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'TOA TAMA !KHAMS GE'

REMEMBERING THE WAR IN NAMAKHOELAND, 1903-1908

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Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Historical Studies

University of Cape Town

2006
Toa tama !khams ge: Remembering the War in Namakhoeland, 1903-1908

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Acknowledgements

Give praises to the most high mother and father of creation for omnipotent, omnipresent love. Mamas tsi Tadab, you have far sighted wisdom, it has been a blessing growing with you. Brothers and sisters we are on our way to Zion do not let anything turn us around. Thank you to my family for your prayers of faith. Ouma Sanna Swartbooi and Oupa Willem Biwa may you rest.

Monwabisi, Mmatotse, Tendai, Farai, Khadija, Thabo, Philisa, Mimi, Ebenezer, Shasheeda, Caro, Hertha, Tuyakula, Letetu, Mapadi, Mphilo, Anita (Maschaba), Xolani, Stina and Simbonile may the rays of the sun shine on your souls.

Hertha, Jeramy, Goodman, Casper, a History Agency in Namibia is long overdue. Working with you has been inspirational. Pastor Pauly you were always ready to translate the ancient German handwriting and give your viewpoint of the history. Saddam I owe you for the hours you spent in my room translating German scripts and the pictures you helped me arrange in the paper. Joan bless you for taking my paper to University.

I give thanks to all the interviewees for encouraging this work to continue in the spirit that it has. The staff of the National Archives of Namibia for their constant assistance. To the Centre of African Studies (UCT): for the Swiss Africa Research Award and the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle for financially enabling me to further this research. Prof. Christopher Saunders you were patient and made sure that I had access to all the work that was important for this research. Thank you for willingly
meeting this task. To Sandra Naidoo for assisting me with administrative issues even though I was miles away from Cape Town.
Toa tama !khams ge: Remembering the War in Namakhoeland, 1903-1908

Chapter 1

Introduction

(Her)Story Unfolds Timeously

This is the first opportunity that I have been blessed with to write about the history of Namibia, and it is an esteem honour to have ventured in this line of work. I was born in Namibia and studied history at high school. My classmates and I were not thoroughly taught the history of Namibia or Africa as a whole, and thus we never heard our story. I found it ironic that we sat in a history class in Namibia and our entire curriculum in our senior year of high school contained sections on other countries and continents, except Africa.

I identify with the history of Africa, and naturally so, because this is the story of my ancestors. Africa’s history is too significant in the grand narrative of the world to be relegated to a small section in the curriculum of life. It is thus pivotal that African people hear and tell their own history as a means of continuing their legacy for generations to come. If Africans create platforms where the stories of the continent can be expressed then many other Africans would be able to hear and tell these stories. This goes a long way in inspiring each other to be proud of who we are, knowing that we have been blessed with a rich heritage, and because of this we are able to contribute to the positive development of humanity.
Nana Banchie Darkwah in his book, 'The Africans Who Wrote The Bible', states that because Africans have not been an integral part of history writing, there is a sense that Africa is not able to contribute to various developments of the world. He says that, 'in the vacuum Africa has created by not telling her story to anyone, western scholars have raised themselves to the ranks of the experts and claimed the authority in telling Africa's story'.

This was visible, for example, at a history conference titled '1904-2004 – Decontaminating the Namibian Past', at the University of Namibia in August 2004. Historians made contributions that were from Germany, United States of America, Japan, South Africa and so on. Papers presented by more Namibians at such a conference would have been very important for Namibians taking ownership in shaping the way their history is written. It is too often the case that the voice of Africans in experiencing their history is silenced.

Since Namibia's independence in 1990, more Namibians are expressing sentiments of their past through commemoration events that aim to remember resistance against German colonialism and the apartheid South African government. These take the form of gatherings to praise fallen heroes and heroines, the erecting of statues and plaques to remember events, documenting the past in literary works and other art forms. It is vital to capture these expressions to tell the untold side of the story.

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1 N. B. Darkwah, The Africans Who Wrote The Bible, p. xii
I wanted to write about the resistance of Khoekhoe communities, following on from a paper that I had written at University on the land struggles in Richtersveld. In this project I traced the roots of land expropriation in the Richtersveld, and how the descendants of the early Nama that live in the Richtersveld claimed for the ownership of land and compensation for dispossession thereof during colonisation and apartheid.

Through reviewing this case it became evident that it was difficult, but not impossible, for the Richtersveld community to prove that they were the descendants of the people that had lived there before and that they were thus the rightful inheritors of the land on which they lived. In the court case it had to be shown that their land had been unjustly expropriated as early as the 1800s. Most of the information to prove this had been passed down through oral tradition, which of course is yet to be, recognised as legitimate evidence.

It is because of such cases that it is extremely important to record Khoekhoe heritage because it is a way of making sure that indigenous knowledge is carried on for future use, alongside oral tradition. Oral tradition should be complemented with the written form, so that our stories of art, medicine, astrology, nature, spirituality and relentless struggle are never lost.

This paper concerns the story of the war that occurred between the Nama communities and the German government in southern Namibia in the early 20th Century, with a view especially on the anti-colonial struggle of the Nama. The events of the war in southern
Namibia have not been given due attention in literary works. Furthermore, events of the Nama war in Namibia between the period 1903-08 from the point of view of the Nama women, men and children is missing. There is scant evidence of how the Nama faired during the war in their own words. Thus the war narrative in its entirety has yet to be exhausted.

Another reason for my interest in this story is because I grew up in Gibeon in southern Namibia with my grandparents on farms Freistadt and Rietkuil.\textsuperscript{2} I have Nama ancestry and have a vested interest in knowing what happened to Nama people in the war and how the consequences of this war played out in the community.\textsuperscript{3} Gibeon was not only one of the main military bases during German administration but it was the home of the Nama leader, King Hendrik Witbooi\textsuperscript{4}, and the /Khobesen community that resisted German colonisation.

I attended commemoration events of the war in Gibeon when I was young, but did not fully grasp the story around which the commemorations were held. After recently reading about the war I realised why there was such praise for our fallen heroines and heroes. It was heartbreaking to read about the cruelty of the war. I literally cried while reading the many stories about the war such as that of the Ovaherero fleeing to the desert and Nama that were deported to West Africa and conditions in the prisoner of war camps where members of these communities were enslaved.

\textsuperscript{2} A guide for the German Army in the Gibeon district, Benjamin Burger, lived on this farm in 1904
\textsuperscript{3} I also have Herero ancestry on both my mother and father’s side
Nama communities such as the !Gami#nun, Khobesen and Kai-/Khaun had their centennial celebrations as from 2003 to 2005. It is now opportune to review this part of Namibia’s history, as there is an emphasis on how this war has been commemorated in the various Nama communities, where initial resistance against German occupation of Namibia began amongst the !Gami#nun in Warmbad in 1903.

It was difficult to speak openly about the atrocities of the war in the past mainly because these communities lived under oppressive governments that reigned in Namibia since the 19th Century. This paper serves as a platform for opening up the debate on the war also. I also give praises to our ancestors that fought for our freedom in the war. I am the living image of that freedom that you sacrificed for and I continue to fight all forms of oppression in that spirit.

‘Toa tama !khams ge, in Khoekhoegowab means the struggle is not over yet. This is the title of one of the hymns sung at the commemoration of the war held annually by the /Khobesen community. It symbolises how this community and other Nama communities in Namibia affected by the war fought during years of colonial oppression and are still fighting for their basic rights as human beings.

This is summed up in the words of the hymn, which are as follows,

‘Toa t’ma !khams ge tsis ge toa tite

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4 In Khoekhoegowab Gaob, the term used to describe the leader of a community is translated as King. Captain or Chief is a diminutive term. I prefer to use the titles, King and Queen because this is the appropriate translation from Khoekhoegowab.
‘Remembering the War in Namakhoeland’ is about listening to the stories told by several members of the Nama communities, to see how it is that the war narrative has been negotiated in these communities. It is difficult to capture the stories of the people that fought in the war, however some of their descendants are able to construct what their fore-parents told them happened in the war. And remembering the war is more than relaying the past as it was. It is the sum of relaying past experiences, the emotions of the person telling the story and how the person has organised the story to construct their self-identity. So the task is not complete with collecting the stories, these have to be analysed as well.

Remembering the war is further influenced by how the community has expressed itself in the war narrative, also known as collective memory. Collective memory is expressed in the commemoration events held by these communities annually, some of which are recorded in this paper. These events are avenues through which these Nama communities are retelling their own stories as a means of sustaining indigenous knowledge. The story

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5 Booklet of the 82nd Anniversary of Heroes Day, 1987, p. 14. The struggle/war is not over and will not be over even though the grandfathers and fathers have passed on. It is the obligation of future generations, to fight for victory. For victory they have laid down their lives with blood, for the clan and land.

6 S. Field, Remembering Experience, p. 131
shared by these people is the foundation of this paper. This project as far as possible also fills in the gaps in the narrative of the war that took place between the Nama and German people.

Remembering the war is itself a form of liberating oneself from the agony that was the consequence of such a catastrophic event. A participant at the history conference held at the University of Namibia in 2004 commented that descendants of the people that were involved in the war remember the war in their bodies. The participant explained that the pain and anguish of war stays in the bodies of the survivors and is genetically transferred to the descendants well after the war has ended. Thus articulating the war in any form by either the survivors or the descendants of people that rose against anti-colonial forces is a way of purging the pain and cleansing oneself spiritually from the memories of the war.

War for the purposes of this paper also involves the countless women, children and men that resisted in many other forms besides fighting on the battlefield, for example in the various prisoner of war camps set up in the country during the war period. Nama refugees who fled to Botswana and the Northern Cape are included in the war narrative. The period under review is 1903 to 1908, where most of the battles of the Nama and German people took place in southern Namibia, Northern Cape and Botswana.

I'm writing specifically about the Nama war story because it has been offered a chapter or a couple of pages in books concerning the war. The same is the case in national commemoration debates and events concerning the war where other indigenous groups
such as the Nama are almost invisible. For example, At the history conference, which was supposed to be involved in ‘decontaminating’ how the history of the war has been presented in the past, only one paper on the resistance of the Nama people in Namibia was given. And that paper only dealt with the war waged by the !Gami#nun against the South African administration in 1922.7

Other communities in Namibia fought against the German government as well. There were however specific groups that were targeted by the German government such as the Ovaherero and Nama peopling. The Ovaherero and Nama in some instances fought alongside each other in southern Namibia, however a more unified front was not strategised. In fact the war narrative is incomplete if one does not study how it affected all the communities in Namibia. Because of the one-sided approach of many historians this war is very often known as the Herero-German war.

Reasons for prioritising the Ovaherero war against the German government in almost all literary forms of the war should in no way result in the war stories of other communities, such as the Nama, San, Ovambo or Damara communities from being excluded in the narrative.

7 J. McClune, Resisting the Official Falsification and Academic Mystification of the Bondelswartz struggle Against Colonialism, Conference Paper, 17-21 August 2004
Love is Lovely, but War is very Ugly

Nama and OvaHerero communities were embroiled in a war against the German government from 1903 to 1908. This war was horrifying, even though it was not the first time that indigenous communities and the German government had fought in the country. However the consequences of war during the period under review would prove to have a more disquieting effect on all the indigenous communities in Namibia.

The war was fought primarily for the hegemony of land and resources. The ‘Scramble for Africa’, cemented by the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, created the platform for European governments to share land that they had already had some form of control over from Africans. In light of this the German government first under Curt Von Francois and then Theodor Leutwein signed protection treaties with several communities in Namibia in a bid to grab land surreptitiously.

The communities in Namibia did not willingly sign these protection treaties. Some of the attempts of the German government were successful but several Nama communities such as that of Hendrik Witbooi initially refused to sign these protection treaties. This was before Major Theodor Leutwein and his forces attacked and massacred the Witbooi nation at Hornkranz in 1894. Slowly after the resistance to German protection had subsided, the German administration of Namibia sought to gain land concessions and other resources such as cattle for the German settlers that were flocking to Namibia. At the height of this activity, OvaHerero and Nama communities waged war.
The Nama war against the Germans initially began in 1903 with the !Gami#nun community of Warmbad, opening the scene for many other Nama communities in southern Namibia. It was then that the Ovaherero community took the opportunity in early 1904 to sabotage railway lines and attack German civilians and soldiers that were present, because the main emphasis of the German troops were delayed in the south of the country.

A peace treaty had however been signed between the !Gami#nun and the Germans, which then allowed the Germans to fight the Ovaherero. The Herero war took place in central and northern Namibia culminating in a battle at Ohamakari in August 1904. This battle decimated an entire people. Ovaherero died in great numbers also owing to lack of water and food in the Omaheke Desert. Some Herero people were able to flee to Botswana. Ovaherero captured after the ordeal of the desert were rounded up by the German soldiers for concentration camps as prisoners of war, where even larger numbers were to perish in Namibia’s holocaust.

In late 1904 after the Ovaherero campaign had subsided, the larger part of the Nama communities rose against the German government in order to rid the country of this foreign occupation. Hendrik Witbooi had broken military ties with the German government, and other Nama communities followed suit. Not all the Nama communities were however involved in the war. The war lasted for six years in southern Namibia, even after the Kaiser had declared the war over on his birthday at the end of January in 1907.
Some communities such as that of King Simon Kooper fled to Botswana and others sought refuge in the Cape Colony under the leadership of King Johannes Christian, Jacob Marenga and Abraham Morris. However in the end, various communities surrendered to the German forces, and met their fate in concentration camps as prisoners of war or were deported to West Africa.

After the war many Namibians were left without land to subsist on and were thus forced to work for the very same people that they laboriously fought against. A livelihood of a culturally wealthy people had been wiped away by the war. Rebuilding the Nama communities from their tattered existence because of the war was near impossible owing to the iron fist mentality with which the Germans governed Namibia after the war years. The Nama communities suffered the same fate when Namibia as a mandate territory of South Africa for seventy-five years. The Nama communities toiled under modern slavery during a time that they should have been striving to consolidate their communities after war. Namibians, including the various Nama communities, again resisted a foreign domination, apartheid South Africa, without having really reconstituted themselves as a people.

Open Book

The first and second chapters introduce the subject matter and show the methods and literature that I used to write this paper.
In *Scenes of the War* I share oral evidence to describe where and how the battles were fought in southern Namibia. I also piece together war details that I have collected from government documents such as those of the German and British administration at the time of the war.

*Across the Lines* documents the stories of the people that fled to seek refuge in neighbouring territories. The focus will thus be on the Nama communities led by leaders such as Simon Kooper, Jacob Marenga, Hendrik Witbooi and Cornelius Fredericks.

In *Memories of War* I document the experiences of members of Nama communities that have participated in events that aim to remember the lives of the people that took part in the war. Listening to the untold stories during these commemorations reveal the silences in the events of the war. My argument is that these commemorations serve as the few spaces where communities are able to finally reconstitute themselves after destructive events such as the Nama-German war. These commemoration events also play a vital role in communities restructuring severed traditional structures. I use the case study of Gaogu Gei-Tses or the /Khobesen Heroes Day to show how Nama communities are reviewing the Nama-German war. This annual commemoration event also attracts other Nama communities that participate in the cultural festivities.
Note on Orthography

Most of the Nama clan, place and river names are written in Khoekhoegowab in order to keep these names in usage when writing about Nama history. After all these are the terms used by Nama people with reference to themselves and their surroundings. I used Namakhoeland in the title instead of Namaland, which was what the land reserved for the Nama communities were referred to during South African administration. Namaqualand is in common usage even today but the 'qua' is a corruption of 'khoe', which means 'people'. So thus Namakhoeland in Khoekhoegowab means the 'land of the Nama people', and describes the historical places where the Nama people lived and still live up to this day. Southern Namibia and Northern Cape used to be referred to as Great and Little Namaqualand.
Chapter 2

Methodology and Literature Review

One Step Forward, A Hundred Steps Backward

I am investigating a story that happened in ancient times, more than a hundred years ago, not many people cared about anymore and certainly not many people wrote about. I had to dig deep and piece together as much as possible. I needed to find all the sources available in Cape Town, where I was studying, and Namibia, where the war occurred, that could give me information about the war between the Nama communities and German government, officials, settlers and soldiers in the early 20th Century.

The first source that I looked at concerning the German occupation of Namibia was H.G. Ritter-Peterson’s, ‘The Herrenvolk Mentality in German South West Africa 1884-1914’. It was the first time that I read the story of the Nama deportees to the German colonies of Cameroon and Togo. I consulted several other authors that had written about the war as a way of seeing what had been included or excluded, and since I too was investigating, where and how I could fill in the gaps in the narrative. The questions I needed answering to were how were the Nama communities in Namibia involved in the war and what were the consequences thereof?

In the books that I had read, the narrative of the Nama war had not been elaborately recorded so I looked for more information in primary sources in the National Archives of
South Africa in Cape Town. At the Archives in Cape Town I found correspondence between the German administration in Namibia and the British government at the Cape. This information was however scattered and when I asked the archivists whether there was any information on the war that took place in 1904 in Namibia, I was told that all the documentation concerning Namibia had been transported back to Namibia after independence in 1990. I was satisfied, at the time that the scant information that I had received would give me a lead to another source of information on the war.

I travelled to Namibia to scout the National Archives, and to my dismay all documents written at the time of the war were written by the German administration in German, of course, which I cannot read. However at the National Archives and Library of Namibia I found literature about the war that I did not find in Cape Town. Many articles had been written about issues concerning the war in various Journals published in Namibia, and elsewhere. But the wealth of information lay in the primary material written by the German government, books published about the war by the General Staff of the German Army, books written by officials of the German administration and diaries of soldiers that had been involved in the war.

I alternatively looked at photographs that had been taken during the war years and one could very easily write a narrative from just looking at the photographs. Natasha Becker in her article about photographic representations in ‘The Lives of the Colour Exhibition’,
writes that the ‘photographs like monuments and sites connect the past and the present because they provide clues to remembering’.  

The power of the photographs lies in the fact that photographs allow the audience to identify with familiar images of activities between individuals. This property of photographs in which one is able to see the ‘truth’ in the images of the past has dramatically changed the way in which memories are created. This photographic revolution has allowed for images to be captured as is, at a particular time and has further enabled people to relive that moment by seeing the image again. There are many photographs that I have used in this paper that I collected at the Archives in Namibia to complement the war narrative in the written form.

I also researched at the Evangelical Lutheran Church Archives where Pastor Pauly, the archivist, helped to translate some of the German material I found in the National Archives and in the Church Archives. Since many communities in southern Namibia had missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society present before the war years I tried to search for information of the war in the books that they had written about these communities.

The Church Archives were important because there I could find answers to the origins of the separatist spiritual movement better known as the Ethiopian movement which to an extent influenced the war in southern Namibia especially in the /Khobesen community. It

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8 H. Becker, The Lives of Colour Exhibition, p. 271
was interesting to see the missionaries' perspective of the Nama people and the war. At this point it was still difficult to piece the events of the war and collect a foundation of primary sources with which I could work on this paper.

I thus went back to the Cape Archives to find primary sources written in English and went through stacks of more correspondence, which had been written up at the time of the war, which I had been told on my first visit did not exist. This information I could use to compare to the stories as told in the interviews that I conducted, the commemoration events of the Nama communities and also with the literature of the war that other authors had written.

‘Was I there at the time of the War, No, So Why Are You Asking Me About the War?!'\textsuperscript{10}

The interviews were done to make sure that this paper was about people speaking for themselves.\textsuperscript{11} I found that not many interviewees were confident that they had any valuable information to share with me about the war, but during the conversations I heard stories of the war that had been passed down to them by their elders. I initially wanted to familiarise the interviewees with the work I was doing so that I could come back to them again if I needed more information at a later stage. I now know that it is almost impossible to get two interviews from the same person, because the interviewees

\textsuperscript{9}N. Becker, The Lives of Colour Exhibition, p. 271
\textsuperscript{10}The 'Under-Captain' of the /Khobes\textemdash{}en community at Gibeon, Christiaan Rooi asked me this question when I interviewed him for the first time.
themselves do not always have the time to see you again, so the first attempt is normally the last. The first interview was done in Gibeon, with Christiaan Rooi, who is second in command of the /Khobesen community. I was told that his father, an oral historian of note, had passed this tradition on to him. The interview was illuminating as we also spoke about the land question, which is a controversial issue at present in our country. He gave me a brief description of who the owners of land were in and around Gibeon and how it is that they got to own that land.

