Hahn wrote from Khoes: "... this place is one of the chief places along the Eastern Kalahari for feather trading; people of all directions come in here, and here is no jurisdiction. The country where the Veldskoendraers do their robberies and violence, belong to the said Willem Christian ... They, the aforesaid Veldskoendraers, take from a trader £ 15 licence fee where the same trader had paid already to Willem Christian £ 4 licence fee (sic)."<sup>17</sup> A. Anderson, not a trader but an

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14. CA G. 50-77, Palgrave: Report, 83. This figure is probably inflated as Palgrave tried to convince the Cape Government that the territory was able to support a British magistrate.

15. CA GH 19/10, A. Ohlsson: 'memo'

16. CA G 50-77, Palgrave: Report, 55

17. Ibid., T. Hahn, to Magistrate, 21 Oct. 1872, Ann.11

explorer busy on a 'survey' of the south-western part of Africa, also complained to the Cape Government that "every petty captein claims a licence fee" for hunting, passing through and trading. Apparently the people did not shy away from helping themselves if the traders rejected their demands.<sup>18</sup>

However, as indicated, this must be viewed as rather weak attempts to retain minimal controls over territories and resources which formerly had been exploited by the Kapteins and their raads alone.

In view of these developments the question arises why the trade was still focussed on what Namaland Kapteins could provide rather than on tapping the truly enormous herds of cattle possessed by Herero-speaking chiefs in Damaraland. Why should ostrich feathers and tusks remain so significant, now that all political restrictions to access to Herero cattle had fallen away?

It seems to me that the answer to this question must be sought in differences between the cattle-owning Herero-chiefs and the kommando groups. These differences existed and were maintained throughout the 19th century.

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18. CA GH 18/12, Andrew Andersen to Governor, 21 March 1872.

This was in spite of the equalising influences of merchant capital which had promoted a very thorough assimilation between incoming Orlams and the original Nama-groups. These Orlam groups had met with pastoral people all the way from the Orange to the areas far north of the Swakop river. Among the Nama-speaking people a process of assimilation (which probably had already begun in the 18th century) occurred fairly rapidly. Soon all their social energy was directed towards the reproduction of the kommando structure along Orlam lines.

The most obvious distinguishing feature between these kommando groups and most inhabitants further north, in Damaraland, was wealth in cattle. As I demonstrated earlier wealth in cattle or the lack of it, may not simply be explained by reference to ecological restraints;<sup>19</sup> as far as the Namaland kommando groups were concerned, cattle breeding has to be seen as one aspect of the total social process. In these groups, this process was structured by relations of production that were relations of exchange at the same time. In other words, commoditisation had turned the focus of production away from pre-capitalist forms of accumulation (the accumulation of followers and goods for use value.) to exchange value.

At the same time, due to the nature of merchant capital, a split between the direct producers and the means of

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19. R. Moorsom: 'Proletarianisation', ch.3.

production had not occurred to any noticeable scale. As we saw, this led to the formation of structures of underdevelopment by which the dependence on imported commodities increased continually while skills geared towards local self-sufficiency (materially and spiritually) lost their function and ceased to exist. As I showed, these included certain critical pastoral techniques. Broadly speaking where the Namaland kommando groups were concerned, we can observe a decaying of pre-capitalist relations of production.

Yet, it would seem that such a process was not happening among the northern cattle owners, even after prolonged contact with the forces of merchant capital. It is important here not to confuse characteristics like language or cultural similarities with certain types of production relations. It appears that the preservation of pre-capitalist relations of production only coincided to a limited degree with the territory where the Herero language was spoken. 'Ethnic' classifications such as 'the Hereros' do not serve to establish the nature of existing differences adequately. Thus, Jonker Afrikaner had a very large number of Herero-speaking servant families, and so had other Orlam-groups, even as far south as Berseba and Bethany.<sup>20</sup> Also, it is certain that evidence

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20. RMS KPB IV, 1871.

of such mixture within population groups will have been underplayed by 19th century missionaries and other Europeans because this did not coincide readily with their own racial presumptions and prejudices. A very considerable number of Herero-speakers were occupying the stations Neu-Barmen and Otjimbingwe working for European traders or at the copper mines. These people had clearly been largely separated from the pre-capitalist production process. They were generally tending gardens and living off income from employment of various kinds. Their life was in no way structured by their position in the kinship group.