In August of 2004, I conducted interviews with Mr. Hans, #Eichab, Mr. Willem Konjore and Rev. Hendrik Witbooi. Mr. Hans #Eichab stated that not only one person knows the truth, encouraging me to seek more of the war story from other members of the Nama communities in Namibia. He described the various Nama settlements where the Nama people live and then described the various battlefields. He also spoke about how Hendrik Witbooi was shot and buried by his soldiers. He advised that in a war narrative a reader or listener should be enthralled by the story because of the graphic images of the battlefield as painted by the storyteller with her or his words.

Mr. Willem Konjore, the great grandson of Jacob Marenga, the war leader of the Nama communities in the far south, described what had been passed down to him through oral tradition in his family. He described the scenes of the places in the deep south, such as /Hei-/gaseb and Warmbad. He spoke about the fall of Jacob Marenga, a story in contrast to what has been recorded in history books, which is evidence of the discrepancies

11 This phrase is taken from the idea of people writing their history in their own words from a book by Patricia Hayes called 'Speak for Yourself'.
between oral tradition and the written word. This further shows the differences between how the war is remembered by the Nama communities and how outsiders have recorded it and also how written evidence is held in greater regard than oral history.

Dr. Hendrik Witbooi stated that even though the /Khobesen community commemorate the 1904 war and particularly the death of Captain Hendrik Witbooi annually, for the /Khobesen community genocide actually began in 1893-94, when the German forces tried to wipe out the Witbooi nation. He said that this massacre should be taken into consideration when discussing the Nama war. When we spoke about the expropriation of land as one of the consequences of the war, he said that it was far from being settled. He said though Namibia is independent, the struggle for land rights in southern Namibia still continues.

Instead of employing the question and answer type interviews I at times had conversations with several people, such as Sanna Swartbooi of Gibeon, where I would briefly broach the subject of the war and they would relay stories that they had heard. I found that when I did this, the speakers were more at ease and open, and we could sit for a while and talk about the war.

I also used interviews conducted by Mr. Markus Kooper of the !Hoacha!nas community, that I had translated from Nama into English for the Archives of the Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle project of the Namibian National Archives. I further worked with him and conducted interviews in eastern Namibia, where battles between the
Nama and Germans had taken place. Through this illuminating evidence I was able to piece together a war story as told by the Nama people.

I attended commemoration events in 2004, such as the History Conference at the University of Namibia and other events held by Nama communities in southern Namibia. I was able to attend the commemoration events of the /Khobesen community held at Goamus, a site in southern Namibia, where a battle took place between this community and the German forces. I also went to !Hoachalas where the Kai-/Khaun community had a 99th year of commemorating the death of their leader Manasse !Noreseb. This event was marked by the unveiling of the tombstone of Manasse !Noreseb where his remains are now buried.12 Nama communities that commemorate this war annually are the !Gami#nun, !Aman, /Khobesen and Kai-/Khaun communities of Warmbad, Bethanie, Gibeon and !Hoachalas respectively.

The primary sources for this paper were thus taken from the interviews and information collected from the commemoration events. And from the pens of Nama leaders or missionaries that lived amongst the Nama. Some of the information was collected also from the files of the German government about the war. The bulk of the primary sources for this paper were collected in the Cape Archives. I found information in these Archives on the war in southern Namibia that was sent from Namibia to the government of the Cape Colony. The British government received further intelligence from British military men that were attached to the German military. These men would send this information

12 King Manasse !Noreseb's remains previously lay near !Gulgoms in eastern Namibia close to where he fell in the battle against the German forces in December 1905.
to the Cape as it happened on the ground. The German army also pursued Nama soldiers that would escape over the border into the Cape Colony or Botswana. The Nama soldiers occasionally took old men, women and children to the Cape Colony or Botswana for refuge. Nama soldiers were also often taken into custody by the government. The German military in turn set up stores and transported supplies from across the border. The British government of the Cape Colony and Botswana borders set up Border patrols and thus they also had information about what was happening in Namibia. The police on patrol at the border would record all this data through correspondence to the authorities in the Cape Colony and Botswana. Some documents were received directly from the German government in Namibia and were translated from German into the English language.

What Do the Literary Ancestors Say?

For secondary information I looked at books such as, ‘The Herrenvolk Mentality in German South West Africa 1884-1914’ by H.G. Ritter Peterson. In this book the author relays the ‘herrenvolk’ mentality of the German administration. ‘Herr’ in the German language means ‘master’. This mentality is thus best described, as a ‘master-race’ mentality where the race that feels superior tries to dominate the race that they feel is inferior. She writes that ‘the settlers held the general view that Africans were an inferior race. They were considered to be mentally and emotionally equivalent to children.’\(^{13}\)

\(^{13}\) H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herrenvolk-Mentality in German South-West Africa 1884-1914, p. i
The 'herrenvolk' mentality the author says, is developed through racial ideology and colonial propaganda. This occurred in various stages in the development of colonisation in Namibia, and the Nama-Herero-German war is a particularly important watershed of the development of this mentality. Because it is after this war that the German forces were able to decisively dominate the communities in Namibia through genocidal measures, forced labour and the expropriation of land and resources. She states that after the war, 'the settlers set about to establish themselves as the undisputed masters of the country'.\(^{14}\) Her main emphasis is on the psychology of the German settlers in Namibia in the process of dehumanising the African people living there. And writes further that the Germans in viewing the Africans had a social Darwinist outlook and it is with this ideology that they acted in the manner that they did.

She discusses the Nama war, but in not so much detail and one does not get a sense of what transpired in the war in southern Namibia. She does however speak about the deportees of the prisoners of war to Togo and Cameroon. The author writes that the deporting the Nama people was a plan to slowly wipe out the nation. The Germans described the Nama as idle, could not really be relied on as labourers and they felt that they should not survive the punishment meted out to them in the prisoner of war camps.\(^{15}\)

This attitude as held by the Germans in the country further supports the herrenvolk mentality, which she advocates in her book. What is noteworthy is that the author studied the writings of German officials such as Hintrager, Leutwein and Diemling to understand

\(^{14}\) H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herrenvolk-Mentality in German South-West Africa 1884-1914, p. ii
the mentality of the people that were establishing the policies of the German administration in Namibia.

Helmut Bley claims that his book, ‘Namibia Under German Rule’, is a comprehensive book on German colonial rule beginning with Leutwein’s leadership in Namibia. In the book Bley mentions that the war has been dealt with extensively by other authors, but that writers should further analyse the survival strategies and how the various communities were able reconstitute themselves in the war and post-war period. He says authors that have written about the German colonial period in Namibia after him have taken good strides in including the various communities in Namibia in the war narrative. And that these researchers have allowed for the communities to show their side of the war narrative. Bley maintains that this has been done by means of the communities ‘laying claim to historical continuity, to land and cattle, and to the graves of the ancestors’. This is especially important for this study, because it is through these markings that the various Nama communities remember the war.

Bley speaks about the relations between the Africans and the Germans from the time that Leutwein is instated. So the reader gets a very good idea of how Namibia is established as a colony by the Germans. Bley says that in none of Germany’s other colonies did the Germans demand socio-political and economic supremacy like they did in Namibia.17

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15 H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herrenvolk-Mentality in German South-West Africa 1884-1914, p. 232
16 H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, Introduction
17 H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, p. xvii

The origins of the war can thus be seen from this time as the relations as described between the Africans and Europeans show why Africans would resist colonialism in the way that they did at a later stage.

Bley downplays the aggressive and violent antics of the German government, administration and settlers since their arrival in Namibia. Concerning the relations of the Africans and the Germans in Namibia, Bley writes that colonisation started in a way that was not aggressive at first. 'Military conquest was neither the intention of Berlin nor of the colony's first governor, Major Leutwein.'

Bley however quotes the German Chancellor, Von Caprivi, when addressing Leutwein as saying that 'in every circumstance...our military position towards the natives...must be preserved and increasingly strengthened'. So how was it not the intention of the German government to use military prowess in subjugating African people, when it was their clear intention from genesis.

Curt Von Francois who had been in charge of the German forces before Theodor Leutwein in Namibia had used force in trying to persuade the /Khobesen community to sign protection treaties. Theodor Leutwein had been sent to Namibia to further persuade the /Khobesen and other Nama communities in Namibia to accept German protection. He

An ambitious legislation such as the Glen Grey Act of August 1894 established by the Cape House of Assembly shows the nature of relations of Europeans and Africans in South Africa. This piece of legislation also named by C.J. Rhodes, as the Native Bill for Africa, sought to increase taxation to swell the labour market with Africans to reduce any rights that South Africans had in land, and adversely change the structure of traditional leadership. South Africans and Namibians were thus at the same time resisting repressive laws established by Europeans.

18 H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, p. xvii

19 H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, p. 5
did these through force as can be seen from his treatment of the /Khauan and their leader, King Andries Lamberts, who was executed when he did not comply with Theodor Leutwein’s orders to ‘act peacefully and quietly in the future’. When visiting the second Nama clan, the !Aman under Simon Kooper, Theodor Leutwein stated that they should sign the protection treaty or leave the country. Theodor Leutwein then delivered a military ultimatum, at which point Simon Kooper signed the protection treaty.

Bley acknowledges that the measures taken by the German forces during the war amounted to genocide. He argues, the German government only at a later stage employed violent means to subdue the Namibians, the height of this so-called structural violence was the war period, in which the genocide was committed. In the chapter called Military Responses, he summarises the reasons and events of the Herero and Nama war. Little is however described of the various battles that took place or how the Nama were able to fend off the German army for so long. From this entire chapter one is not able to gain a clear understanding of the war events of the Nama community, or relate to the human aspect of the events described.

The rest of the chapter is dedicated to the German military and the settlers and how they responded to the war. He writes more about the war policies as espoused by Leutwein, his allies and about the reactions of the settlers in the war. In discussing the policies developed by the German administration during the war years as from 1904, one however

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20 H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, p. 10
gains an understanding of the socio-economic and political discrimination of Africans by the German colonial forces.

In conclusion the author writes that the German administration in Namibia was influenced in their control of policies more 'by general European notions of social conflict than by any particular colonial concepts of racial inequality'.\textsuperscript{21} I disagree with this statement because, besides the history of the practices of racism of the German administration in Namibia, racial discrimination was made a law by the German administration by a decree passed on the 18\textsuperscript{th} of August 1907. This decree signed by Lindequist, the Governor of Namibia at that time, also known as the 'order of the Governor of SWA pertaining to measures for the control of the natives' sought to totally erase the rights that Namibians had in their land and resources and also established slavery.\textsuperscript{22}

Bley says that if there was any racial discrimination, it was a method of protecting social distance and not an expression of unreflective superiority. Why would a community want to 'protect social distance' if they felt that who ever they needed a distance from were equal to them in race, class, gender and so on! He also writes that the 'modern native was neither a slave nor a full citizen'. So if Africans were forced to work for Europeans after they had successfully expropriated their resources and they were not considered to be full citizens or slaves in their own country, then what was their precarious position in society?

\textsuperscript{21} H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, p. 282
\textsuperscript{22} H. Bley, Namibia Under German Rule, p. 172
Is it not true that the situation that Africans of various communities found themselves in after the war was in fact modern slavery?

Another book that deals with the colonial history of Namibia in its entirety is Horst Drechsler’s, Let Us Die Fighting. This was a book that was endorsed by the founding President of Namibia during the liberation struggle. This author is adamant about ‘exposing the hated policy of colonialism whatever its guise’. 23 The book maintains the struggle story of the Herero and Nama and in doing so, Drechsler places these two communities as the focus of the historical narrative. He is able to show the colonial policies of the German government because he had access to the files of the Imperial Colonial Office. Drechsler states that even though these files were written by persons who propagated colonialism, it was not intended for the public’s viewing, so one can very well gain an understanding of the German-styled colonialism because it is in these files that the policies and attitudes towards the Namibians were expressed. He says that by viewing these files one can indirectly extract the story of the African struggle in Namibia because ‘as a rule, no written records of the Africans are available to document their struggle against colonialism’. 24

Drechsler writes that the 1904-08 period in Namibia ‘is arguably the most cataclysmic event in the history of South West Africa’. 25 He mentions this because the German government only after the war was able to take control of the large parts of the land and

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23 H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 7
24 H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 2
25 H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 231
resources of first the Herero and then the Nama communities. Drechsler in his book describes how these communities were literally destroyed by genocide orchestrated by the German government. He shows that the Herero and Nama communities started the war because the German government was undermining their rights to land and resources. Drechsler shows the political tactics employed by the German government and the social and economic reasons for these policies before, during and after the war.

He, being sympathetic towards the resistance struggle of the Herero and Nama communities writes about the steps taken by these communities towards liberation in the war period. He thus writes about them as an active part of Namibia’s history, unlike other writers that merely write about Africans as objects in the events of the war.

Drechsler recounts the stages at which these communities had the upper hand and what led to their downfall in the war. He is also, to a lesser extent, able to show the responses of that the Herero and Nama communities had towards the invading German administration by looking and sometimes including the testaments of people in these communities. This I think is the area in which his book would have been of even greater value, had there been more of these oral testimonies. He however leans more towards the sources in the files of the Imperial Colonial Office which are used to describe the scenes of the war, the border violations as well as the aftermath of the war in which he describes the inhumane situation in which the African population was forced to live in, such as the prisoner of war camps, the deportations to the other German colonial sites in West Africa and forced labour in Namibia. He clearly shows that the colonial policy of resettling
Germans almost destroyed a nation through calculated plans of expropriation of resources and annihilation of African communities.

In ‘The Revolt of the Hereros’, by Jon Bridgman, there is an emphasis on the battle scenes, the weaponry used and the terrain on which the battles were fought. This information allowed me to have an image of the actual war scenes. He describes why the war lasted for long in southern Namibia even though the Nama soldiers were outnumbered and the German soldiers had modern firepower. Because of his attention to war detail one is able to understand the logistics of the war far better than when reading other narratives on the war. He describes that the terrain was one where the Nama soldiers were better adapted and that because of the artillery acquired by the German army, transport problems in this terrain were problematic.

He writes that unlike in the German army where one could differentiate between civilians and soldiers, in the Nama army one could not easily tell the soldiers apart from the shepherd, because everyone was an active part of the war against the Germans. He also describes that the difference between the war tactics used by the German soldiers and how that was hopeless against the tactics used by the Nama soldiers. He describes guerrilla warfare in detail and suggests that this was a great factor in prolonging the war in southern Namibia.

Like many Eurocentric scholars that write about African people, his terminology in the book is dated. But what is even more shocking is that this book was published in the 80s.
He uses the terms hottentot and native so freely without regard for how these terms have been used to subjugate African people, and especially seeing that Nama or Herero people do not refer to themselves in these terms. The author states that as far as possible he used the same terms used in the records of the German administration. I cringe at such practices, because these records contain a derogatory mentality and terminology used by the German government to describe Namibians. Authors normally excuse themselves and say that this practice of using the terminology as used during the time at which the event occurred is in line with the historical context of the subject. This, the authors do without being sensitive about the context of the terms within the present period, especially seeing that the terms were previously used in a racist paradigm. The use of, for example, hottentot was unacceptable to Nama in the past and still is today.

Bridgman writes about the nature of the people by referring to what previous travellers have recorded. He observes that travellers 'generally dismissed the Namas as shiftless, lazy, and cruel'. He quotes from ideas that he says were shared by travellers that had been in contact with Nama, 'in all attacks of the Namas, the most atrocious barbarities were committed. The men were unmercifully shot down, the hands and feet of the women chopped off; the bowels of the children ripped up etc. and all this to satisfy a savage thirst for blood'.26 Other particularly generalising statements in this book to show readers the culture of the people in Namibia are, 'Europeans accused the Hereros of being cruel, deceitful and untrustworthy. The first charge is no doubt true, although in this regard the

26 J. Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros, p. 23-4
Germans ran them a close second.27 After telling a story of the Herero men’s cruelty, the author writes, ‘this is not an isolated horror story, for cruelty undoubtedly played an integral part in the life of the Herero.28

The author hardly offers an alternative reading of the culture of these specific people so that the readers are able to make their own analyses, and when he does he often compares to norms of European society. Bridgman also states that the legal system of the Herero was primitive by European standards, but had a sense of equity and justice.29 Secondly the point of reference when observing Nama or Herero culture is far from the author’s reality, because we do not know whether Bridgman actually came to Namibia to study the culture of the Nama or Herero. These examples are a testament of eurocentrism employed in ethnographic writing, a style used extensively in historical writing, such as Bridgman’s.

It is almost as if in the colonial history of Namibia, the Nama and Herero are mere objects. For example Bridgman writes in his last paragraph that, ‘the Germans, like many nations before and after, were trapped in the paradox of power. On the one hand, they had almost unlimited ability to do violence to their enemies. But on the other, all their cannons, all their machine guns…could not enable them to impose their will upon a handful of nearly powerless people. They learned to their dismay that even ‘black

27 J. Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros, p. 16
28 J. Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros, p. 20
29 J. Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros, p. 21
savages' would sometimes rather die as free men than as slaves. For all their power, they could kill but not convince'.

Bridgman does not write about the Nama war in detail in the chapter in his book called The Hottentot Revolt. For example, in a paragraph describing how Jacob Marenga came to his demise, he does not elaborate on the details, the reader has to fill in the missing information. Also it is misleading that he writes that the war ended in 1907 in southern Namibia, 'with the surrender of Cornelius, the last organised resistance of the Hottentots collapsed'. By stating this he leaves out a great deal of the war narrative. Further the war from the perspective of the soldiers or the Nama community as a whole is sorely missing.

A noteworthy book that does describe the fall of Jacob Marenga in detail is the one by John Masson entitled, 'Jakob Marengo: An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia'. This author engages with the struggle of the !Gami#nun community of Warmbad. He writes about Jacob Marenga because 'the role of Jakob Marenga in the Nama resistance campaign against the German army from 1903 to 1907 is mentioned cursorily by most English language historians of South West Africa'. The author had the privilege of camping out in the places where Jacob Marenga and his army had been planning and fighting battles against the German army. Using the knowledge of the landscape gained

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30 J. Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros, p. 171
31 J. Bridgman, The Revolt of the Hereros, p. 21
32 J. Masson, Jakob Marengo: An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia, p. iii
through his journey, the author is able to describe the terrain where the war had taken place, which is pivotal to understanding the logistics of the Nama soldiers at the time.

The author describes the tactics used by the Nama soldiers, and this is the first attempt by an author to describe the method used when the Nama soldiers fought the Germans in the deep south, besides stating that the Nama soldiers employed guerrilla tactics. Masson also describes the problems that were encountered by these warriors. He further describes some battle scenes in detail and how it was that the war between the German army and Jacob Marenga ended in an ambush by the British military officials.

This he does however from the pens of the colonialist themselves, as he mainly relies on the war history as recorded in ‘Die Kampfe der Deutschen Truppen in Sudwestafrika’, the official war story written by the General Staff of the German Army. It is not entirely problematic using these documents because this is where you can at least find a report of the war, however it is a one-sided story and disables the inquirer from seeing the war from the perspective of the Nama community. Examples of inconsistencies present when relying solely on the German records as mentioned by the author is ‘although the Germans meticulously recorded their own casualties, they only occasionally recorded the Nama losses’. Having said this, I fully understand through the research that I have done, that it is often impossible to collect information about the war from Nama descendants.

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33 J. Masson, Jakob Marengo: An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia, p. 42
The author knows this too well and states plainly that the reason for not being able to get the perspective of Nama involved in the war was because it was difficult at the time of the research to get such information. But he further states in his postscript that ‘personal violence, expropriation of land and property, and the general dismemberment of the indigenous society...was particularly severe for the Nama, a folk memory would have survived, however fragmented and blurred’.³⁴ This seems to show that even though it is not possible to get all the information about the war, some should have survived, that can be salvaged.

A writer that sheds light on the deep-rooted causes of the war in the south is Brian Mokopakgosi. His Ph.D. thesis, ‘German Colonialism in Microcosm' and an article in the journal ‘People and Empires in African History' both deal with issues that show how the land and resources of the Nama communities were expropriated by big businesses. In ‘Conflict and Collaboration in South-Eastern Namibia Missionaries, Concessionaires, and the Nama’s war against German Imperialism, 1880-1908’, he writes that ‘even though there have been numerous studies of resistance to colonial rule in Namibia... they are incomplete’. ‘Authors have paid too much attention to the Herero resistance war of 1904-08. No study of comparable scholarly quality on other communities has appeared’.³⁵

What is particular important about this paper is that the author cites that the reasons for the war in southern Namibia was about the expropriation of land by concession companies supported by the missionaries and the German government long before 1903.

³⁴ J. Masson, Jakob Marengo: An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia, p. 55
Mokopakgosi writes that the examination of the involvement of the south-eastern Nama communities in the war must be done against the background of the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission, the KharasKhoma Syndicate which later became the South African Territories Company (SATCO).\textsuperscript{36}

Mokopakgosi describes in detail how it is that KharasKhoma and later SATCO originated and developed into institutions that sought to exploit the Nama communities. He writes that by 1892, the government allowed to be transferred to the syndicate over 53 per cent of the land belonging to the south eastern Nama.\textsuperscript{37} Of interest is the fact that when the reasons for the war of 1903 in Warmbad are cited, it is normally stated that the war was about an incident with a goat. Mokopakgosi writes that this incident was a catalyst for the war, but that underlying that was the progressive expropriation of rights in land and resources of these specific Nama communities.\textsuperscript{38}

Casper Erichsen in his recent thesis about Namibia’s concentration camps and prisoners of war writes that ‘following 1908 the camps had virtually disappeared from the country’s historiography, from popular discourse and eventually from memory’.\textsuperscript{39} By researching and circulating this information about the concentration camps he brings it rightfully into focus of Namibian war historiography.

\textsuperscript{35} B.T. Mokopakgosi, Conflict and Collaboration in South-Eastern Namibia, p. 185
\textsuperscript{36} B.T. Mokopakgosi, Conflict and Collaboration in South-Eastern Namibia, p. 186
\textsuperscript{37} B.T. Mokopakgosi, Conflict and Collaboration in South-Eastern Namibia, p. 189
\textsuperscript{38} B.T. Mokopakgosi, Conflict and Collaboration in South-Eastern Namibia, p. 192
\textsuperscript{39} C. Erichsen, The Angel of Death, p. 8-9
This thesis contains insightful information about the establishment of these concentration
camps during the 1904-08 period, and shows that after the Herero war and during the
Nama war, these communities were targeted by the German government and sent to these
camps for labour or annihilation.\textsuperscript{40} He gives evidence of where these concentration camps
were set up in Namibia, the living conditions of the people in these camps and the
activities that they engaged in while in these camps. Erichsen shows the mortality figures
of a camp such as Shark Island near Luderitz in southern Namibia, which was also,
dubbed Death Island.\textsuperscript{41} This evidence clearly shows the genocidal intentions of the
German government.

He relies mainly on German primary materials for information on the concentration
camps such as Shark Island, where Nama communities such as the /Khobes, //Hawoben and the !Amanwere kept. He states that information that he may get today
from other sources besides the German primary material could be biased and untruthful
because the ‘genocide issue is still very contentious and emotional’.\textsuperscript{42} I agree that the
genocide is an emotional issue, but it does not necessarily take away the truthfulness of
some of the accounts that may be collected in the present day.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40} C. Erichsen, The Angel of Death, p. 167
\textsuperscript{41} C. Erichsen, The Angel of Death, p. 167-197
\textsuperscript{42} C. Erichsen, The Angel of Death, p. 29
\textsuperscript{43} Casper Erichson initiated a Shark Island Oral History Project in 2005, where he is collecting oral
evidence about the concentration camps in Nama communities such as Gibeon, Bethanie, Vaalgras and
Koes. I am working with him on this project for the Archives of the Anti-Colonial Resistance and
Liberation Struggle.
passed down about ancestors. Both these forms of oral evidence were used for research in this paper.\textsuperscript{45}

In ‘Personal Narratives of Political History’, Tristan McConnell shows how vital oral evidence is in history writing. McConnell writes that ‘personal narratives, in the form of life histories, offer a way for us to problematise accepted notions of historical processes, and question the veracity and lack of contradiction in impersonal historical accounts’.\textsuperscript{46} The complexities in the war narrative are like the pieces of a woven cloth.

Luisa Passerini however stresses that collecting oral stories does not solve the problem of memory work. She says that research should be done in other areas that would give more weight to the personal narratives such as music, theatre and social sciences in order to view the various ways in which historical events are remembered in society.\textsuperscript{47} My argument is also that the commemoration events expressed in a variety of ways add emphasis to the stories told about the war.

‘Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity’, by John R. Gillis and other social scientists showcase remembering within the framework of modern politics where nations are creating a national identity. A study of how a national identity is constructed by using memory is viewed under various subjects such as, The Problem of Identity and Memory, Memory in the Construction of National Identities, Memories of War and Wars over Memory and Politics of Memory and Identity. This work is relevant because it shows the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{45} P. Hayes, Speak For Yourself, p. 10
  \item \textsuperscript{46} T. McConnell, Personal Narratives of Political History, p. 27
\end{itemize}
problems involved in how and for what purposes historical events such as the war are remembered.

In 'Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa', Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool describe how oral history in South Africa has been used as a source of counter-memories to established ways in which certain events have been documented. The stories from individuals about the war may surface as part of this counter memory of the war, which has been subjugated in the past and present. While the research on the Nama-German war continues new evidence collected through oral history may illuminate some of the unanswered questions about the war.

In 'The Burden of Memory, The Muse of Forgiveness', Wole Soyinka writes that the sign of true justice after war is reparations. Reparations to communities that suffered atrocities during the war is at the heart of the war narrative in Namibia. Communities such as the Ovaherero community are relentless in their struggle for war reparations from the German government. Wole Soyinka also states that remembering atrocities of the past aids to ‘exorcise the past and secure a collective peace of mind, the healing of a bruised racial psyche’. This is an important process that has already been taken up by communities that were affected by the war against the German government.

47 L. Passerini, Memory and Totalitarianism, p. 4
48 W. Soyinka, The Burden of Memory, p. 31
49 W. Soyinka, The Burden of Memory, p. 60
Commemorations of the war in communities in Namibia are sites where the healing work has begun.
Chapter 3
Scenes of War

Introduction

Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, then everywhere is war.\(^{50}\)

War is a constant feature in the colonial history of Namibia. There was war between the various communities before the arrival of the Germans, such as the Nama and Herero, which ended in peace in 1892.\(^{51}\) There were further battles between the indigenous communities and the German forces from 1893, and after this not a year went by where peace prevailed in the country.\(^{52}\) In some cases the communities would wage war with the German forces after they had signed 'peace agreements', such as the Gei-/Khaus Nama under King Manasse Lambert\(^{53}\) and the Herero and Mbanderu under King Nicodemus and Kahimemua.\(^{54}\)

Most indigenous communities were militarily overpowered upon which they signed peace agreements and became allies of the German government. The /Khobesen community, after the battles at Hornkrantz and Naukluft, under the leadership of Hendrik

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\(^{50}\) Excerpt from a song called 'War' by Robert Nesta Marley interpolated from a speech made by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia at the United Nations, New York City, 4 October 1963

\(^{51}\) B. Mokopajgosi, Imperialism and War, p. p. 45

\(^{52}\) ZBU 1884-1915 Vol. 1, Inventar der Akten des Zentralbureaus des Kaisertlichen Gouvernements, p. 66-8

\(^{53}\) The German court martial on the request of Major Leutwein sentenced King Andreas Lambert, former leader of the Gei-Khauan to death, after he had allegedly committed crimes and was unfit to govern his community. Eduard Lambert, Andreas Lambert's brother, was appointed 'Acting-Captain' when the Protection Agreement was signed with the Khaua community. Manasse Lambert, Andreas Lambert's nephew, was the leader of the Gei-Khauan during their resistance against the German government in 1896 at Otjunda.
Witbooi became indispensable collaborators of the German government.\textsuperscript{55} However this community, amongst others, were to later wage war against the German government regardless of the fact that they had signed for peace in earlier times.

The period of 1903-08 is significant in the sense that it ushered in a period where whole communities were fighting against German oppression, unlike the earlier period of warfare, where sporadic engagements from small communities occurred against the German forces. After the first incidence of war in southern Namibia in 1903, the Herero community waged war in 1904. Thereafter most of the Nama communities in southern Namibia openly resisted German rule. The German forces thus had to suddenly fend themselves off from the resistance of a large part of the country.

The infamous war where most Nama communities militarily resisted the German government began in the far south-eastern corner of the country in Warmbad, Sandfontein and Hartbeestmünd from October to December 1903. ‘The war of the goat’, as it is popularly known, is what sparked off the general resistance. This resistance by the !Gami\#nun community is often not included in the war narrative as it was seen as just an earlier incidence of resistance leading up to the ‘Great War’. However this small incident was to form the foundation of the later wars and groom guerrilla leaders such as Jacob Marenga and Abraham Morris, who were members of this community that continued the war well into 1907.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} ZBU, A.I.a.2. vol. 1, Treaty of Protection and Amity between Khausas Hottentots, Herero Captain Nicodemus; I. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. 146
\textsuperscript{55} A. Heywood et al, The Hendrik Witbooi Papers, p. 207
\textsuperscript{56} J. Masson, Jakob Marengo: An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia, p. 17
The /Khobesen community of Hendrik Witbooi followed suit in October 1904, even after assisting the Germans to subdue various forms of resistance from indigenous communities for ten years. Even in the 1903, Witbooi soldiers were sent to help quell the rebellious !Gami#nun and plead with some of them to surrender to the German forces. Hendrik Witbooi also sent fighters to engage with the Ovaherero community, who were destroyed by these joint forces in August 1904. 57

In a letter to Major Theodor Leutwein during the war, Hendrik Witbooi explains why he ended peace with the German government. He writes, 'I have read your letter of 21 October and shall answer your question about the cause. It goes back a long way. You told me that you had read my letter to Captain Hermanus van Wyk: therefore you have seen what fills my heart. As you point out, I have for ten years stood in your law, under your law, and behind your law – and not I alone, but all the chiefs of Africa. For this reason I fear God the Father. All the souls, which have for the last ten years perished from all the nations of Africa and from among all its chiefs, without guilt or cause, without justification of warfare in times of peace, and under treaties of peace, accuse me. I will have to answer a great reckoning to God our Father in Heaven' 58

From this letter one does not know for certain when Hendrik Witbooi and his community had been feeling this way or planning war against the German government. It is certain from this letter however that he had these feelings for a long time, which means that his previous actions were prompted by the fact that the German forces had shown greater

57 K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 100,111
military prowess, thus he could not fight against them. It is also clear that it became unbearable to live under the German authorities, thus he chose to defy them. Hendrik Witbooi fought persistently until he was wounded in October 1905 near /Hei-/gaseb (Vaalgras), after which the rest of his community surrendered to the German forces.

Following Hendrik Witbooi other Nama communities such as the !Aman of Bethanie under the leadership of Cornelius Fredericks, who defected from King Paul Fredericks with some community members, joined the war in 1904. General Von Trotha put a price of 200 marks on Cornelius Fredericks’ head in May of 1905 in a war declaration delivered to the Nama communities at Gibeon. Cornelius Fredericks fought alongside Jacob Marenga and Johannes Christiaan from 1904 until 1906, when he surrendered to the German forces.⁵⁹

The //Hawoben community of Koes also joined the war under their King Hans Hendrik. Their campaign started on the 8th of December 1904 and lasted after several engagements until 1905 when they surrendered to the German government.⁶⁰ They were taken in as prisoners of war first to Windhoek, Okahandja and then to Shark Island, where they suffered the same fate as the Nama communities from Gibeon and Bethanie.⁶¹

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⁵⁸ A. Heywood et al, The Hendrik Witbooi Papers, p. 193
⁵⁹ K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 128
⁶⁰ K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 124
⁶¹ C. Erichson, The Angel of Death, p. 130, 161
The Kai-/Khaun community fought under King Manasse !Noreseb at !Gu!Guoms in eastern Namibia on the 1st of December 1905. Gu!Guoms is located north east of !Hoacha!nas, which is the centre of the Kai-/Khaun community. After they suffered a defeat at the hands of the German shutztruppe, the community surrendered and was made to work in Windhoek as prisoners of war. Unlike other communities that were sent to concentration camps, the Kai-/Khaun were allowed to settle at their home, !Hoacha!nas.

Besides some of the Bethanie community under King Paul Fredericks, other Nama communities living in southern Namibia remained loyal to their ‘protection agreements’ with the German government. These were the Berseba community under the leadership of King Christian Goliath, the Keetmanshoop community under King Jonathan Tseib and the Herero community of King Jan Apollus of /Hei/gaseb.

**Defiant Landscape**

The battlefields of the 1903-08 Nama-German war are located in southern Namibia below the Tropic of Capricorn, across the !Gariep (Orange) River in the Northern Cape and to the east of the Nossob River in Botswana. Most of the battles took place in the vast country of southern Namibia.

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62 Grosser Generalstab, Die Kampfe der Deutschen Truppen, p. 346
63 Interview conducted by Mr. M. Kooper with Abraham Jager, !Hoacha!nas, September 2003
64 K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 116
James Alexander, who traversed the lands of the ‘Great Namaqua, Boschmans and Hill Damaras’, described the land of the ‘Great Namaqua’ in his expedition in 1838. He wrote, ‘over plains of vast extent, desolate and silent as the grave, covered with stone and scattered bushes - the sight of these solitudes was enough to damp the ardour of the most determined voyageur, and to sink the spirits, as the eye wandered over the waste in search of some hill, or some object on which to rest’. 65

Southern Namibia to this day fits the description by James Alexander, and this certainly was the case during the war. Southern Namibia is flanked on both sides by Deserts, to the west is the Namib Desert and to the east lie the red soils of the Kalahari Desert. This flat lying plateau is known as the Nama Karoo Basin and is divided into three vegetation zones, namely the Dwarf Shrub Savanna, Dwarf Shrub – Southern Kalahari and the Karas Dwarf Shrubland. The landscape thus, as the names suggest, consist of short shrubs and grasses that are sparsely scattered on the vast plains. 66

The land displays a range of hills and low mountains on the west of the //Oub(Fish) River, the high mountains in that range are the Naukluft Mountains in the south-west near Rehoboth and the Huns Mountains at the !Gariep (Orange) River. The Great Karas Mountains are on the east of the //Oub River near Karasburg. A common feature of these mountains in southern Namibia is their flat tops. 67 The vegetation and rainfall around these mountains are often in contrast to the surrounding lower lying areas, as the mountains prevent moisture from passing ahead, allowing rain to fall and maintaining a

65 J. E. Alexander, An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa, p. 215
high water catchment area. The rivers in southern Namibia are non-perennial, the prominent rivers are the Gariep, //Oub and Gamchab. These rivers erode the landscape as seen in the //Oub River Canyon.

In an extract from Carol F. Brink's journal about the expedition of Hendrik Hop and his Company to Great Namaqualand in 1761-2 he describes an encounter with the Gamchab River. "We left the above-mentioned camp and proceeding among the mountains then arrive at the Leeuwen R. which arises up north from the Bergfontein and empties itself in the Great R. south easterly from here...Along the banks of this river Red-wooded trees and Thorn-bush, we found it dry but along its banks saw signs that in the rainy season it could rise very high".68

68 E.E. Mossop, The Journals of Brink and Rhenius, p. 51
The average rainfall in southern Namibia is between 100-350mm every year, which are the lowest averages in comparison to the rest of the country, with the exception to the desert areas. Further it only reaches 300-350 in a small area in the far south-west close to the !Gariep River, which means that in the most part of the region the average annual rainfall is between 100 and 250mm. According to average rainfall figures recorded by the German Governor Theodor Leutwein for Namibia from 1901 to 1903, the figures for southern Namibia had the lowest averages with Gibeon at 85mm, Keetmanshoop 83mm and Bethany 69mm. Compared to the figures above, it shows that there was a drought in southern Namibia during the years in which Theodor Leutwein made his recordings.

This region is one of the driest regions in Namibia, second only to the desert regions. This dryness is however not only caused by the poor rainfall but also by the air movements, or more specifically the Subtropical-High Pressure Zone. This climatic phenomenon causes little moisture to remain in the air, thus not enough rain clouds.

69 J. Mendelsohn et al., Atlas of Namibia: A Portrait of the Land and its People, p. 84
70 K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 97
form. This region also displays the hottest temperatures in the country, especially in the central area between Mariental and Keetmanshoop, as well as near the !Gariep River, and the coldest, especially between Mariental and Keetmanshoop.

Theodor Leutwein speaking about a possible campaign against the !Gaminun long before the war commented that, 'the country is so deficient in water and pasture land that a force of 100 men would pose an almost insoluble supply problem. We would be defeated not by the people, but by Nature...all future wars against the Hottentots will be more difficult'. During the war in 1903 a letter from the Resident Magistrate in the district of Gordonia in the Cape Colony testified to this by stating that mobilising German forces in southern Namibia was a difficult task owing to the drought in the country. And that they would have to inconceivably transport water supplies and animals for long distances at a time.
Roots of Resistance

The initial engagements that Nama communities had with Europeans in Namibia were with the various missionaries, traders and explorers that travelled in southern Africa. Some Nama communities already had strong European influences before trekking to Namibia across the Gariep River and still maintained trading ties with the Cape Colony. The missionaries and traders that lived in the Nama communities had a profound influence in the Nama's western acculturation. Their methods of acculturation were to illuminate the nature of western influences that the Nama communities later resisted.

Abraham and Christian Albrecht of the London Missionary Society established the first evangelising mission amongst the !Garifun at Warmbad in 1806, after they moved from Jäger Afrikaner and his community at !Kouchalnas or Blyderverwacht. Johann Heinrich Schmelon who with his Nama wife translated the New Testament into Nama established a station at !Ungantes or Bethanie in 1814. Missionary Ebner resumed the christianising mission amongst the Afrikaners in 1815 at !Kouchalnas. Robert Moffat the

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74 Attorney General's Office 1859, Resident Magistrate's Office, Gordonia 17th November 1903, Boerentau Rising: German South West Africa
75 S.V. V. Nambala et al, The History of the Church in Namibia, p. 9
preferred missionary of the Afrikaners moved there in 1816. The Rhenish Mission Society took over the work of the LMS in 1842 and opened missions also in Berseba, Gibeon, !Gochas, !Hoacha!nas and Rietfontein.

The mission work was challenging at first but these stations gradually became important centres where the nomadic Nama communities settled more permanently. The missionaries encouraged the Nama to accept Christianity and western education. They taught the Nama to cultivate land and supplemented their economy with European consumer goods. The missionaries were traders in their own right and opened stores where they could sell amongst other goods, weapons and ammunition as well. With these activities the missionaries effectively created a situation where Nama economies were increasingly reliant on foreign markets to thrive. This work of the missionaries contradicted their evangelising mission. The Nama made use of these goods to take part in raiding and gun running to establish key positions in society, thus destabilising their traditional way of life. Also the work of the missionaries could not be successful if they did not oppress the traditional socio-political and economic base of the Nama communities.