Similarly, people who lived in Damaraland and had decided to ally themselves politically with local cattle-owning chiefs were considered as Hereros even if they spoke Nama. When the question of differences between 'Herero' and 'Nama' missionaries was discussed, Schröder mentioned in a letter to the Society that "as far as Brother Böhm and the Ameibers are concerned (he was talking about Willem Swartbooi's group and their new missionary) it is to be noted that the latter have become Hereros due to the wars against the Namas ten years ago". He also indicated that the same was true for Topnaars at the Bay and certain Hau-Khoi who were living in Damaraland.<sup>21</sup>

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21. Quellen, 30, Schröder to Society, 12 Aug. 1880

As the political conflicts show, the difference between those who owned and reproduced large herds of cattle and those who raided them was maintained in the relations between the Swartboois and Hereor-speaking chiefs<sup>22</sup> even if for practical purposes they had "become Hereros". These conflicts did not become manifest as 'ethnic' difference or 'ethnic' conflict at all. Thus, to indicate that specifically pre-capitalist relations existed, I propose to talk about 'the northern cattle-owners'.

Although this term is inadequate in that it excludes all the northern cattle-herders, the followers, 'clients' and the women who together made up these formations, it seems to be the best term available for the time being.

I am not arguing here that all the currents shaking Namaland and areas further north left those cattle owning chiefs completely untouched. For instance, processes of community formation in certain areas began to resemble closely those we observed in Namaland. Thus, Hahn reported on a conversation he had with Kamaharero regarding a new station Otjizeva. "There those Hereros who have been freed from confinement by the Namas and have largely become Christians are supposed to consolidate. Maharero intended long ago to provide them with a missionary, not because he was concerned about their spiritual well-being but rather to keep those who originally belonged to

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22. On conflicts between Swartbooi and Kamaharero and his associates, see RMS KP 1870; CA GH 23/38, Reports and Correspondence on the State of Affairs in Damaraland and Great Namaqualand, in connection with the mission of Rev. Dr. C.H. Hahn, meeting Hahn/Swartbooi, 3 March 1882.

different tribes, together".<sup>23</sup>

Also, as Werner noted in a recent study, important items like guns and wagons came to be inherited outside of the more firmly established 'oruzo' and 'eanda' kinship structures.<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein, Kamaharero's 'paramountcy' established by Andersson with the support of a very limited number of Herero-speakers (as we saw in the last chapter) came to be a permanent feature of political relations among and within Herero-speaking clans and sub-clans. As other writers have asserted this continued to play a very important role in Leutwein's colonial 'divide et impera' politics.<sup>25</sup> Thus, while we cannot explore the subtleties and implications of certain fundamental changes that were taking place among the northern cattle owners and their followers at this time, we can still note that a dissolution of pre-capitalist relations was apparently not taking place.<sup>26</sup>

Quite to the contrary, it seems that merchant capital penetration acted as a stimulus to cattle-breeding while structures of underdevelopment did not develop noticeably. This means that the basic material difference between the Namaland kommando groups and the cattle owners further north (which I demonstrated was established in the first

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23. Quellen 30, Hahn's Heimreise, 1873

24. W. Werner: 'Investigation', 35

25. H. Drechsler: Fighting, 84-88

26. Interestingly, Werner's research conclusions pointed in the same direction, W. Werner: 'Investigation', 94-97

half of the 19th century) was maintained right through the second half of the 19th century: the cattle owners reproduced their large herds, and the kommandos raided them.

Before we consider some of the more ideologically based differences which were probably also maintained, we will briefly consider the evidence supporting such conclusions.