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76 S.V.V. Nambala et al, The History of the Church in Namibia, p. 12
77 S.V.V. Nambala et al, The History of the Church in Namibia, p. 18
78 B. Mokopakgosi, Imperialism and War, p. 19
79 The wars for paramountcy in the 1800s were perpetuated by the dependency of Nama and Herero communities on European goods. The Nama and Herero would use exploits from raiding and alienation of land as resources to trade with.
80 C. Gutzmore, Land, Kin and Ancestor, 22 August 2005
The influence of the missionaries in the lives of the Nama further assisted their governments in cementing colonial objectives. The German government literally gained ground in Namibia by signing protection treaties with the various communities. The missionaries were translators and witnesses to the treaties that gave the German government partial control of the land and resources of the Nama communities. Missionary Bam co-signed the ‘Treaty of Protection and Amity’ between the German Empire and Bethany in 1884. Other missionaries from the Rhenish Missionary Society that assisted the German government in concluding these treaties with Nama communities were E. Judt of !Hoacha! as also in 1884 and Carl Wandres of Warmbad in 1890.81

The missionaries also profited from assisting land companies such as the Kharaskhoma Exploring and Prospecting Syndicate to whom the !Gami#nun, //Hawoben and Tseib Community of Keetmanshoop conceded large parts of their land in October and November 1889.82 The Resident Missionary at Warmbad, Carl Wandres was given shares in the company for the upkeep of the mission station after assisting with the contracts between the Land Company and the Nama communities involved.83 It is interesting to note that the son of the Missionary Hugo Hahn, John Theophilus Hahn, was the leader of the Kharaskhoma expedition that unscrupulously negotiated land grants with these Nama communities.84

81 NAN, A. 40, Translation of Protection Treaties
82 Deed of Ratification of the titles of The Kharaskhoma Exploring and Prospecting Syndicate Limited, October 1892; South West Africa Annual, A Company Romance, 7th June 1920
83 Deed of Ratification of the titles of The Kharaskhoma Exploring and Prospecting Syndicate Limited, p. 29
84 Deed of Ratification of the titles of The Kharaskhoma Exploring and Prospecting Syndicate Limited, p. 25; H. Dreschler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 48
So contentious was the land issue within the !Gami#nun community that the German government had to step in to assist Willem Christian when his leadership was threatened by internal tension concerning the extensive land rights given to the Kharaskhoma Company.\textsuperscript{85} Major Leutwein commenting on the land question in southern Namibia stated that ‘the large concession granted to the Kharaskhoma in the south has created so much ill-feeling that it may lead to the outbreak of a revolution’.\textsuperscript{86} When the Company sought ratification for the agreements made between them and the Nama communities, the German government merely told the Company that all land concessions were to be approved by the government according to the law of 1888 promulgated by Commissioner Heinrich Goring.\textsuperscript{87} The German government had thus affectively taken ownership of the land dispute and sidelined the three Nama communities in their land affairs. The government, in order to avoid internal hostilities, suggested that the Company take control of the land in portions and transferred the first batch of 128 farms to the South African Territories Company, the successor to Kharaskhoma, in 1892. This agreement was contrary to that signed with the leaders of the three Nama communities in south-eastern Namibia.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{85} H. Dreschler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 82-3
\textsuperscript{86} NAN, A. 40, Translation of Protection Treaties; Letter by Major Leutwein entitled ‘Reasons for my concessions in the land question’, p. 44
\textsuperscript{87} C. Bochert, The Witboois and the Germans in South West Africa, p. 135
\textsuperscript{88} T.L. O’Reilly, Memorandum on the position of the South African Territories Limited in South West Africa; South West Africa Annual, A Company Romance, 7th June 1920. The German government also did not recognise the land conceded to Robert Duncan, Robert James Duncan and Robert McKimmie by Hendrik Witbooi and Andries Lamberts in 1890. The Great Namaqualand Exploration Company that was once chaired by Cecil John Rhodes bought these concessions.
The Land Companies accumulated great amounts of land in southern Namibia, which often lay fallow as they were bought for prospecting and sold at high prices. The Nama communities in south eastern Namibia for example controlled 70,000 square kilometres of land of which they leased 67,000 square kilometres to the Kharaskhoma Company.\textsuperscript{89} Hendrik Witbooi and Andries Lamberts granted large tracts of land for exploration to an English company, The Great Namaqualand Exploration Company in the late 1800s. As a paramount leader Hendrik Witbooi wielded power over the lands of the !Aman, //Hawoben, !Khara-khoen, Kai-//Khaun, /Hai-/Khauan and Kharo-loan Nama communities.\textsuperscript{90}

Since the land companies often sold these plots of land at exorbitant prices to settlers, the settlers would thus rather lease or buy land directly from the Nama leaders or Crown land from the German government, who were selling the land at much cheaper rates.\textsuperscript{91} The German government usually acquired crown land after conquest of a community. More than half of the land of the /Khobesen community for example, was declared Crown land after the wars of Hornkranz and Naukluft in 1893 and 1894.\textsuperscript{92} The land that was being sold to settlers in southern Namibia gradually affected the farming practices of the Nama as the settlers later owned a greater proportion of the land. Also the new form of land tenure, namely private ownership, practised by the Europeans meant that the

\textsuperscript{89} H. Dreschler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 49

\textsuperscript{90} NAN, Map 3633, J.E. Davies, Chart of Concessions Granted to The Great Namaqualand Exploration Company Limited by Paramount Chiefs, Hendrik Witbooi and Andries Lambert, March 1891. Hendrik Witbooi would sometimes sign his letters as the 'Chief Captain of Great Namaqualand'. A part of the land that Hendrik Witbooi claimed, such as that of the Kharo-loan and //Hawoben, was possessed earlier by the !Gami#mun leader, Willem Christian when he signed contracts with the Kharaskhoma Company in 1889.

\textsuperscript{91} C. Bochert, The Witboois and the Germans in South West Africa, p. 136
Nama were restricted from moving as widely as they had in the past for pasture. The landowners enclosed water points that could be found on their farms thus reducing the land on which the Nama could take their herds. These farms were also situated on the most fertile land and thus the Nama communities were relegated to the driest portions of the land.24

Other colonial policies that further illuminated that the plans of the German government were in disrepute are seen in the events that occurred when some Nama communities refused to submit to the laws of the German government. These communities were either punished with force and submitted to German 'protection' or were exterminated. The incidents with the Khobesens at Holmklanz and Naukluft in 1893-4, the Gei-Khuas in 1896 and //Eecha-//ais in 1897 are examples of the force that the German government was prepared to use to subjugate the Nama communities.25

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25 W. Werner, A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia, p. 137-8
27 H. Drescher, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 99; J. Silvester, Words Cannot Be Found, Chap. 18
The German government, in order to curtail the military threat of communities such as the Nama, also issued a law in early 1897 calling for the licensing and marking of weapons. A Nama man also had to pay twice as much for weapons and ammunition than a European man. The Nama were banned from owning modern weapons and these were in some cases replaced with antiquated firearms. These measures especially affected the !Aman and !Gamer communities as they used weapons for hunting animals as part of their livelihood. When tensions flared about this issue in these communities' in 1898, German soldiers assisted by /Khobes men were sent to extinguish these sentiments. The Nama communities were forced to compensate this expedition with land in their territories.

Other particularly violent practices of subjugation used by German officials and settlers towards the Nama ranged from flogging, unjustified imprisonment, imprisonment in chains, rape of women to hangings. When the rate at which flogging was used against Africans in Namibia was reported as being too high and had reached the attention of the German Parliament, Governor Leutwein requested the magistrates and missionaries to comment on the issue. The general view from these quarters in southern Namibia was that flogging was a cultural practice already practised by the Nama and that it was the only manner in which to instil discipline in these communities.

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99 NAN, A 41, Translation of German Records re: Infliction of Corporal Punishment on Natives, Statement by C. Berger, Missionary at Rietmond; Altham, Missionary at !Gochar, and Otto Simon, Missionary at Gibeon, May 1900
A settler F. Hermann wrote to the Magistrate at Gibeon from Nomtsas in June 1900, that 'the natives are used to corporal punishment. I beg to call to mind, that in Namaland, where Christian religion has already gained a fairly large footing, it is the custom up to the present time to inflict 40 lashes with a rim on either sex for illegitimate pregnancy...but 80 to 150 lashes are the punishment for serious theft according to the circumstances...The natives are nothing else as big children and must be educated'.

Missionary E. Judt at !Hoacha!nas shared similar sentiments and stated that 'Whosoever knows the Namas...will be, just like myself, most decidedly against the abandonment of corporal punishment...One must not lose sight of the fact, that a hiding must not only be considered as a punishment, but also as an educational measure; because even the adults are in most cases naughty big children, who insist on their opinion'.

Leaders such as Hendrik Witbooi complained about the codified violence used by the German government stating that 'these laws are quite insupportable, incomprehensible, and unbearable — intolerant, pitiless, uncouth. He establishes prohibiting laws in our country and on our farms...He is sentencing our people in Windhoek, and has already executed men for owing money, which is not sufficient and worthy crime for capital punishment. I am referring to five people, four Berg Damara and one Red man of mine. German officials told my officials how they had beaten the men in a disgraceful and brutal manner, as the dumb and ignorant creatures they think us. We never use such

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100 NAN, A 41, Translation of German Records re: Infliction of Corporal Punishment on Natives, Statement by F. Hermann, Nomtsas, 26 June 1900
101 NAN, A 41, Translation of German Records re: Infliction of Corporal Punishment on Natives, Statement by E. Judt, Missionary at !Hoachalas, 19 June 1900
brutal and improper punishments. They stretch people on their backs and hit them across the belly, and even between the legs, be they men or women. You will understand that no man can tolerate such punishment. 102

A councillor of the !Gami#nun community, Abraham Kaffer, commented that 'We have never been able to understand the German government. It is so different to our ideas of a Government, because every German officer, sergeant, and soldier, every German policeman and every German farmer seemed to be the Government...every German seemed to be able to do towards us just what he pleased, and to make his own laws, and he never got punished. The police and soldiers might flog us and ill-treat us, the farmers might do as they pleased towards us and our wives, the soldiers might molest and even rape our women and young girls, and no one was punished'. 103

Tensions were growing stronger in southern Namibia as seen in a meeting that took place after the Anglo-Boer war. Leaders of this war against the Britons such as Manie Maritz and Robert de Kersauson instead of surrendering to the British government went over to Namibia with the intention of boarding a ship at Swakopmund to their homelands. During their journey in southern Namibia, they made an early stop at Warmbad and were invited to the Royal House of the !Gami#nun at the end of June 1902. The Nama elders were heated about the German presence in the country and Abraham Christian wanted them to assist his community in leading a military campaign against the German government. The

103 J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. 159
Boer militants taken aback by the request however lightly turned down the offer, saying that they were retiring from war. 104

Matters came to a head in 1903 for the !Gami#nun community and they took action. The incident that sparked this, according to oral tradition, was when the King of the !Gami#nun was shot by a German officer because of a goat that he took from a visitor. Mr. Willem Konjore, great grandson of Jacob Marenga relays, that ‘right from the start when the Germans came to Warmbad, settled down, opened up their offices and so on, particularly between the German officer that was in charge, and between the Captain, the relationship was not that good, right from the start. Reasons being, the Germans came with the attitude that they are now colonising the country, so they must give orders. And this the Captain objected to, and said “no-one can come and give me orders in my territory. I am the chief, I am the leader.” This sours their relationship. Now, whilst they were there something happened, it was told in oral history’.

‘There was a group of Herero people who were living in the Karas Mountains, they were on a visit going to South Africa to relatives of theirs, who were working in the mines. And then it so happened that amongst these people there was one woman, an elderly woman. It is told that she had only one son, and this one son of hers was working in South Africa. So she joined the group in order to visit her son.’

‘And it was also a custom in those days, people were walking there was no transportation, so for food purposes the only option or the best option for them was to

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104 C. de Jong, Manie Maritz and Robert de Kersauon’s Secret Meeting with the Bondelswartz, p. 231
take along some animals. Which means, cows will be taken... They also would take along some small stock, goats and sheep... Now this particular woman, as was told, had a big goat, a kabader, as its called. And she took that goat but with the intention to take it to her son in South Africa. Only to slaughter it there and then have it, enjoy it with her son. When she came to, when the group came to Warmbad, they had to spend some time there in order to give a rest to the animals in particular but to themselves as well. And then at that stage the German officer there apparently noticed that goat and he wanted to buy the goat. But then the old lady said, "no I cannot sell it because my intention is to take it down to South Africa to my son and slaughter it there and enjoy it with my son". Which he accepted.

'But at the same time there was also a problem in the Captain's family. Apparently a relative of the Captain was sick. Now also it was practice that sometimes they use the skin of a goat and also the fat of the stomach, the ____ fat, as its called, to cover people with these for cure purposes. So for that ceremony or ritual they need a goat. So when the Captain saw this very goat again he also approached the lady to have the goat. But she gave apparently the same answer, "no I cannot give it away because I'm taking it to my son". The Captain accepted, but then the Captain's advisor's said "no, why? This is a sickness, your relative is sick, so it is not for a party or so that you need it. Why should she refuse, and why should you allow her to refuse? She is, after all in your own territory, she is a subordinate. Take the goat and slaughter it!" Then the Captain said, "okay if you say so, you can take it". The goat was then taken, it was slaughtered.'
'Apparently when the animals again came to the fountain, because the Germans were close to the fountain, so each time the animals came they saw it. So then the German officer apparently noticed that the goat was not there. He went to the old woman and asked, "what happened to the goat? You said you don't want to slaughter or to sell it, you were going to take it to South Africa". But then she said, "no it is true that's what I said, but the Captain took the goat". And then since their relationship was already kind of a confrontation, this German officer got a reason to challenge the Captain. So he sent a message, "tell the Captain he must come to me. He must come and explain to me what right he has to take someone else's property as he likes". The messenger came to the Captain, and the Captain apparently said "no, go and tell him he needs me not me. If he wants to hear anything from me he should come, he shouldn't call me to his place".

These messages apparently went back and forth. The advisors of the Captain then saw what is happening. Because they were always keeping a close eye around the Captain. So they saw what happened, and they asked, "what is happening, what should we do? Because this thing can end up in a fight". The Captain said, "no, my death will be my instruction". The German officer finally paid the Captain a visit. A shooting incident at the Captain's mat house resulted in the death of the Captain and two German officers. 

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105 Interview conducted with Mr. Willem Konjore, Windhoek, August 2004
106 Interview conducted with Mr. Willem Konjore, Windhoek, August 2004
'Fight and Runaway, Live to Fight Another Day'\textsuperscript{107}

The 25\textsuperscript{th} of October 1903 marked the beginning of a war in southern Namibia that was to last for six years. The !Gami\#nun community fought against the German forces in Warmbad. This military engagement lasted for eight days in Warmbad. Leaders such as King Johannes Christian, who succeeded his brother King Jan Abraham Christian, Jacob Marenga, Abraham and Eduard Morris led this war.\textsuperscript{108}

After the shooting of the king, the community went on a rampage looting stores owned by Europeans and raiding wagon supplies and taking livestock from farmers in the area. The Nama soldiers gave the settlers ultimatums and told them to leave the country and no harm would come of them. In an urgent telegram written on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} of November 1903 from the Magistrate in Springbokfontein to the Police in Cape Town it states, ‘Very serious report received from Ramansdrift that the Bondelswarts are in arms in consequence of their Captain being shot by Germans. They have retaliated and it is reported that they are in possession of Warmbad. Have killed Magte one Sergt. One storekeeper and Clerk three soldiers dangerously wounded...’\textsuperscript{109}

On the 4\textsuperscript{th} of November an officer commanding the Cape Police, in Springbokfontein reported to his seniors that he found a German Spurlich and his family along with a

\textsuperscript{107} Robert Nesta Marley, Heathen Back 'Ye
\textsuperscript{108} J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. 161-162
\textsuperscript{109} Attorney General’s Office 1359, Telegram to Police in Cape Town from Magistrate in Springbokfontein, 2\textsuperscript{nd} November 1903
German soldier who had come to Ramansdrift to be protected by the Cape Police from the warring Nama soldiers.\textsuperscript{110}

That evening a farmer, Van der Berg, was found walking towards Ramansdrift and upon questioning the officers found that he had been transporting supplies in wagons from Steinkopf to Warmbad. Before he reached Warmbad, he let his oxen drink water, he went looking for the oxen and found his herdsman arguing with Nama men who had driven the oxen away. When he went back to his wagon, !Gami\#nun men had taken his two mauser rifles and 150 rounds of ammunition. Van der Berg informed the officers that the !Gami\#nun soldiers were 200 strong, well-armed and all mounted.\textsuperscript{111}

In another letter addressed to the Staff Captain for Intelligence in Cape Town from a Lieutenant H.D. Goldsmith of the Cape Police, it shows that the !Gami\#nun killed all the Germans, but did not harm the English people or South African Territories Company employees in Warmbad and were well armed after looting 1000 rifles and lots of ammunition. As one can see from this correspondence there was a panic in the region and some of these reports that had reached the Cape Colony may have been untruths, because various reports do not correlate. It was reported, for example on the 13\textsuperscript{th} of November, that the Nama were 2000 strong and had killed the manager and all the staff members of the Company except for a Mr. Von Keston.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{110} Attorney General's Office 1359(2), Report to the Commissioner, Commanding Cape Police D.3. in Cape Town from an officer of the Cape Police, C.H. Adams, 11 November 1903

\textsuperscript{111} Attorney General's Office 1359(2), Report to the Commissioner, Commanding Cape Police D.3. in Cape Town from an officer of the Cape Police, C.H. Adams, 11 November 1903

\textsuperscript{112} Attorney General's Office 1359, Letter to the Staff Captain for Intelligence in Cape Town from Lieutenant H.D. Goldsmith, 5 November 1903
The battle scenes open with an engagement at Warmbad and then another ensues at Sandfontein, which is north of Ramansdrift. Here the !Gami#nun on the 20th to the 22nd of November 1903 suffer losses against the German army. Another battle in which the !Gami#nun are again defeated by the Germans, who have /Khobesen men under King Hendrik Witbooi and other Nama soldiers as their allies, takes place in the Great Karas Mountains.\textsuperscript{113} This battle is relayed in a telegram dated the 18th of November and is sent from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, it states that the German troops surrounded the Karas Mountains and fighting began on the 16th of November. The Commissioner also writes that there are rumours that the /Khobesen community will wage against the German forces as soon as the Nama soldiers have a victory.\textsuperscript{114} The German army was thus uncertain about the loyalty of their Nama allies once it would become evident to them that the Nama could defeat the German army.

The last battle at Hartbeestmund during this period took place on the 12th of December. An inspector of the Cape Police Ernest Woon describes that the Nama soldiers were camped between steep cliffs by the !Gariep River. The riverbed was dry at this time of the year and the Germans were seen taking the livestock of the Nama. The Nama soldiers suddenly ambushed them from three sides, at which point the German forces made up of 23 officers ran into the riverbed onto British territory.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{113} K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 97

\textsuperscript{114} Attorney General's Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, 18 November 1903

\textsuperscript{115} Attorney General's Office 1359, Letter to the Commissioner Commanding Cape Police in Cape Town from Inspector of the Cape Police, Ernest F. Woon, 12 December 1903
The Cape Police disarmed the German officers, and the Nama soldiers fired on the troops and gave chase. Lieutenant Bottlin and another officer had been severely wounded and as they were being carried the Nama soldiers were still firing, when the British officer pulled out a British flag. The firing from the other end stopped abruptly after the flag was shown. Three Nama soldiers died and two were wounded. King Johannes Christian sent his apologies for firing on the British men after the engagement. What has been left out of Inspector Woon’s account is that so-called Baster men aided the German forces. They first attacked the Nama camp killing some women that were at the camp, before rounding up the livestock and other supplies, it was only after this that they were ambushed by the Nama soldiers.