Special Commissioner Palgrave noted in 1876 that wherever he travelled in Damaraland, men and boys were carrying guns, mostly good rifles. It was only young boys who had old flint guns. He remarked that the gun market was completely overstocked, 6,000 guns were on offer for sale, "and not less, probably much more, than 20 tons of gunpowder and a proportionate weight of lead".<sup>27</sup>

Two years later he was more explicit. In a letter to the Secretary for Native Affairs he talked about the difficulties of trade. While ostrich feathers and ivory had increased tremendously in scarcity, the

\* 'Damaras' "long intercourse with white people has developed singularly few wants amongst them ... More than three-fourths of the Damaras are without a single want the trader can gratify that would compel them to part with a sheep or goat from a herd of thousands; and the wants of the other

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27. CA G, 50-77: Palgrave: Report, 22

fourth are limited to a little powder, and lead, and a little clothing..."<sup>28</sup> Besides, he had noted before that "those actively engaged in this trade, believe that it is not capable of any material extension".<sup>29</sup>

In the early 1880s the situation had not changed. This becomes obvious in Hahn's letter, notwithstanding its optimistic tone. He said: "The Damara is wide awake to what is profitable, and in a few years he will learn that it is to his interest to sell his cattle rather than to hoard them up as he now does".<sup>30</sup> Hoarding, of course, is a very characteristic form of pre-capitalist accumulation designed to secure followers or dependants but not commodities.

At the beginning of the 1880s the kommandos of Namaland began raiding again probably because income from the trade in ostrich feathers and ivory was decreased due to the depletion of natural resources. In addition they had had opportunities to supply themselves anew with arms and ammunition. Thus, Kamaharero claimed that such kommandos (he in fact mentioned Jan Jonker and a whole number of associates) had raided ten of his cattle posts,

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28. CABNA(Cape), Palgrave: to Secretary, 1 July 1879.

29. CA G. 50-77, Palgrave: Report, 83.

30. CA GH 23/38, Correspondence, Hahn to Secretary, 16 March, 1882.

killing 20 men<sup>31</sup>. This was only the beginning. Yet, the circle of impoverishment was not to be broken. The Special Commissioner noted that the Namaland kommandos had captured many thousands of head of cattle, but they were "now poorer than when the war broke out<sup>32</sup> and they have nothing to pay the traders to whom they are deeply indebted for ammunition and guns".<sup>33</sup> As far as certain Herero-speaking chiefs were concerned they were still rich; some, he claimed, like Kambazembi, had lost next to nothing. "Although the loss in oxen alone is computed at some 30 000 head, that has not impoverished the Damaras who will in a few years make up for these losses. There is, perhaps, no people in the world who equal the Damaras as cattle breeders..."<sup>34</sup>

Here as in the conflicts of the 1860s the dividing line was not 'ethnic'.. For example, the group of Basters from the Cape who had settled at Rehoboth, finally allied themselves <sup>with</sup> Kamaharero and his associates and stopped supporting Jan and his friends. Soon after this, a kommando headed by Jan stole 600 oxen, 2 000 sheep as well as 26 horses from Rehoboth, killing two men<sup>35</sup>. As frequently before, it was noted that the Kapteins of Bethany, Berseba and Gibson "were quite prepared to

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31. Ibid., Official Journal of British Resident, 24 Aug.-6 Sept. 1880.

32. European commentators of course immediately made this into a 'Herero>Nama war'.

33. CA GH 23/38, Correspondence, Hahn to Secretary, 16 March 1882

34. Ibid.

35. CA GH 23/38, Coresspondence, Windhus to Secretary, 7 March 1882

enter into negotiation for peace".<sup>36</sup> We can proceed no further with the examination of these issues, but must look finally at possible ways of viewing the political-ideological manifestations of the distinctions between certain groups, especially in the light of evolving relations with the Cape Government.

Hereo-speaking chiefs had begun to make independent use of exchange relations with the Cape to support their own positions of political power (like Kamaherero). The 1880s were not marked by any signs of a trend towards the dissolution or transformation of pre-capitalist relations of production. This meant that around the time of formal colonial occupation, the relations between the Namaland kommando groups and those northern cattle-owners were characterised by two major aspects. The one was that in spite of a common involvement in the same mercantile networks (which had been developing over the decades) the historically determined original differences between incoming Orlam-groups and Herero-speaking cattle owners were not suspended. Thus, whatever had separated those groups historically had not actually been overcome by the common involvement in the Cape nexus.

As I argued briefly in the preceding paragraphs, the roots of conflict stayed the same. On the political

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36. CA GH 23/38, Correspondence, Hahn to Secretary. 16 March 1882.

level, we can see this in that Herero-speaking chiefs seem never to have acquired insight into the forces of imperialism and the necessity to fight colonial domination which was one of the major political traditions of the kommando groups. Thus, while Kamaharero and his associates were very keen indeed to cooperate with Special Commissioner Palgrave and even invited the Cape Government in writing to annex Damaraland<sup>37</sup>, the 'Namaqua' were reported to be "still sullenly hostile to our exercise of any influence in the country".<sup>38</sup>

However, the kommando groups also had a long history of collaborating with the forces of imperialism, in order to ensure their own positions of dominance. We saw in the last chapter how eager the Kapteins of Berseba, Gibeon and Bethany had been to ally with Andersson and other Europeans to the detriment of the Afrikaners. Due to the needs to consolidate positions of dominance, opportunities for combining with Herero-speaking chiefs were always present. This we saw manifested in the long friendship between Jonker and Tjimuaha.

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37. CABBNA (Cape) 1879, Palgrave to Secretary, 11 Aug. 1878. See also J. Davies: 'Palgrave and Damaraland' South African Yearbook, 1842.

38. CABBNA (Cape) 1879, Palgrave to Secretary, 26 June 1878. It does not seem appropriate to charge those Herero-speaking chiefs with political naivety. Kamaharero for instance, sternly refused to allow any European to pay any taxes, especially the British Magistrate. He said: "You would take part of the land from me by allowing these men to pay taxes, and thus gain a right to land." CA GH 23/38, Correspondence, meeting Hahn/Kamaharero 14 Feb. 1882.

Thus, despite all their differences, both Herero chiefs and Namaland Kapteins had a history of alliance and friendship and had been closely related at certain points in the past. The Cape Government was genuinely afraid that such a combination would unite the advanced military technology of the kommandos with the material resources of northern cattle owners.

Palgrave once wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs about his grave worries that the "rebels of the Northern Border and Griqualand West", together with "Bastards, Namaquas and Korannas" would form an alliance and then gain the sympathy of Kamaharero and his associates. "Then", Palgrave argued "we may find that our protectorate of the Damaras has exposed us to a war, the consequence of which may be very serious". He also claimed that in recent years there had been a substantial influx of Griqualand West "rebels", "many of whom are Waterboer's people" into the country, where they settled with other fugitives.<sup>39</sup>

Quite apart from reflecting on the nature of relations between Namaland Kapteins and northern cattle owners, Palgrave's remarks betray a respect and fear of the kommando groups all around the borders of the Cape Colony that might account for the Cape's very apparent reluctance to annex those territories.

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39. CABBNA (Cape) 1879, Palgrave to Secretary, 28 Nov. 1878

In the concluding section I shall consider the nature of the kommando groups again and attempt to situate them in their historical and historiographical context.

When the Orlam kommandos crossed the Orange River around the turn of the last century, a new historical epoch began for the people then inhabiting Namaland. Fairly rapidly, a process of fundamental transformation took place among the Nama-speaking pastoralists who populated these areas. By the mid-1850s, they were reproducing the determining features of the kommando communities established by Orlam groups. Politically, as well, all references to earlier differences were given up.

In the 1860s, almost a quarter century before the official annexation of South West Africa by Germany, major functions of control over territories, and people, were taken away from the Namaland kommando groups led by the Afrikaners. The new powers in control were not other kommando groups, nor groups of Herero-speakers, but - European traders and missionaries.