The war waged by the !Gami#nun community continued well into 1904. It is reported in a telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town that the Damaras and //Hawoben join the war as well. No other report is available that the //Hawoben actually join the war at this time. There is however a report in February that the Damara have an engagement with German forces. In this engagement a Lieutenant Boysen and 11 officers lose their lives. Further in the same time period, Hendrik Witbooi and Johannes Christian try to persuade Damaras to end the war. Who these Damara were and where they came from is uncertain, but this information shows that the !Gami#nun were not the only community that were a threat to the German forces. And even though these reports

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116 Attorney General’s Office 1359, Letter to the Commissioner Commanding Cape Police in Cape Town from Inspector of the Cape Police, Ernest F. Woon, 12 December 1903
117 J. Masson, Jakob Marengo: An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia, p. 20
118 Attorney General’s Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, 6 January 1904
119 Attorney General’s Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, 9 February 1904
may be plausible, they show that there was flaring tension between the German forces and various other communities in the country.

Various engagements take place in the early part of 1904 in the territory of the !Gami#nun in places such as Kalkfontein, present day Karasburg close to the Karas mountains. It is reported that ten German officers fall in an engagement at this place. This battle is however not listed in the official war listings of the German army. The telegram about this battle also reads, ‘Natives have had the best of all actions so far. Hottentots are expected to attack Ukamas. Natives have plenty of ammunition’.120

The !Gami#nun surrender to Major Leutwein on the 27th of January 1904. The ‘Peace of Kalkfontein’ as it is known is signed with the conditions that the !Gami#nun bring in all men guilty of murder, that they hand in all arms and ammunition and that they declare part of their territory as Crown Land.121 However not all the !Gami#nun have signed the peace agreement, there are for example, fighting men in the Karas Mountains who have not surrendered.122 Despite this the Germans hastily move northwards, because the Hereros have raised the resistance in Windhoek and Okahandja respectively.123 On the

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120 Attorney General’s Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, 6 January 1904
121 Attorney General’s Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, 9 February 1904, Klaus Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 107
122 Attorney General’s Office 1359 (2), Letter to Officer Commanding Cape Police III from Sergeant P. Boyle, 18 February 1904
123 Attorney General’s Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town from the Commissioner of Police in Kimberley, 3 February 1904
way to Windhoek, the Germans disarm the Kai-/Khaun community of !Hoach!nas, who apparently wanted to join the war.  

After peace was signed, the German forces went about investigating war crimes, retrieving stolen livestock and attempting to persecute war 'criminals'. On the 27th of February 1904, Wilhelm Marcus, a Nama cattle guard employed by the South African Territories Company stated that he was willing to state on oath that, 'In the autumn of last year I removed as cattle guard with the cattle of the above named Company to Haib, to find better pasturage. In the beginning of November a great number of Hottentots of Warmbad, amongst them Abraham and Eduard Morries, also Niklas, Jacobs, Jeremias, Matheus John Christian arrived at that place. They told me that they would take my cattle away. Jacobus threatened me in case of refusal with shooting. The Bondels under the leading of Abraham Morries then took away 10 head of cattle of the Company'.  

'I fled with the remainder of the cattle towards the English boundaries, but immediately after the same at Violsdrift was overtaken by the pursuing Hottentots whereby Niklas Christian took away another 7 head of cattle, 6 oxen and I bull belonging to the Company. All cattle of the Company bears on the right haunch the stamp S.A.T. Besides the cattle of the South African Territories I was entrusted with the care of the cattle of Mr. King of Warmbad and his employee van der Merwe...as far as I can remember of the cattle belonging to the two above named persons, the following was stolen: in Haib two

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124 K. Dierks, Chronology of Namibian History, p. 107

125 Attorney General's Office 1437(2), Translation of testament by Wilhelm Marcus, done at Steinkopf, 27 February 1904
cows of King, three oxen of Van der Merwe. Near Violsdrift five oxen of King and five young oxen of van der Merwe. All this happened in my presence…  

On the 19th of February 1904 warrants of arrest were issued for twelve !Gami#nun men by the Berzirkshauptmann or district officer at Keetmanshoop. The German government sought the extradition of these men who were at this time in the Cape Colony. According to the terms of surrender these men had to stand trial in the country where the crimes were committed. These !Gami#nun men were charged with various crimes such as murder, attempted murder, arson, violent robbery and house-breaking.  

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126 Attorney General’s Office 1437(2), Translation of testament by Wilhelm Marcus, done at Steinkopf, 27 February 1904
127 Attorney General’s Office 1437(2), Translation of testament by Wilhelm Marcus, done at Steinkopf, 27 February 1904
The following is an example of the warrant of apprehension.\textsuperscript{128}

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\textbf{Warrant of Arrest} \textsuperscript{1} No. 1 \\
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Decree of arrest for trial is issued against the Bondelswart Hottentot NIKLAS CHRISTIAN, against whom there is reasonable suspicion that he murdered the Non-commissioned Officer Otto in Uhabis and took part in the ransacking of the Station (ss 211 and 250, 1 and 2 St. G.B.).  \\
It is reported that he be arrested and delivered to the District Administration at WARMBAD.  \\
He is at present within the territory of Cape Colony.  \\
\textbf{Description:}  \\
\textbf{Age:} About 40 Years.  \\
\textbf{Size:} Middle height, well built.  \\
\textbf{Hair:} Ordinary Hottentot hair.  \\
\textbf{Nose:} \\
\textbf{Beard:} Small black moustache  \\
\textbf{Face:} Broad  \\
\textbf{Expression:} Morose, reticent  \\
\textbf{Look:} Shifty  \\
\textbf{Languages:} Nama and Dutch  \\
\textbf{RAMANSDRIFT, the 19\textsuperscript{th} February 1904}  \\
The Imperial District Judge  \\
(Sgd) Von Eschstruth  \\
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These men were specifically charged with murdering the Non-commissioned Officer Otto and horseman Zeiser, looting the Station at Uhabis, attempting to murder and rob a Mr. Papke at Violsdrift and murdering and robbing a Mr. Weigel at Rosynbosch. These places are all located in the !Gami#nun territory.

Susan Skayer recalls the incident that took place at Uhabis, which is located north of Violsdrift. 'On a Monday at the end of October of last year my husband and the rider Mathias rode from Uhabis to Warmbad on patrol. On the following Sunday, before daybreak there arrived at my hut near the horsekraal at Uhabis four Bondelswarts, armed with guns, named John Christian, Jeremiah Christian, Niclas Christian and Mathaus

\textsuperscript{128} Attorney General's office 1437(2), Copy. Kaiserlich Deutsche General-Konsulat fur Britisch Sud-Afrika no. 1238, Cape Town, 8 March 1904
Christian. I asked them and they told me they came from Violsdrift and were going to shoot Springbucks. The four men waited at my place till daybreak and then went to the Station where the Non-commissioned officer Otto and the rider Zaiser were. The four above named Bondelswarts left their guns at my hut.'

The men had gone to declare the amount of cattle they had to Officer Otto. In the morning they spoke about what the Nama men intended to do etc. In the afternoon they sat together for awhile, when Officer Otto went back to his station, 'he had however scarcely gone 10 paces from John Swartbooi's hut, when he received from Niclas Christian a shot askew from the side through the left shoulder and immediately after one through the head. Both shots were fired by Niclas Christian from my hut. Upon the two shots being fired Zaiser came out of John Swartbooi's hut, saw the Non-commissioned officer Otto on the ground and ran to him. After the first two steps Zaiser received a shot through the back and chest and fell together. He immediately received another shot through the stomach. Both shots on Zaiser were fired out from John Swartbooi's hut by John Christian. I could see this distinctly through the open door of the hut'.

Susanna Afrikaner gave witness as well. She states, 'I am properly described, 14 years of age, heathen, adopted daughter of the native Constable Jan Skayer from Uhabis. I agree on all points with the evidence of Susanna Sayer. Only on the afternoon in question I was not in the immediate vicinity of the hut out of which the shots were fired on Otto and Zaiser. I had gone down to the bed of the river shortly before to fetch firewood to make

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129 Attorney General's office 1437(2), Copy. Kaiserlich Deutsche General-Konsulat fur Britisch Sud-Afrika no. 1238, Cape Town, 8 March 1904, Susanna Skayer's testimony, p. 3,4
coffee. As I was gathering wood there I saw the Station horseherd, Johannes Swartbooi, creep very stealthily through the bush in the river and through the Station garden to the Station building. He entered the building and came out of it with two guns.'

She saw Otto as well as Zaiser being shot from behind. Then Johannes Swartbooi handed the guns to John and Niklas Christian. She describes that the dead men were stripped of their clothes and that Susanna Sayer and her had to dress the bodies with old clothes. The two Christian relatives took them on that day to Grossfluss. The rest remained at Uhabis with Johannes Swartbooi.  

A report in May shows that the !Gami#nun had surely not surrendered to the German government and had continued with rampaging the region. It is a well known fact at the time, even amongst the British patrols at the border between Namibia and the South Africa, that the !Gami#nun have hidden their weapons along the !Gariep river. Another sign that there is no calm after the storm is that the Nama men that have handed their arms to the German government want them returned at this time. Further, in September Jacob Marenga is reported to still be looting farms for ammunition and other supplies. These incidences further occur after an engagement led by him against the German forces on the 1st of September in the Karas Mountains. This is the first time Jacob Marenga is explicitly mentioned as being part of an engagement by the German

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130 Attorney General’s office 1437(2), Copy. Kaiserlich Deutsche General-Konsulat fur Britisch Sud-Afrika no. 1238, Cape Town, 8 March 1904, Susanna Afrikaner’s testimony, p. 6,7
and British Intelligence. This battle is reported to have taken place on the 30th of August at the Schambokberg, which is to the east of the Great Karas Mountains.

During this battle it is reported that Lieutenant Van Stempel and three men were killed, four injured and three were missing in action. Mason writes that the bodies of the fallen German soldiers could only be attended to on the 11th of September. Klaus Dierks' research in this area shows that Kouchanas/Gugenanas was probably Marenga's base where he was able to elude the German forces during many battles. Kouchanas/Gugenanas or //Khauxa纳斯 in Khoekhoegowab means to protect or shield and is referred to various times concerning engagements near the Great Karas Mountains. Seeing the images of this place it is clear why it served as a military base for Jacob Marenga and other Nama soldiers, owing to its structure as an inaccessible fortress.

On the 1st of October Jacob Marenga wrote a letter to the Magistrate of Upington and sent three of his men to deliver it to him. The letter reads, "I the undersigned, Kornet Jacob Mornka, send you these few lines. I had hoped to come to Upington but my wife and

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131 Government House 35/137, Letter to the Commissioner Commanding the Cape Mounted Police in Cape Town from the Officer Commanding the Western Division of the Cape Mounted Police, C.H. Adams in Springbokfontein, 18 May 1914
children are at Karasberg so I did not come. Be so good as to assist me (in obtaining) ammunition for Mauser guns and bullets for Metford and Martini Rifles. I have commenced the war three times but have had no losses, by God’s mercy, so I seek assistance from you.\textsuperscript{132}

The fourth battle was not to have the same success for Marenga and his men, as he suffered heavy losses at the hands of the German soldiers. This is because he and his soldiers were ill-equipped to fight the German soldiers at this point in time. The Acting Consul General for Germany in Cape Town, von Jacobs also reports that Hendrik Witbooi joined the war at this stage.\textsuperscript{133} This action is to have a definite blow on the confidence of the German government to maintain its allies and pacify the country.

Hendrik Witbooi and his community waged war against the German government in early October 1904, a day after Jacob Marenga attacked the German forces for the fourth time in 1904. The German Military Staff recorded an engagement against the ‘Witboois’ on the 6\textsuperscript{th} of October at Kuis, south-west of !Hoachana's and another on the same day at the telegraph station at Falkenhorst, situated south-west of Mariental. These engagements by Hendrik Witbooi and Jacob Marenga may not have been calculated to follow each other, but the inspiration to fight against the German government was definitely similar.

\textsuperscript{132} Native Affairs 647, Letter to the Secretary to the Law Department, Cape Town from Percy Wright, Resident Magistrate of Upington, 18 October 1904, Letter to Resident Magistrate of Upington from Jacob Marenga, 1 October 1904. The three battles he was referring to are the one where Lieutenant Von Stempel fell in the Karas Mountains, the other at Karabis on the 3\textsuperscript{rd} of September and at Gais on the 21\textsuperscript{st} of September.
The German soldiers and settlers were however not the only targets of this war but other European settlers as well. Mrs Steyn explains that, 'I lived for about a year at Stamp Reid in German South West Africa, Stamp Reid is about 36 hours on horse back from Gibeon. About the end of September we were given notice by Hendrik Witbooi that there was going to be trouble. Early in October of this year we left Stamp Reid. At about 8 o'clock on the morning of October 5th we were outspanned at Kalkfontein, five native mounted and one on foot came up to where we were – they were all armed – my husband Mr Steyn walked to one side, the natives fired two shots at him, the second killed him, he was unarmed at the time they wounded my son, 12 years of age and later came back and killed him'...Mr Hendrik Reinart Fourie was shot shortly after my husband was killed between 100 and 200 yards away from the spot where my husband fell. Mrs Fourie's son was saved.'

Mrs Steyn says the Nama men did not allow them to attend to the bodies of their relatives. They later went to Rietmont, to the house of Hendrik Witbooi. Hendrik Witbooi did not listen to the cries and pleas of the women. He told his men to offload their furniture from the wagon and put it by his house, he also told a man that was living on Mr Steyn's farm that he could have his livestock, if he so pleased. From there the women travelled south. At Mariental they were met by Petrus Jutd, who told them to wait for other women that had also suffered a similar fate and move further with them. They also

133 Attorney General’s Office 1358, Letter to Major General E. Smith-Brock from H. Von Jacobs, Cape Town, 19 October 1904
rested at Koes under the hospitality of Hans Hendrik for six days before crossing the border into the Cape Colony.\textsuperscript{134}

King Isaak Witbooi, the son of Hendrik Witbooi, says that Hendrik Witbooi gave the orders for the beginning of the war in Rietmond and Gibeon where meetings were held. Various leaders converged mostly at Gibeon, and at one such meeting they raised funds for the !Gami#nun community, that had already been at war for a couple of months. Isaak Witbooi was surprised that his father started the war, and only realised this fact when Hendrik Witbooi wrote a letter to the District Officer, Karl Von Burgsdorff of his intentions to start a war against the German government.\textsuperscript{135}

Isaak Witbooi, like several other Nama informants, gave their testimonies to the German intelligence in 1906 after they had surrendered to the German government, and the likelihood that they would want to distance themselves from the war action is great. Isaak Witbooi thus explains that he was surprised that his father had started the war and that he could not refuse to partake as he was following his father's orders. This testimony and others are possibly tainted but not all the information given is false and can be verified with other evidence. Further, other informants described their war actions against the German government in detail, not fearing that they would be persecuted after their testimonies.

A Nama soldier that had been sent to fight with the German army against the Hereros and had been part of the nineteen Nama soldiers that deserted the war told a German officer

\textsuperscript{134} Attorney General's Office 1358, Statement made by Mrs Steyn to the Inspector of the Cape Mounted Police, Upington, 20 November 1904
about the start of the war during questioning in Windhoek on the 6th of June 1906. The forty-seven year old Jacob Isaak said that Hendrik Witbooi did not tell them to leave the war against the Herero. "We fled, while the German soldiers told us, "after the Herero, are the Namas!" They fled to Rietmond and from here they rode as a twenty-man patrol to Mariental with Shepherd Stuurman as their leader. In Mariental Stuurman told them that Hendrik Witbooi had ordered them to war against the white people in the area. One of the first white men to be killed in Mariental was Karl Von Burgsdorff on the 4th of October. He had apparently come to Mariental to persuade Hendrik Witbooi against starting a war.

It seems that other Nama too were surprised by the sudden call for war against the German government, such as Gorub, who at some point led his own patrol of Nama soldiers against the German army. His father belonged to the Kai-/Khaun clan but was

135 ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2, vol. 3, Questioning of Isak Witbooi
136 ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2, vol. 3, Questioning of Jacob Isaak
part of Hendrik Witbooi’s army in the war. At the beginning of the war he was in Nomrabis, which is to the north of Gibeon at the Fish River. A man by the name of Sebulon told him to kill all white people as the war against the Germans had officially begun. He did not have a gun to do this, so he ordered a settler by the name of Friccius to come to him. He refused and fled to Heal, an English man who was with a police officer visiting him from the Cape Colony. Gorub went to Friccius’ house, helped himself to ammunition and a rifle, rode after the white men and shot at them. He hit them, but they were able to escape to Heal’s home. He then shot another white man at Alias, and returned to Nomrabis. At Nomrabis Gorub took Friccius’ livestock, sent his wife to Heal’s home and rode to Sebulon to await further orders.138

Gorub relays that he was at one of the initial battles at Nomtsas in October, before he got on the scene; he came across a wagon where he killed a white rider and a black man. The other men fled and he got a hold of supplies such as food, drink and ammunition. By the time he arrived at Nomtsas several farmers had already been killed. These engagements are often not recorded in the official war listings because they were seen as insignificant, but because they were incidents in the war, it is evidence of the nature of the war in southern Namibia.139

Isaak Witbooi describes one of the battles between the /Khobes and German soldiers, which took place at Naris on the 4th of December 1904. ‘As the Germans came, we put obstacles in their way. We trapped them and then we started shooting. At first we thought

137 A. Heywood et al, The Hendrik Witbooi Papers, p. 249
138 ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2 vo.l. 3, Questioning of Gorub
that a stronger patrol was coming, at the same time we noted, that we also had a strong troop. The Germans came from the left. My father sent more help there, where the more powerful artillery war began. Here I was injured, I was shot from behind. The Germans started shooting with canons, but without success, because we had good protection. We had three dead and four wounded. From these some died later.\textsuperscript{140}

On the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} of December the Nama communities of the /Khobesen and //Hawoben were dealt a heavy blow. The battles at Naris and Rietmond between the /Khobesen and the Germans resulted in the fleeing of the community from their base in Rietmond. More than 400 German soldiers under the command of Colonel Diemling also took 12,000 head of cattle away from Hendrik Witbooi and his soldiers. The //Hawoben community had entered the war at this time under the command of Hans Hendrik. According to oral tradition, German soldiers surprised this community on the morning of the 4\textsuperscript{th} of December.

The !Aman community entered the war after Hendrik Witbooi's second attempt to persuade Nama communities to join the war. Hendrik Witbooi first sent letters to !Hoachalnas where they were received by Cornelius Fredericks and Manasse !Noreseb. The !Aman community of Bethanie however did not want to wage war at that time. Hendrik Witbooi then spoke to Cornelius Fredericks at Rietmond, at one of the meetings that were held before the war. This meeting must have persuaded Cornelius Fredericks

\textsuperscript{139} ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Gorub
\textsuperscript{140} ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Isaak Witbooi
and some of the Nama from Bethanie, because they defended themselves against a German force at Kunjas and Uibis on the 24th of October and 21st of December.\footnote{ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Eduard Fredericks}

In Kunjas four German and two Nama soldiers from Bethanie were attacked and their weapons and horses taken. In Uibis German soldiers that had come from Bethanie used canons to fire at the Nama community early in the morning. The Nama lost eight men and women at this fight. After the initial engagements of the !Aman under Cornelius Fredericks, Paul Fredericks asked him to come to Bethanie and surrender the people that had shot the Germans at Kunjas. Instead Cornelius Fredericks met with other warlords such as Kamadam, Jacob Fredericks and Elias to continue the war against the German army.\footnote{ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Eduard Fredericks}

On The 26th of November General Lothar Von Trotha replaced Governor Theodor Leutwein as the head of the army in the country. The war in the north between the Herero and German soldiers was waning. Lothar Von Trotha thus re-deployed half of the German troops that were fighting in the north to the south of the country to quell the resistance of the Nama communities. By December 1904, about three companies, a company consists of 100 mounted men, and four guns were involved in the fight against the Nama soldiers. Ten companies and four batteries, consisting of fewer than 100 men, were sent to aid the German forces already there. Also troops were disembarking from Germany at Swakopmund and Luderitz. The Nama soldiers fighting under the command
of Jacob Marenga, Abraham Morris or Cornelius Fredericks never amounted to more
than 500 men.\textsuperscript{143}

A telegram sent at the end of the year from Lothar Von Trotha to the General Staff read
that there were difficulties in waging a war in the south of the country, and he wanted to
discontinue for a while.\textsuperscript{144} He further requested that a railway line be constructed from
Luderitz to Kubub, as this would be strategic for the campaign against the Nama. For
one, it would allow greater access to supplies for the troops in the south. The railway line
only came to fruition in 1906, so plans of increasing the supply lines were not realised at
the height of the war.