These suggestions should lead us to reconsider the notions of 'primary resistance' or collaboration' which have played an influential role in African historiography since *the* 1960s.<sup>40</sup> The Afrikaners and their associates put up an

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40. T.O. Ranger: 'Connections between 'Primary Resistance' movements and modern nationalism in East and Central Africa', Journal of African History, 1968, Parts I and II; A. and B. Isaacman; 'Resistance and Collaboration in Southern and Central Africa, c. 1850-1920'; International Journal of African Historical Studies, 10, 1977.

arduous struggle lasting for almost seven years against the trader/missionary alliance. Their aims were strictly limited to their own interests which centred on the exploitation of Herero-speakers and the riches of the northern and eastern hunting veld. Yet, they were also resisting the political rightlessness and subordination which European imperialism began to impose on many Africans. Thus, this resistance was so multi-faceted that it is not easily labelled with a single term. It cannot be called 'primary' because it had progressive elements. It had itself a long history to it. The Orlam kommando groups partly emerged in the second half of the 18th century at the Cape. Through the kommando, the dispossessed indigenous inhabitants of the Cape tried to find an alternative to accepting the subordinate roles available in the colony and immediately beyond its borders. This was not a resistance against colonialism itself but rather a refusal of the roles colonisation assigned to the indigenous peoples.

The alternatives found, however, were of such nature that thenceforth the newly-emerging kommando-groups themselves began to perform 'colonial' political and economic roles. As Legassick has indicated<sup>41</sup>, this was true for the

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41. See chapter 2, ftn. 4.

relations established between Griquas and Sotho-Tswana peoples on the north-eastern frontier. My study strongly supports and extends such contentions as far as the relations between Orlam-groups and indigenous Nama-speakers north of the Orange River were concerned. As indicated, these relations were marked by a combination of conquest, forms of subjection and alliances between the parties concerned. Thus, the kommandos which fought the missionaries were already formed by a multitude of experiences of colonisation, conquest and the subordinate roles attached to it as well as of the struggle against it. The Orlams had partly come as colonisers to Namaland: Yet their subjection of Nama groups was restricted to a limited loss of pastures and waterholes and did not involve long-term relations of exploitation. Fundamental social and economic transformations of Nama groups involving destructive dependencies came about in more indirect ways (which came to be shared by Nama and Orlam alike).

Through the agency of the kommando group, peoples beyond the borders of the Cape Colony experienced forms of political, but also economic, subjection because they became incorporated into the expanding world market. Under the impact of the Orlam invasions, the original inhabitants of Namaland soon came to organise kommandos themselves, and after roughly half a century, the kommando had replaced the kinship group as a means of political

identification. This resulted in processes of 'underdevelopment'. Thus, here we have a case in which 'underdevelopment' may not be seen as a function of merchant capital penetration. It may not be conceptualised on the level of exchange only. Nor, have I here found it possible to explain processes of impoverishment and the transformation of political and social structures by way of analysing an 'articulation of modes of production'. This is mostly due to the fact that in kommando groups, as bearers of merchant capital, old forces and relations of production did not entirely dissolve, and the development of capitalist relations was thus jeopardised. It was precisely this stalemate condition, reproduced by Nama groups, that made them unable to control and defeat the traders' and missionaries' claims for political and economic rights. Still, that struggle was clearly informed by an emerging awareness of the nature of the ever encroaching European imperialism.