Von Trotha’s request to cease the war in the south for a while fell on deaf ears, because
the war continued in 1905, and the German armies encountered the difficulties that he
mentioned they would. Several men fell and many were wounded at an engagement at
Nabas\textsuperscript{145} from the 2\textsuperscript{nd} to the 4\textsuperscript{th} of January from the German and Nama armies. A
/Khobesen Nama, Lucas Hans, who had been there that fateful day, described this fight in
detail under questioning in Windhoek on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of June 1906.

There were two Nama patrols one led by Hendrik Witbooi and the other by Shepherd
Stuurman. Shepherd Stuurman’s men fought from the river, while Hendrik Witbooi’s
men took cover behind the dunes. The German army was not aware of Hendrik Witbooi

\textsuperscript{143} Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Sub-Inspector Geary,
Springbokfontein, 27 July 1905
\textsuperscript{144} H. Dreschler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 187
and his men behind the dunes and as soon as the German forces had taken their positions at sunrise on the first day, the Nama soldiers from behind the dunes started firing. 'Many horsemen fell...This is how we fought all day and night. We lost nine men in total...Of these most men fell on that day. We also had many wounded. The Germans also had many fatalities. They lay lower than us and had bad cover. When they wanted to shoot they had to lift themselves up. We could see everything clearly with binoculars and could also recognise the officers and aimed at them precisely'.

Between the second and third day the Nama intercepted two wagons with ammunition, weapons, clothes and food that was sent from Stampriet for the German soldiers. The Nama with Shepherd Stuurman were guarding the only source of water in the area, the German soldiers had to go to Stampriet for want of water. Shepherd Stuurman, on the final day of battle, informed Hendrik Witbooi that some German soldiers had already fled. He decided to waylay the fleeing German soldiers at Stampriet because by now it was a well-known fact the Germans did not have enough water and may try and go to Stampriet. However as Hendrik Witbooi and his men were heading towards Stampriet, they heard artillery fire from the direction where they had left Shepherd Stuurman and his men. When they contacted Shepherd Stuurman, he said that the German soldiers attacked his men and they fled. The German soldiers now controlled the water source. The Nama men moved away to Zwartfontein.

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145 Referred to in the Military Staff report as Gross-Nabas. On the Official German War Map of 1904, Gross-Nabas is Gei-Nabakarus. Gross and Gei mean big in German and Khoekhoeogowab respectively
146 ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Witbooi Nama, Lucas Hans about the fight of Namas
147 ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vl. 3, Questioning of Khobesen Nama, Lucas Hans, about the fight of Namas
Lothar Von Trotha realised that the war in the south of the country was going to be difficult owing to the lack of good supply lines and the harsh environs of the country. Besides that, the Nama were so far fighting a guerrilla war in numerous areas of the country, it was not going to be easy for the German army to end the war with a swift battle. And the German soldiers were still occupied with ending the war with the Herero in the north of the country. So Lothar Von Trotha personally went to the south to take command of the army.

At first he attempted to call for the surrender of the Nama communities by sending out a proclamation order in German and Khoekhoegowab from Gibeon on the 22nd of April 1905. It read as follows:

'To the rebellious Hottentots,

The great and powerful German Emperor will be lenient with the Hottentot nation, and has ordered that the lives of those who give themselves up voluntarily will be spared. Only those who in the commencement of the rebellion have murdered white people or have ordered them to be murdered have, according to law, forfeited their lives.

This I make known to you, and further that to the few who do not surrender the same will happen as happened to the Herero nation, who also thought in their blindness that they could wage war successfully with the powerful German Emperor and the great German nation. I ask where is the Herero nation and where are their chiefs to-day? Samuel Maharero, who was once in possession of thousands of cattle, has fled like a wild animal over the English border, he has become poor as the poorest veld Herero, and does not
possess anything. So it is with all other headmen, most of whom have lost their lives and
the whole Herero nation, who partly starved to death in the sandveld and died of thirst,
partly have been killed by German troops, and partly murdered by the Ovambos.

Nothing else will happen to the Hottentot nation if they do not surrender voluntarily and
lay down their arms. You must come with a white flag with your families and nothing
will happen to you; you will receive employment and food until the end of the war, when
the great Emperor will arrange circumstances for peace. Those who believe that
according to the above, such acts of grace cannot be shown or to whom this leniency
cannot refer had better quit the country, because wherever they are seen in German
territory they will be shot at until all those outlaws have been exterminated.

The under mentioned reward will be given for the handing over of the following guilty
ones, dead or alive: For Hendrik Witbooi, 250 or 5,000 marks; for Stuurman Shephert
(false prophet) 150 or 3,000 marks; for Cornelius Frederick, 100 or 2,000 marks; and for
all other guilty persons, 50 or 1,000 marks.

The General of the Germans and the powerful German Emperor

Von Trotha”¹⁴⁸

For those who attempted to surrender an incident described by a German scout that lived
on the farm Rietkuil in the Gibeon district most probably deterred them. Benjamin Burger
states that, ‘I was in Gibeon when two Hottentots surrendered in terms of a Proclamation
issued by the German government to the effect that any natives surrendering would be protected. Ober-Lieutenant Zweinicke, who was in charge, said the two Hottentots had only come in for the purpose of spying, and without trial he ordered them to be hanged. I was present the next day when they were hanged by the soldiers. Further Nama people that surrendered would have to work for the Germans and live on rations. Also after months of fighting with the Germans, the Nama communities understandably did not trust the German army as they knew what the German soldiers were capable of. This proclamation thus only exacerbated the situation in the south of the country. The Nama soldiers did not put down their arms and surrender. In fact the Nama communities only readied themselves to fight in earnest. Other Nama people decided to pack and leave the country to seek refuge in the Cape Colony or Botswana.

When the German army saw that the proclamation did not achieve the desired effect, they attempted to negotiate peace terms with some of the resistant Nama communities. They realised that because of the proclamation many more people that did not take part joined the war because it was interpreted as a declaration of war and not a call for peace. They knew that a war on many fronts would be costly, and had to find a way to end it as soon as possible.

The German soldiers at first sent a so-called Baster to the !Gami#nun, which at this time were in the Karas Mountains. The first messenger went with the proclamation order, the second a black man, the third Father Malinowski from the mission station at Heirachabis

149 J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. 172
and then the German officer von Kopp, who had on several occasions led German soldiers into battle against the Nama.\textsuperscript{150}

The three day armistice from the 1\textsuperscript{st} to 3\textsuperscript{rd} of May fell through because, two !Gami#nun messengers, young boys, that were sent to relay to their men about the armistice were killed by von Kopp’s men. One of the boys was shot while the other was stabbed with a bayonet and had his tongue, stomach and private parts cut off.\textsuperscript{151} Father Malinowski states that the reason why the negotiations ended was because the German army did not agree with the !Gami#nun on the conditions of surrender. The Germans wanted the !Gami#nun to surrender their arms and stock, in which case they would be allowed to stay in their territory and not be punished for going to war with the Germans. The !Gami#nun on the other hand wanted to keep their arms and stock and have whatever they agreed to on paper.\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{150} Government House 35/153, Letter to Officer Commanding the Cape Mounted Police Upington from E. Burges, 17 May 1905

\textsuperscript{151} Government House 35/153, Letter to Officer Commanding the Cape Mounted Police Upington from E. Burges, 17 May 1905

\textsuperscript{152} Government House 35/153, Letter from Colonel Neylan from T. H. Whitaker, Smalvisch, 18 May 1905
The negotiations only applied to the !Gami:#un as the German army decided that Nama men fighting under Hendrik Witbooi should be exterminated because of the crimes that they had committed against the German settlers and soldiers.123 A Nama community consisting of the /Kho:sen and !Khar-a-khoen under Hendrik Witbooi and Simon Kooper moved to Botswana in January because they ran out of ammunition and weapons. They also moved to safe-keep their women, children, elderly and for water and grazing pastures for their animals. Hendrik Witbooi returned to the country after a while and camped on the !Oub River with both his and Simon Kooper's fighting men. However, Simon Kooper remained in the British Protectorate with some men and women of both the /Kho:sen and !Khar-a-khoen clans, stating that the war was far from over, as he and the other leaders were determined to fight until the end, returning only in September.124

123 Government House 35/153, Letter from Colonel Neylan from T. H. Whitaker, Smalvlei, 18 May 1905
124 Prime Minister's Office 214, Patent Report to J.N. Neylan from C. Barrange, Upington, 25 July 1905, German Military Staff
Other communities such as that of the !Gamlinement and !Aman had on several occasions also sent women, children, elderly and animals across the border into the Cape Colony.\(^{133}\)

![Image of Nama women, children, and men during the war.

This is probably what the scenes of Nama women, children and men looked like during the war. NAN 8764.

After the peace negotiations fell through with the !Gamlinement, Jacob Marenga, Abraham Morris and Johannes Christian wasted no time in attacking the German settlers and army wherever they could be found in their territory. Cornelius Fredericks and his men also had no peace in mind. The German army therefore targeted these communities.

Cornelius Fredericks and his community suffered heavy losses at the end of May. Nama prisoners of war were captured after the engagement with Captain von Koppy and his men. Amongst the prisoner's was Cornelius' mother. Also a large number of horses, cattle, rifles and ammunition were also taken from the Nama community that was camped

\(^{133}\) Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to the Resident Commissioner, Mafikeng from A. W. Hudson, 21 August 1905
at Gei Ous, north west of Rosynbusch on the //Oub River. Cornelius Fredericks and the rest of the community fled southwards towards the !Gariep River.¹⁵⁶

On the 17ᵗʰ of June Jacob Marenga was defeated at Narus, with his men he then fled north towards the Karas Mountains but was blocked by the German soldiers under the leadership of Colonel Ritter. At the same time the //Hawoben wanted to surrender to the German army, also some of his men had left the war. This forced Marenga to negotiate with the German army. The German army however believed that Marenga really had no intentions of peace and that it was a way to buy time, to strategise his next move.¹⁵⁷ This could be true because after the negotiations fell through in July, Marenga often fought battles alongside Johannes Christian and on occasion with Cornelius Fredericks.

Cornelius Fredericks and his men further suffered a series of defeats in the middle of the year. This was at Kochas and Kanibes, which are located on the tributary of the //Oub River, all north of /Ai/Ais. In June Cornelius Fredericks and about 800 men, women and children gathered at Kochas. This place was ideal for refuge, as the German soldiers were still pursuing this group, because on all sides of the river there were high cliffs that were impregnable.¹⁵⁸

And at the end of June, a group of German soldiers moved from Auchab springs on the west, Kanibes on the north and from the south at /Ai/Ais. Cornelius Fredericks’

¹⁵⁶ Letter to the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, W.F. Hely-Hutchinson from the Acting Consul Governor for Germany, M. von Jacobs, 31 May 1905
¹⁵⁷ Government House 35/135, Narrative of Operations, F. Trench, British Attaché to the German Forces
¹⁵⁸ Government House 35/135, Narrative of Operations, F. Trench, British Attaché to the German Forces
community was then surrounded by German troops. When the German soldiers stormed, the Nama soldiers resisted but when it looked bleak, they moved in a westerly direction towards the Konkip River. In July the Nama position was again attacked resulting in heavy losses of men and livestock. They retreated back to the //Oub River towards the !Gariep River. Cornelius Fredericks and his people then joined Jacob Marenga in the Karas Mountain. They were operating in July and August in the !Gami#nun territory.\footnote{159}

In August the German strengthen their forces in the south and all the troops from Rehoboth to Keetmanshoop moved in combined columns, first towards the west where Hendrik Witbooi and his men were on the Swartrand and then towards the other Nama positions. The results were however not as successful as the German army would have hoped, because in September Hendrik Witbooi and his men offer a reversal and attacked troops commanded by Lothar Von Trotha. They captured 1000 head of cattle and twelve wagons.\footnote{160}

In the meantime the German military units tried to keep apace with Jacob Marenga, Cornelius Fredericks and Abraham Morris. In fact in October Jacob Marenga and Abraham Morris after capturing German soldiers at Jerusalem released them with a letter to the Lothar Von Trotha saying that up until then they were only defending themselves, and now they were going to attack the German army until the end.\footnote{161}

\footnote{159} Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Sub-Inspector Geary, Springbokfontein, 27 July 1905

\footnote{160} Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Major Berrange, Upington, 18 September 1905

\footnote{161} Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Major Berrange, Upington, 12 October 1905
There are twenty-three battles listed by the German Military Staff as having been fought against ‘hottentoten’ in 1905. This means that the German army had no idea which specific Nama clans or communities they were fighting against. Understandably so, since the Nama did not only operate in the area in which they lived, did not often wear insignia that would show which Nama clan they belonged to, or leader they fought under and Nama soldiers from different clans fought alongside each other. It has been recorded that the fighters under Hendrik Witbooi wore a white scarf around their hats as they belonged to the !Uri-kam military society. However not all !Uri-kam fighters were necessarily members of the !Khoigoin clan. Because these !Uri-kam hats were distinguishable, both the Nama and German soldiers used them as part of the tactics to ambush the enemy. For example, Simon Kooper once remarked in an interview with British police that the German soldiers would sometimes wear this head dress so as to trap Nama soldiers.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{102} Prime Minister’s Office 214, Patrol Report to Colonel J.N. Neylan from Major C. Berange, 27 July 2005.
A group of soldiers that were discernible were the Hereros that fought under Andreas with the Nama. This group first arrived in the south in 1905. Hendrik Brandt commanded by Cornelius Fredericks to take livestock from settlers, settled north west of Bethanie on the edge of the Namib dessert. He relays that Andreas was the first person to come to him during the war with eighty soldiers and many women and children. Andreas wore a German military uniform. He and his soldiers were also well armed and had tons of ammunition. They however did not have livestock and horses.\footnote{ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Hendrik Brandt, 20 June 1906}

Andreas not having any livestock took Hendrik Brandt’s and coerced him to move with him to Nubib, where he stayed and observed how Andreas would regularly send people to loot livestock and horses. These events culminated in an engagement with the German soldiers in Nubib. ‘I remember the fight of 13.09.05. During that time a small German detachment took away 30 small livestock and some large livestock from one of my people…When the Germans started shooting at Nubib, I immediately fled to Kowachasip with my people and left everything behind. After 2 days Andreas came to me with his people and war, but only stayed for one day and then travelled towards the south east with the intention of going to Marenga. Andreas told me that the fight had been difficult with him losing everything.\footnote{ZBU 462, D.IV.M.2. vol. 3, Questioning of Hendrik Brandt, 20 June 1906} It is significant however that at this point that some Hereros had moved to the south of the county and were fighting alongside Nama against the German government.
Another community that was fighting in southern Namibia were the descendants of the Dutch that later dubbed themselves as ‘Boers’. Most of them had settled in this region between //Kub and Stampriet. They felt justified fighting against the Nama since they too targeted them. Such as at the battle at Kuis //Kub at the beginning of the war, where these Boers were settled.¹⁶⁵ In an incident in the third year of the war several Nama attempted to shoot a Boer by the name of Liebenberg exclaiming that they had a right to do so because his children were fighting against them in the war.¹⁶⁶

The other forces that fought alongside the German army were men employed by the army as transport riders. On arrival in Namibia some of these men, instead of being presented with riding equipment, were given arms and told to go on expeditions to find the Nama and rid the country of them wherever they could be found.¹⁶⁷ One of such men, Wepener, employed by the German army reported to the Cape Argus, after leaving the colony that, ‘when we arrived in Angra Pequena with some twenty-five of this lot…they left for Kubub where the party split up into two portions. Mr Vos’s going on to Bethany. On arrival there they were made to relieve the garrisons there by taking over their duties’.¹⁶⁸ Interestingly a British patrolman stationed on the northern border reported on the 1st of March 1906 that Jacob Marenga and Abraham Morris both had Dutch and Englishmen fighting in Nama forces led by them.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ I.M. Skillian, The History of Kub, p. 27-8
¹⁶⁶ Attorney General’s Office 1723, Copy of Witness Examination, 22 February 1907
¹⁶⁹ Government House 35/138, Letter to Colonel Crewe from Upington, 1 March 1906
On the 29th of October Hendrik Witbooi was wounded in his right thigh at a battle near /Hei/gaseb, east of Berseba. According to oral tradition as retold by Mr Hans #Eichab, Hendrik Witbooi bled to death and was immediately buried as the soldiers did not want the German soldiers to access his body because they were afraid that the German soldiers would decapitate him. After burying Hendrik Witbooi, they rode over his grave with their horses so as to disguise the gravesite. Mr Hans #Eichab further stated that the soldiers could not have buried the body very deep, because the soil in this area is hard.\footnote{Interview conducted with Mr Hans #Eichab, Windhoek, August 2004}
After Hendrik Witbooi's death, Samuel Isaak, Hans Hendrik surrendered with 74 men, 44 women and 34 rifles at Borscha in November. These Nama communities, according to an agreement with the German army were to be pardoned, retain what property they had left and settle in their respective territories. For example the /Khobosan were to settle near Gibeon. Their arms they had to hand in as soon as they surrendered.

There is only one battle recorded in which the Kaib-Khaun community of Hoachabnas took part. This battle was at Guloms, near Arininus on the 15th of December. According to oral tradition, Hendrik Witbooi and Manasse !Noreseb agreed to wage war together and that Hendrik Witbooi would fight in the west and Manasse !Noreseb and his community in the east. The night before the battle, Manasse !Noreseb called his men together and told them to be courageous and fight until the end. He said that on the following day he

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would appear before God, and that if he was to fall in the war, all the Germans in the
!Hoacha!nas area should be delivered to the German government.

The battle began at sunrise. Ouma Martha !Nakhom recalls that the battle lasted for the
whole day and all the Nama soldiers that were on the battlefield were killed, even
Manasse !Noreseb was not spared. After he was shot six times in the chest, he emptied
his rifle, leaned on it and surrendered. It is said that he was decapitated with a sword and
his head was either sent to Windhoek or Germany.\textsuperscript{172}

After surrendering the Kai-ǁKhaun community was sent to the prisoner of war camp in
Windhoek. There they were punished with hard labour for about a year at a Banhof
Station near Rehoboth, after which they were allowed to move back to !Hoacha!nas. This
was done because Manasse !Noreseb had before the outbreak of the war told his men to
spare the lives of the German settlers in their territory.\textsuperscript{173} Interestingly Manasse !Noreseb
and his community only joined the war after the death of Hendrik Witbooi, who had
called them to the war already in 1904.

Lothar Von Trotha left to Germany in November 1905 and Major Von Diemling was in
charge of the German army, but only from July 1906.\textsuperscript{174} The German soldiers under the
leadership of Major Ludwig Von Estorff were instructed to end the war in the south for
once and all in the beginning of 1906. Ludwig Von Estorff’s men were to be reinforced

\textsuperscript{172} Interview conducted by Mr. M. Kooper with Frans !Nakhom and Martha !Nakhom at !Hoacha!nas,
September 2003.
\textsuperscript{173} Interview conducted by Mr. M. Kooper with Abraham Jager, September 2003.
by Major Siebert's who were stationed at Klipdam near the border on the east of the Karas Mountain range. Boers from South Africa that were employed as transport riders oftentimes assisted the German soldiers in the war effort.\footnote{H.G. Ritter-Petersen, The Herrenvolk Mentality, p. 217} The drive as it was called, was to ensure that the war would end on the 27\textsuperscript{th} of January, in honour of the birthday of the German Emperor.\footnote{Government House 35/138, Notes taken from an interview with Jacob Marenga at Tokai Prison in 1906} The German troops in this drive operated in areas in which they knew the Nama soldiers were present and along key supply routes especially the route from the Cape Colony. In this operation the German soldiers positioned themselves from Warmbad to Scuitdrift, which is to the east of Warmbad.\footnote{Government House 35/138, Secret Despatch to the Earl of Elgin from the Governor of the Cape Colony, W. Hely-Hutchinson} 

At this point the !Gami\#nun soldiers under Abraham Morris, Jacob Marenga and Johannes Christian operate near the !Gariep River, after access to the Karas Mountains was cordoned off by German forces. Abraham Morris is to the west of Ramansdrift and Jacob Marenga more to the east attacking places such as Duurdrift.\footnote{Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town, from Colonel Neylan, Upington, 20 January 1906} The !Aman community with Cornelius Fredericks move around the north and north west of Bethanie. So even though the German presence in the south is increased as a bid to end the war, the Nama soldiers were still running circles around the German forces. They continued to ambush German patrols, military stations and raiding livestock. This caused difficulties for the German soldiers' attempt, because this livestock is used for transporting

\footnote{Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Inspector Spencer, Upington, 27 March 1906}
supplies. In January it was reported that Nama soldiers took twenty oxen from Nareeckt, all stock from Warmbad on the 20th of January and 180 head of cattle in Naragab, on one of the major transport routes from the Cape Colony between Ramansdrift and Warmbad. In February, the road west of Keetmanshoop could not be used to transport supplies because Cornelius Fredericks and his men constantly occupied this area. Meanwhile Simon Kooper and his community are again living in Botswana and actively engaging the German troops under Major Von Eckert north of Grootkolk on the 16th of March.

On the 6th of March the German government officially announced the surrender of Cornelius Fredericks and his community. However it was reported not to be accurate and that it was likely that Cornelius sent 150 men and women to surrender at Keetmanshoop, while he moved further south with a hundred men to join the !Gami#mun led by Jacob Marenga. In April it is reported that Cornelius Fredericks and men under his command were captured between Bethanie and Keetmanshoop. The !Aman who surrendered

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179 Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town, from Colonel Neylan, Upington, 30 January 1906
180 Government House 35/138, Secret Letter, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Cape Town, 27 January 1906
181 Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Inspector Spencer, Upington, 27 February 1906
182 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Telegram to the Prime Minister from H. Currey, March 1906.
183 Government House 35/138, Secret Letter, Colonial Secretary’s Office, Cape Town, 10 March 1906
184 Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police, Cape Town from Inspector Spencer, Upington, 4 April 1906
consisted of 250 men, 200 women and children with 80 weapons. By November this community was moved to the prisoner of war camp on Shark Island near Luderitz.

The !Gami#nun were routed out of the mountains on the !Gariep River near Hartbeesmund on the 12th and 13th of March. The German soldiers used eight machine guns and maxims to attack the Nama position. Some Nama men fled to join Jacob Marenga, the women and children were driven across the river under the military leader, Willem Christian. A hundred women and children were however captured as prisoners of war by the German army. By the end of March it was all too evident that the drive by the German soldiers had failed because the !Gami#nun, even though there were setbacks and the !Arman community had surrendered, were still in a strong position.

Jacob Marenga and his allies were pushed so far to the fringes of their country that it was only a matter of time and urgency before the German and Nama soldiers would engage each other across the border. In one such engagement at Van Rooi's Vley, where thirty Nama fell, Jacob Marenga was forced to flee into the Cape Colony. The British police later caught Jacob Marenga and six of his men that had evaded the German soldiers. They were in British custody at Tokai Prison in the Cape Colony for a year.

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185 Prime Minister's Office 227, Letter to British Embassy, Berlin, from Military Attaché, F. Trench, 21 November 1906
186 Prime Minister's Office 227, Letter to British Embassy, Berlin, from Military Attaché, F. Trench, 21 November 1906
This did not deter the !Gami#nun men from continuing the struggle. Petrus Marenga, Jacob Marenga's eldest son, Johannes Christian and Abraham Morris continued the campaign against the German army in the country.\textsuperscript{188} Fielding, who fought alongside Cornelius Fredericks and his men also further led the !Aman men that had not yet surrendered. The Nama soldiers intensified their guerrilla tactics by breaking up into even smaller units than before making it impossible for a swift battle to end the war.\textsuperscript{189}

During October an armistice was established so as to negotiate peace terms between the German and Nama forces. These negotiations probably appealed to the Nama forces as one of their ardent leaders, Johannes Christian was convalescing at Ukamas.\textsuperscript{190} Also Petrus Christian and Abraham Kaffer who had been fighting as leaders in charge of small units of !Gami#nun men, women and children had in November taken their community to the nearest mission station at Heirachabis.\textsuperscript{191}

About one hundred !Gami#nun surrendered after negotiations under Johannes Christian and the German forces under Ludwig von Estorff, at Ukamas on the 23\textsuperscript{rd} of December. Other signatories on behalf of the !Gami#nun were Jakobus Christian and Abraham Kaffer. The peace terms were that the !Gami#nun were to be confined to Warmbad, Haib, Gabis, Dreihuk and Wortel, under strict supervision. The community that had been led by

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{188} Government House 35/138, Notes taken from an interview with Jacob Marenga at Tokai Prison in 1906
\item\textsuperscript{189} Government House 35/138, Letter to the Colonel on the General Staff, Cape Colony from Major Wade, attached to the German Forces, 4 July 1906
\item\textsuperscript{190} Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of C.M.P., Cape Town from Inspector Harvey, Springbokfontein, 31 October 1906
\item\textsuperscript{191} Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner of C.M.P., Cape Town from Inspector White, Upington, 3 November 1906
\end{itemize}
Sheppert Stuurman was to settle at Spitskopp. If they wanted to go beyond these places they had to have a pass to do so.\textsuperscript{192}

The !Gami\textquoteright;nun were also according to the peace terms not allowed to carry arms any longer, their weapons which amounted to 105 were thus confiscated.\textsuperscript{193} The surrendered Nama were given 1500 goats, while Johannes Christian received oxen and 300 goats. The German government promised that if these provisions were not enough to sustain them, they would be supplemented with food rations. The !Gami\textquoteright;nun people that had moved into the Cape Colony for refuge were also included in these peace terms.\textsuperscript{194}

Abraham Morris with ten men did not surrender at Ukamas, but instead sought asylum in the Cape Colony, arriving at Steinkopf on the 26\textsuperscript{th} of December. Because this was the last major surrendering of the Nama during the war, the Germans government was comfortable to lift the war in March in the following year. However Jacob Marenga was released after the war was declared over as the British could not hold him lawfully any longer. He returned to Namibia with several men, posing a threat to the German forces once again. Furthermore small Nama units were still mobilised within the country even after the war had been declared to be over. The likes of Christian Lambert and Fielding led such units.\textsuperscript{195} In 1908, an Abraham Rolf, who had been fighting the Germans alongside Jacob Marenga continued war efforts in the area that was formally known to

\textsuperscript{192} Translation from German records, Agreement of Surrender, p. 89
\textsuperscript{193} Attorney General's Office 1359, The End of the Rebellion, December 1906
\textsuperscript{194} Prime Minister's Office 227, Letter to W.F. Hely-Hutchinson, Governor of the Cape Colony, from E.P. von Humboldt, Consul General for Germany, Cape Town, 31 December 1906
\textsuperscript{195} Government House 35/139, Letter to the Colonel on the General Staff, Cape Colony from Major Wade, British soldier attached to the Head Quarters of the German Field Force
the !Gami#nun as their land. Simon Kooper and his community also did not surrender and even fought against the German army also in 1908.

Nama on Board a Woermann Steamship to West Africa

Nineteen Nama soldiers that were a part of a hundred that were sent to the north of the country to assist the German army against the Hereros absconded to Rietmond, to tell their leader about the brutal treatment of the Hereros and of themselves in the war. As soon as Hendrik Witbooi commanded the war against the German government in the southern Namibia, Lothar Von Trotha ordered that the remaining Nama that were assisting them in the central and northern Namibia be arrested and sent to West Africa. This group numbered about 119 Nama soldiers in total in November 1905.

There was some haggling about where to deport the Nama soldiers, whether they were to be transported to Togo or Cameroon. The Deputy Governor of the colony, Tecklenburg set the matter straight and suggested that the Nama soldiers be sent to Togo, where the taxpayers' money would be spared as the Nama soldiers would inevitably perish. This became then the policy sanctioned by the German government, to deport Nama so that they could swiftly perish in an unknown land. The action of deporting Nama in a bid to decrease their numbers in the country was a form of genocide.

196 H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 238
There was a heavy death toll in Togo, because of the climatic system that the Nama were unaccustomed to and the heavy labour endured by them. The German government sent less than half the initial number of Nama soldiers sent to west Africa to Cameroon, as a precaution against the increasing number of Nama that were dying in Togo. This however did not change the circumstances of the Nama soldiers and out of the 119 Nama that were sent to Togo and Cameroon, only forty-one survived and were able to see their country again in mid 1906.\textsuperscript{197}

Statements by Nama soldiers that returned from West Africa were collected by the German military staff and were later included by the British intelligence in the testimonies about the treatment of Africans by the German government in Namibia.\textsuperscript{198} These testimonies in the Blue book banned as from 1926, because it was dismissed as an

\textsuperscript{197} H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herero War, p. 221-222

\textsuperscript{198} J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. xxv
instrument of British propaganda\textsuperscript{199}, give important evidence from Nama survivors that they were indeed deported to West Africa and that death tolls were especially high because of conditions that existed in these German colonies.

Franz Lambert who had survived to tell the tale of the ordeal in West Africa said that, 'at the time of the Herero rebellion, I was deputed by Chief Hendrik Witbooi to assist the Germans. After that rebellion we who had assisted the Germans (115 men) were captured by the Germans at Okahandja. They told us that Hendrik Witbooi had made war and that was why we were captured. We were all sent to the Cameroons. We were employed there on the railways...The climate was unhealthy and the work heavy. Many of us died, but I don't know how many'.\textsuperscript{200}

Another Nama soldier with the same surname also states that the work given them also led to the demise of many Nama in Cameroon. He says, 'there we were inspanned to wagons loaded with railway iron, and these we had to pull every day. The work was very hard and many of us collapsed...There were no horses or oxen there'.\textsuperscript{201}

The German government remained, even after they declared the end of the war, fearful that the Nama would attempt to wage war again. This resulted in further deportation of Nama people. As if the first deportations were not enough to show how inhumane their actions were, a month after the first group of Nama that had been deported came back,

\textsuperscript{199} J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. xxxi

\textsuperscript{200} J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. 173

\textsuperscript{201} J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. 173
the new Governor of the colony, Frederich Lindequest suggested that further deportations of Nama people should continue.\textsuperscript{202} The /Khobesen were to be sent to Samoa, while the !Aman and !Khara-khoe to Cameroon. This plan was aborted due to the costs that would be incurred in transporting many Nama to these countries.\textsuperscript{203}

Resettlement plans for various communities were initiated by the Deputy Governor of German South West Africa, as the country was known in that time. Oskar Hintrager in 1910 attempted to move the Nama to the north of the country and Herero to the south to once and for all remove any organisation amongst the Africans that may have contemplated to resist against the German government. These plans were not as successful as the German government would have liked because the communities were far from accepting the German government as legitimate and there were many cases of people escaping captivity. The German government from that year onwards deported groups of Nama to West Africa.\textsuperscript{204} One of the groups to yield to these deportations were the Veldschoendraers and the Stuurman community, who were given land at Spitzkopp, after the war. These groups were transported to Cameroon from Grootfontein in 1910. After suffering the same fate as the first group of deportees, they were finally repatriated after several objections. Thirty-seven of the ninety-three Nama returned in 1912.\textsuperscript{205}

\textsuperscript{202} H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 21
\textsuperscript{203} H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herrenvolk Mentality, p. 222

\textsuperscript{204} H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herrenvolk Mentality, p. 228-9, four !Aman Nama were for example sent to Cameroon in 1912 and five Nama soldiers that had been led by Simon Kooper were sent there at the end of 1912 as well.

\textsuperscript{205} H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 241-243
A Khobesen group of a hundred people consisting of men and women, including Hendrik Witbooi's son Hendrik Witbooi junior, were also deported to Cameroon in 1910. The Rhenish Missionary Society appealed on their behalf so that they could return to their motherland. Their appeals went unheeded until October 1913 when the surviving Nama were brought back.²⁶

Namibia's Holocaust: 'The Extinction of the Tribe Would Be Welcomed By the Authorities'.²⁶⁷

Holocaust is defined as a wholesale destruction or loss of life by war.²⁶⁸ The Nama communities perished in great numbers as a consequence of the war. For example, during the war and after the surrender of Nama communities to the German government a campaign was embarked on to wholly annihilate the Nama communities by placing them in concentration camps. The German government set up these prisoner of war camps in

²⁶ H.G. Ritter-Peterson, The Herrenvolk Mentality, p. 230
²⁶⁷ Words of F. Trench in a report about the war. He refers to the Nama after he had visited the concentration camps on Shark Island near Luderitz. Prime Minister's Office 227, Letter to the British Ambassador in Berlin, Count De Salis from F. Trench, British Military Attaché to the German Army, 21 November 1906
Windhoek, Karibib, Swakopmund, Luderitz and Keetmanshoop where Nama and Herero prisoners were housed.\textsuperscript{209} By the time that the Nama prisoners of war were freed from these camps there were very few survivors of this ordeal.\textsuperscript{210}

Most of the Nama were taken to these camps after they had surrendered to the German government. The //Khobesen and //Havoiben were sent to these camps in Windhoek a few months after they had left the battlefield. This was done even though they had signed an agreement with the German government that they could remain on their own land after the war.\textsuperscript{211} This must have come as a blow to the Nama communities who had hoped that they had signed peace terms with the German government that would be honoured. One can assume from this action that the German government had no intention of living peaceably with Nama communities.

\textsuperscript{209} New Standard Encyclopaedia Dictionary, p. 339
\textsuperscript{209} C. Eriksen, The Angel of Death, p. 55, 58
\textsuperscript{210} C. Eriksen, The Angel of Death, p. 17
\textsuperscript{211} C. Eriksen, The Angel of Death, p. 156
The Kai-/Khaun of Manasse !Noreseb were sent to the Windhoek camp after surrendering in Aminius at the end of 1905.212 The !Aman of Bethanie under Cornelius Fredericks were sent to Windhoek as well after they surrendered in 1906. Some prisoners of war from this community had already been confined to the camps on Shark Island near Luderitz. These people had been caught during the various engagements that took place in southern Namibia. Cornelius Fredericks's mother was captured in one such engagement in which the German soldiers took members of this community as prisoners in May 1905 at Gei Ous. Also Cornelius Fredericks had surrendered women and children to Keetmanshoop before he himself surrendered in 1906. These women and children were probably taken to Shark Island as well.213

The Nama communities collected were divided in their clans and then sent to other camps in Karibib, Okahandja and in the Otavi district before being shipped to the notorious Shark Island near Luderitz in 1906, where a smaller group of Nama had been confined since 1905.214

These camps were set up as an alternative to deporting Nama communities to other German colonies, as the deporting venture proved to be too expensive. According to the German government these communities posed a constant threat as long as they could regroup themselves. The German government wanted to punish the Nama for crimes

212 Interview conducted by Mr. M. Kooper with Frans !Nakhom and Martha !Nakhom at !Hoacha!nas, September 2003.

213 Government House 35/138, Secret Letter, Colonial Secretary's Office, Cape Town, 10 March 1906; Letter to the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, W.F. Hely-Hutchinson from the Acting Consul Governor for Germany, M. von Jacobs, 31 May 1905

214 C. Erichson, The Angel of Death, p. 158-162
committed during the war. The Nama could also be used as labourers that would develop the latest German conquest in Africa.\textsuperscript{215}

The German government was well aware of the conditions of these camps in which they had confined the Nama, and thus I concur that these camps were purposefully established to wipe out the Nama communities imprisoned. Even if the German government were to argue that they did not know the conditions initially, it would have been clear from officers and doctors that worked in these camps over a long period that the Nama were perishing at an alarming rate. When the death toll of the Nama was at its peak in December 1906 and January 1907, certain German officials suggested that the women and children should be removed from the island. Oskar Hinrager replied that the Nama women and children were a security risk and that such a move was in contrast to official German policy.\textsuperscript{216}

A report written in 1905, by a British police inspector shows the fate of a Nama man and woman captured at different times by the German police and sent to the prisoner of war camp on Shark Island. 'Two reliable men informed me that they had witnessed shocking brutalities at the hands of the Germans. At Angra Pequena there is a small island which is occupied by Hottentot prisoners. A Hottentot was captured between Kubeck and the bay. He was given 50 lashes and the next day another 50, after which he was put on the island

\textsuperscript{215} C. Erichson, The Angel of Death, p. 160
\textsuperscript{216} H. Drechsler, Let Us Die Fighting, p. 212
where a rope was thrown around his neck and he was hanged by torture and allowed to remain for three days to be viewed by everybody'.

A pregnant Nama woman captured at Kubeck ‘was forced to march at the head of the company. The following day the child was born, nevertheless she was forced to continue the march until she died...The prisoners...are in a shocking condition especially the women’.

A Mr Percival Griffith who had taken up transport riding for the German army during the war at Swakopmund and Luderitz reported that he witnessed the ill treatment of women and children in concentration camps at Luderitz. He stated that ‘there were many women and children in these camps, and children that are more or less five years old are made to carry heavy bags of sand and cement for the jetty, just like the women. These women and children are often physically weak from being under nourished’. He also observed that ‘the loads are out of proportion to their strength. I have often seen women and children dropping down, especially when engaged on this work...when they fall they are sjamboked by the soldier in charge of the gang...across the face was the favourite place for the sjamboking...their funerals took place daily. They averaged while I was there from 9 to a dozen daily, with many children and babies among them’.

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If these reports came from 'reliable sources', and with such graphic detail, it means that these men were witnesses to these events. The information came from English and Dutch men that were employed either as transport riders or as combatants. This may be assumed too because they were so willing to divulge information such as this to a third party. I hesitate to think that the German soldiers would be so generous with this kind of information. The report is also probably reliable as many other cases such as these were cited by other men from South Africa that were employed by the German army during the war.

Colonel F. Trench, whose duty it was to report to the British government about the war in Namibia knew the particulars of the policies and actions of the German army, was able to visit the camp at Luderitz. He wrote in early 1907 speaking about the Nama that 'the liberation of the prisoners is to be postponed and the majority employed as labourers under military supervision'.\footnote{Prime Minister’s Office 227, Letter to the British Embassy, Berlin from Colonel F. Trench, 26 February 1907} He also states as a matter of fact that, 'I think that there is a general hope that they will soon die out'.\footnote{Prime Minister’s Office 227, Letter to the British Embassy, Berlin from Colonel F. Trench, 26 February 1907}

The fate of the Nama communities were sealed as the intentions of the German government can be gleaned in a report by the British military attaché, Colonel Trench in November 1906. His words are noteworthy, as this is the third time that he expresses these sentiments in a report to the British Ambassador in Berlin, Germany. He writes that the Hottentots are to be 'permitted' to die out, but the Hereros and Damaras, who are good labourers and herdsmen, are to be retained, in a semi-servile state, as farm
labourers, &c. Steps are to be taken however to make the country a white man's country and above all an all-German one'.

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221 Government House 35/158, Letter to British Embassy, Berlin from Colonel F. Trench, 22 April 1907
Chapter 4

Across the Lines

Introduction

The Nama-German war was not confined to the country, which was then known as South West Africa. The Nama hardly recognised the borders as separating Namibia from South Africa or Botswana. As a result of this Nama communities crossed and re-crossed the borders according to their need. These communities would seek refuge, food, weapons and ammunition and grazing for animals in the neighbouring countries during the war.