Lastly, mention must be made of 'ethnic' classifications. I was careful in my terminology to avoid terms like 'the Herero' or 'the Nama'. Still, I have not found it possible to abandon distinctions between groups of people which are seemingly based on differences in language or 'culture' alone. My study suggests that recent attempts to eliminate such distinctions as largely as possible<sup>42</sup> cannot

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42. See for instance Loth: Mission, R. Moorsom: Proletarianisation; SWAPO Department of Information: 'Namibia: People's Resistance, 1670-1970; Race and Class, 1980.

be supported by an analysis of the pre-colonial period. However, I hope to have made it clear that the remaining distinctions only coincided to an extent with those in language or 'culture' but were by no means based on them. Rather, they appear to have been based on specific social and economic differences. As far as most Herero-speaking chiefs were concerned, they continued to focus on the incorporation of as many followers or clients as possible through the hoarding of cattle. The focus of their social energies, certainly as far as the period up to the 1870s is concerned, were concentrated on the breeding of cattle in order to attract followers rather than in order to accumulate cattle for their exchange value, thus on the reproduction of pre-capitalist relations of production. The kommando groups of Namaland, however, were not pastoralists but had specialised in extracting this cattle wealth.

Therefore, we should not try to assume that the differences between groups were only minimal, or did not exist at all. It is equally misleading to rely on the still prevalent view (originally proposed by Heinrich Vedder) that there was no discernible pattern in the pre-colonial violence. Rather it is necessary to make precise inquiries into the nature of the remaining differences and splits among the people of Damara-land and Namaland. This is particularly so as

far as the kommando groups themselves are concerned. It seems rather striking that fundamentally similar social and economic structures should exist in various groups yet their separate political identity be maintained. For the period up to the 1870s the independent position of political power held by the Afrikaner alliance might account for this. It probably had a fuelling effect on competitive tendencies among the various Kapteins. However, post-1870 attempts to achieve a larger unity among the kommandos such as those undertaken by Hendrik Witbooi, were also only partially successful. It seems to me that a thorough investigation into 'ideological' aspects of the kommando organisation over time, such as the formation of a groups consciousness not based on a capitalist ethic nor on kinship structures, could be usefully examined in this context.

For the people of Namaland, Orlam, Hau-khoi and Nama alike, colonisation did not begin in 1884. Through forms of social organisation imposed by invading Orlams on original Nama inhabitants, from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, political and social controls slipped out of these people's hands. When the power of the Afrikaners and their associates was broken by a European trader/missionary alliance, this marked the final stages of political and economic independence for the inhabitants of Nama-and Damaraland. At the same time, it indicated

the actual beginning of colonial conquest and domination  
which has not come to an end until the present day.

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APPENDIX B

TRAKTAAT VAN HOACHANAS, 1858

- i. There shall be no right of self-defence in a serious war but resort must be had to an impartial Kaptein as arbitrator.
- ii. Failure by the party found guilty to obey the decision of the arbitrator, to pay a fine or to suffer punishment, shall lead to all the signatories of this treaty combining to take up arms and punishing him.
- iii. No commando raids are to take place against the Damaras without cause, and any members of the tribe undertaking any raids of their own accord shall be punished.
- iv. No junior official shall deal with important matters without the consent of the Kaptein, and no one shall take the law into his own hands.
- v. No Kaptein shall permit copper mining in his territory without the consent of all Kapteins.
- vi. No Kaptein shall sell land to any white person of the Cape Colony. The seller shall be punished with a heavy fine and the purchaser shall pay damages unless he was unaware of this law. It is agreed that the signatories shall come to the assistance of the Griquas, in case of need, in any serious wars.
- vii. Provision is made for mutual extradition of offenders.
- viii. No Kaptein shall take to arms without written proof of hostile acts.
- ix. Murder trials shall take place by the Kaptein of the tribe acting with two or three impartial Kapteins.
- x. Provision shall be made for an annual meeting of all the Kapteins for the preservation of land and people.
- xi. An appeal may be lodged by any member of a tribe from a sentence by his Kaptein, to the other Kapteins.
- xii. Any member of a tribe may lodge a complaint against his Kaptein with the other treaty Kapteins, who shall investigate, and, if need be, punish the guilty Kapteins.

This document is noteworthy in a number of respects. In so far as rights of individual members in a tribe are concerned it provided for protection

APPENDIX A

JAN AFRIKANER AND HIS RAAD



Afrikaner Women



From: Palgrave's Album, Windhoek State Archives, 1876.