Besides the activities during the wartime, there were existing links between the Nama communities in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana. These were formed during migration of the various communities and through kinship ties. There were Nama communities living in the Cape Colony since time immemorial, furthermore the region which now is part of the Northern Cape province used to be referred to as Little Namakhoeland, which shows that Nama communities lived there. Some of these communities still live there today.

The same is the case in Botswana, there were Nama communities that lived there before the war. Certain Nama leaders such as King Simon Kooper would state that their land encompassed the land that was considered to be a separate country. These territorial links

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222 Prime Minister's Office, Confidential Letter to Count De Salis, Berlin from Colonel F. Trench, Military Attaché, 21 November 1906
were often made concrete through trade. This was not acknowledged in the agreements between the governments that decided where the borders were to be drawn to divide their colonies.

The German and British governments in 1890 signed an agreement that established where the beacons were to be placed that would demarcate the borders between the different colonial entities. The German government attempted to control South West Africa by signing protection agreements with different African communities, in the hopes of one day properly owning the territory. Their opportunity to do this was realised with the beginning of the war in which they sought to crush the resistance so they could justify expropriating the land from the African communities. The British government on the other hand had previously annexed the Cape Colony and Botswana after successful conquest.

The British government during the war assisted the German government and allowed supplies of weapons, ammunition, food and various other goods to be shipped to Namibia for the use of the German army and settlers. The British government also placed border policemen to regulate the traffic of supplies from the Cape Colony and to especially deter the Cape Colony and Botswana from becoming places where the Nama communities could transport goods into South West Africa. For example Nama soldiers were not allowed to trade for arms and ammunition in the Cape Colony or Botswana and selling livestock taken during war was also prohibited.
It often occurred when there were engagements too close to the border that the Nama and German soldiers would cross the border either into Botswana or the Cape Colony and fight in that country. The British men were then responsible to make sure that war did not spill over into their territories, by disarming the Nama or German soldiers. The Nama communities that sought refuge in British colonies would sometimes make offensive strikes against the German army from the British territory, this too had to be monitored by the Cape Mounted Police. In some cases the British government acted as an accomplice to the German government by sending border police to arrest Nama soldiers and even fighting alongside the German army against Nama soldiers. For example in the engagement that led to Jacob Marenga’s death in 1907 at Eensamheid pan in the Cape Colony.

However the British government did allow Nama refugees to settle in the Cape Colony and Botswana. These refugees were allowed to remain if they did not constantly re-cross into Namibia to make war on the German government. The British government not having sufficient funds to maintain the refugees, encouraged the Nama people to seek employment on farms or mines in the neighbouring areas. The /Khobesen and !Karakhoen communities of Gibeon and !Gochas often fled and stayed in Botswana for lengthy periods during the war. The !Aman and !Gami#nun also travelled to what was then known as the Cape Colony and were housed as refugees.
Anglo-German Colonial Frontier

The war in Namibia was of concern to the British government because they had annexed Bechuanaland in 1885 and the Cape Colony after the South African War, which had lasted from 1899 to 1902. Namibia officially annexed by the German government, via the concessions sold to Adolf Luderitz by the !Aman leader Josef Fredericks of Bethanie, was thus a neighbouring country. The social, political and economic ramifications a war in Namibia would have on their colonial assets were taken into consideration.

The British government had also signed agreements with the German government to maintain peace and not to oppose any actions the one government had taken in its acquired territories. So even though a war was taking place in Namibia between the Germans and the Nama, Damara and Herero communities, the British government turned a blind eye to the consequences the war had on the African communities in Namibia.

The borders of the colonies were thus drawn up so that the two countries knew in which territories they had jurisdiction by an Anglo-German Agreement pertaining to Africa and Heligoland in 1890. The borderline between Namibia and Botswana was on the 20 degrees line of east longitude and the !Gariep River formed the boundary with the Cape Colony. The Attorney General of the Cape Colony thus defined this boundary as

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223 J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. xxviii
224 J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. xxviii
following the course of the Orange River, along its left bank, to where it empties itself in the South Atlantic Ocean'.

Besides these bilateral ties, the British government incorporated Walvis Bay as one of its colonial assets in 1878 and considered this an important port for trade in southern Africa. There were also a number of business opportunities that British subjects had invested in the country such as land concession and prospecting companies, such as the Kharaskhoma Exploring and Prospecting Syndicate that had invested large sums of capital in southern Namibia. The British government thus needed peace to prevail between the colonial governments because of these opportunities that Namibia presented.

However the war lasted for several years in Namibia and the threat of the war continuing in the British colonies of Cape Colony and Botswana was imminent. The British border patrol in 1903 anticipated the fleeing of the !Gami#nun soldiers into the Cape Colony once they were attacked by the German soldiers. It was also clear that the non-combatants whether German or Nama would also go over the border for safety. The British police set up posts at Pella and Ramansdrift, and later at places such as Kakamas, Fleispad, and Scuitdrift, near their northern border. Helio-stations were also put up so that the men at the different posts could communicate using the sunlight during the day.

The British patrolmen stated that the patrolmen would not be sufficient to monitor all the

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225 Attorney General's Office 1359, Report of Attorney General, 29 November 1905
226 J. Silvester et al, Words Cannot Be Found, p. xxv
227 Deed of Ratification of the Titles of the Kharaskhoma Exploring and Prospecting Syndicate, p. 13
228 Attorney-General's Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary of the Law Department from the Commissioner of Police, Kimberley, 27 November 1903
people coming across the border, as the river was too wide and could be crossed at any point.229

Mr Adams a member of the Cape Mounted Policemen responsible for sending reports to the Commissioner Commanding the Cape Police describing the conditions on the !Gariep River at the end of 1903 said, ‘the river is phenomenally dry and can be crossed at any point without touching water. This makes the work much more difficult as to patrol the river properly it must be done right on the banks, and this means miles have to be done on foot as horses cannot proceed’.230

The official policy of the British government in connection with the war from 1903 was that the Germans were not allowed to use the Cape Colony for anything connected with the military operations in Namibia.231 Even though the official policy of the British government was that they would remain impartial in the war effort, the government later actively assisted the German government with military supplies such as facilitating the transport of supplies of arms and ammunition from South Africa.232

The Governor of the Cape Colony for example, approved the issuing of a permit and export license for the Consul General for Germany in January 1904 to buy seventy-four

229 Attorney-General's Office 1359, Telegram to Cape Police from Magistrate, Springbokfontein, 2 November 1903
230 Attorney General's Office 1359 (2), Report to the Commissioner Commanding the Cape Police from C.H. Adams, Springbokfontein, 11 November 1903
231 Prime Minister's Office 199, Minute from the Prime Minister's Office, Cape Town, 22 February 1905
232 Government House 35/138, Memorandum on the action by the Government of the Colony with references to the disturbances in German South West Africa, p. 6. The British High Commissioner, Lord Selbourne commented in 1905 that he would willingly help the German government in the war as the
Mannlicher Rifles from a company in Port Elizabeth called Dalldorf Schabbel and Company.\textsuperscript{233} At the end of 1904, a small German unit was at Beenbreek, a British post on the border, with the object of getting supplies from there to Warmbad.\textsuperscript{234}

The British government also sent food and other goods to the German civilians because the war had created a situation where these people were cut off from these supplies. In a Memorandum 'on the action taken by the government of the colony with reference to the disturbances in German South West Africa', it is reported that during the war the German government urged the British government to send supplies through Ramansdrift, a town on the border of southern Namibia. The British government stated that the south of Namibia was not in such dire straits and the supplies sent to the country should be minimal, so as not to give the German and Nama soldiers the impression that the British government was assisting in the war.

The Kharaskhoma Prospecting Syndicate for example, had before the war been supplying civilians in Namibia with goods from the Cape Colony. This company transported huge supplies from Port Nolloth to their shop in Warmbad. The British government during the war stated that the Cape Colony could not be used as a base for military operations, but did not outright prevent these supplies from entering the country because they were profiting from the trade links.\textsuperscript{235} During the war the government only reduced these

\textsuperscript{233} Government House 35/155, Minute from T. Lynedoch Graham, Prime Minister's Office, Cape Town, January 1904

\textsuperscript{234} Government House 35/137, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department from the Commissioner of Police, Kimberley, 30 December 1904

\textsuperscript{235} PMO 199, Letter from Sir F. Lascelles, June 1905
supplies to fifty tons per month. These supplies were transported to the country, as requested by the German government, through Rietfontein and Ramansdrift.\textsuperscript{236}

The border patrol also reported stores of large quantities of food and forage on the border at Ramansdrift for the use of the German army and civilians at the end of 1904, as well as at Steinkopf, in the Cape Colony in 1906.\textsuperscript{237} The British government had however warned the German government that such large quantities could not be kept so close to the border when the German government had initially been supplied from Ramansdrift as 'such a large supplies was undoubtedly a strong incentive to the natives to violate our border'.\textsuperscript{238} So the supplies were probably moved away from the border to Steinkopf, not because the British government was attempting to be impartial, but because they feared that the Nama soldiers would cross into the Cape Colony and take supplies.

In 1905, the British government further allowed the German government to transport supplies and other materials that may help with the railways and other developments from Walvis Bay.\textsuperscript{239} Also the policeman in charge of the north west border who gave permits to transport supplies into Namibia for the German government was allowing in more than he was supposed to. It was stated that 'when Col. Neylan took charge of the Border his instructions were to allow the crossing of an amount of supplies not exceeding 150 tons in all. He appears to have considered that this limitation applied to food supplies

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[236] PMO 199, Letter from Sir F. Lascelles, June 1905
\item[237] Government House 35/153, Memorandum on the action taken by the Government of the Colony with reference to the disturbances in German South West Africa, p. 3, Report by Captain H.S. Simon, 11 April 1906
\item[238] Government House 35/153, Memorandum on the action taken by the Government of the Colony with reference to the disturbances in German South West Africa, p. 3
\item[239] Government House 35/138, Letter to the Government House, Cape Town, 11 April 1905
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
only and as far as I can gather granted permits largely in excess of this amount. The increased quantity was for such luxuries as tinned vegetables, beer, drink of all kinds and similar articles.\(^{240}\)

The Captain of the General Staff inquired from the Military Secretary of the British government in the Cape Colony in early 1906 whether he was aware of the quantity of the supplies that was being transported to the German army. Using reports written by Colonel Trench, British attaché to the German army who would have been well informed of information on the supplies that the German government was receiving wrote that the supplies were coming into Namibia at three points, Ramansdrift, Sceitdrift and Rietfontein, but instead of only 125 tons there were 300 tons of supplies coming in at that time.\(^{241}\)

The German government was also allowed to recruit British subjects to work during the military operations in Namibia, without objections from the British government. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Dutchmen were recruited as transport riders for the supplies to be used during the war against the Nama communities. Englishmen too applied for work in the colony as transport riders and combatants. In October 1905, there were about 1000 of these men in the colony.\(^{242}\) A British border patrolman working alongside Colonel Neylan, who was in charge at the border, reported that in March 1906

\(^{240}\) Prime Ministers Office 228, Memorandum
\(^{241}\) Government House 35/138, Letter to Military Secretary, Government House, Staff Captain, General Staff, The Castle, Cape Town, 5 February 1906
\(^{242}\) Government House 35/138, Letter to the British Embassy, Berlin from Lt. Colonel Gleichen, Military Attaché, 10 October 1905
there were 1500 to 1800 Dutchmen working as conductors and transport riders and a few as soldiers in the employment of the German government.\textsuperscript{243}

At the end of 1906, when peace negotiations between the German government and Nama communities seemed certain, it was commented in the Cape Argus, a leading newspaper in Cape Town, that the end to the war would be welcomed in the Cape Colony. This was on account of the cost of maintaining a police force on the border and other expenses incurred such as sustenance for refugees coming in from Namibia. However the author of the article writes that a slump in trade should be expected as ‘there will be an immediate lessening of the large sums which have been spent by the German authorities in this Colony in regard to such matters as the purchase of stock, mules, horses, wagons, produce, harness and so on.’\textsuperscript{244}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Government House 35/138, Letter to Colonel Crewe, 1 March 1906
\item D.IV.M.2 Vol. 3, Cape Argus, The German Operations, 6 December 1906
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
People Across the Water Drawing Lines On their Maps

The /Khobesen and !Kara-khoen communities under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi and his close ally Simon Kooper sought refuge in Botswana for extended periods during the war. Nama soldiers of these clans were looting farms and fighting engagements in the area very close to Botswana, so it was only a matter of time before they crossed into British territory when the need arose.

In April 1905, for example these Nama soldiers joined forces and looted the farm of a Mr Janssen and took 150 cattle near Rietfontein in the British Protectorate. The German station closest to Rietfontein, Hasuur immediately informed the Windhoek Authorities. When the Acting Consul General for Germany in Cape Town, Dr. von Jacobs was alerted

Simon Kooper leader of the !Khara-khoen community during the war. NAM 2521

Statement made by Simon Kooper on several occasions to British officials that would interview him when he was in refuge in Botswana with the !Khara-khoen and /Khobesen during the war. Prime Minister’s Office 214. Letter to the Resident Commissioner, Mafikeng, from the Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rietfontein, 10 February 1908.
to this, he requested that the Governor of the Cape Colony advise the police in the British Territory to put the robbers in custody and return the stolen cattle to Farmer Janssen.246

The Prime Minister of the Cape of Good Hope, Mr. L. S. Jameson replied on behalf of the Ministers in the Cape Parliament on this situation. He stated that farmers and refugees had been instructed not to allow their livestock to stray close to the border regions, because these livestock were targeted during the war. He however assured the German government that all necessary steps were being taken to apprehend the thieves and that the Cape Police Camel Patrol had already repossessed eighty-one heads of cattle.247

After the battles in January 1905 in !Gochas and #Nu/aub Simon Kooper retreated to Botswana with his community of women, children and some fighting men.248 The community of Hendrik Witbooi was also located in Kakans Vlei, Botswana in May of the same year. The two communities sought refuge when the fighting became too intense and also because of a lack of supplies necessary to sustain their warring communities.

Hendrik Witbooi writes to the English Magistrate in Botswana on the 10th of May 1905. The letter reads, therewith I write to you a few lines to let you know a few points concerning me. You have already heard about this war what is true and what is not true. Although I have nothing to say as I say you know I am standing in the fight eight months so I come now not in my own country I am now on the sands of Kakans Vlei. It is

246 Government House 35/138, Letter to the Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope from the Acting Consul General for Germany Dr. Von Jacobs, Cape Town, 10 April 1905
247 Government House 35/138, Letter from Prime Minister L.S. Jameson to Governor of the Cape Colony, Cape Town, 18 April 1905
through nothing else but running short of ammunition that I have been driven from my district, the German government is not the strongest. If I had ammunition they would not have driven me away'.

'I do not know the German line and how far I can go with the German line. Perhaps my poor people may come into your country for the sake of water but that is not my meaning for them to come across your line but if they do I ask you to let them have water or Tsama for my poor women and children my intention is to go back and fight again. I may be detained so please let my poor women and children have water or Tsama'

in July Corporal Banning, Private Engelbrecht and a Nama camel herd, Titties, left Rietfontein to find the camps of Hendrik Witbooi and Simon Koop. On the 11th of July, they noticed a Nama on a dune and sent the Nama herd ahead to tell the man that they had come in peace. When they got closer, they saw that seventeen armed Nama had been hiding in the dunes, thinking that they were German soldiers. These armed Nama were searching for tsamma, probably for the camp of the /Khoes and /Khara-khoen

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248 Grosser Generalstab, Die Kampfe der Deutschen Truppen, p. 342; W. D. Haake, The Kalahari Expedition, p. 2
249 Tsamma is a melon that grows in semi-arid to arid regions such as the Namib and Kalahari Deserts. It is a good source of water. During the war the Nama often depended on Tsamma when moving around in the Kalahari Desert. Wulf Haake in 'The Kalahari Expedition' writes 'the Nama and their horses, cattle etc were used to living on Tsamma melons. This allowed them to utilise this area (Kalahari Desert) in reasonable safety. If not used to Tsamma it causes severe constipation in humans and swollen joints in horses', p. 2
250 Government House 35/147. This is a rough translation of the letter by Hendrik Witbooi who wrote it in Cape Dutch. There were errors in the translation, which I corrected. For example instead of reading 'I ask you to let them have water or Tsama', it read 'I ask you to let them have water at Tsama'.

community of 3000 women, children and fifty fighting men that were a few kilometres west.251

Simon Kooper was in charge of this community in Botswana, while Hendrik Witbooi was on the battlefield with both !Khoesen and !Kama-khoen warriors. The Nama community in Botswana had a large livestock and had moved to British territory for want of water and tsamma that was scarce in Namibia. They had also run out of weapons and ammunition. However Hendrik Witbooi had sent a message to Simon Kooper to send all able men to the battlefield in Namibia.252

Simon Kooper apologised for being on British territory and he hoped that the English government would take over Namibia. He also asked permission from Corporal Banning to remain in Botswana. This request was refused and he was told to immediately return to Namibia with all his people and livestock. On the 15th of July the Nama community started moving towards the border with the intention to cross back into Namibia.253

It is possible that some people left to Namibia, however some must have remained, because in August a village of !Khoesen and !Kama-khoen were located with 103 people, mostly women and children, on the Nosob River by Lieutenant Arnold Hodson, Sub-Inspector in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police. There were also twenty-four

251 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Patrol Report to Lieutenant Colonel J. Nolan-Neylan from Major C. Berrange, Upington, 25 July 1905
252 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Patrol Report to Lieutenant Colonel J. Nolan-Neylan from Major C. Berrange, Upington, 25 July 1905
253 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Patrol Report to Lieutenant Colonel J. Nolan-Neylan from Major C. Berrange, Upington, 25 July 1905
fighting men. Most of them belonged to the !Khara-khoen clan of Nama. Peter Kard, a military commander under Simon Kooper who had deserted him during the war informed Lieutenant Hodson that traders from the Cape Colony, Groenewald, Kemmel and Stumpy used to sell coffee, tobacco, clothing and other supplies to Hendrik Witbooi, Simon Kooper and Nama soldiers. These traders used to come up to the Nossob River to sell their goods and were paid with sheep and goats.

By this time Hendrik Witbooi and Simon Kooper had left Botswana and were on war expeditions in Namibia on the //Oub River. They had been living on tsamma in Kakans Vlei, but the tsamma finished, so they returned. Hendrik Witbooi even said that he would rather go back and fight than die in the desert of thirst. He also sent messages to the fighters in Botswana to return to Namibia. Lieutenant Hodson explained to them that they could not re-cross and if they did the British government would not be willing to accommodate them in future. Some of the fighters related to Simon Kooper, such as Jacobus Daniel and Joseph Kooper stated that if the British authorities did not stop them with force, they would return as they had to obey the orders of their leader.

A Mr Whitehead from Berlin, Germany wrote to the Marquess of Lansdowne in Cape Town in June 1905 about an article that appeared in a German newspaper that popularly reported on colonial matters. A writer of the National Zeitung, in an article entitled

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254 Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to Resident Commissioner in Mafikeng from Lieutenant Arnold Hodson, 21 August 1905
255 Prime Minister's Office 214, Duly sworn statement by Peter Kard before Arnold Hodson, Sub-Inspector in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police, Nossob River, 21 August 1905
256 Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to Resident Commissioner in Mafikeng from Lieutenant Arnold Hodson, 21 August 1905
'South West African Frontier Idylls', accused the British government of assisting Nama soldiers during the war. The writer said that Nama soldiers were given passage into British territory to rest, regroup and move back into Namibia to continue the war. The writer stated that 'the British Authorities have during the whole campaign made things difficult for the Germans by treating the Herero and Hottentot rebels as belligerents, a course which he says is in itself in defiance of the feeling of race solidarity which should unite all the civilised nationalities in South Africa'.

Colonel F.J.A. Trench, British attaché to the German army, rebuffed this line of argument in a letter to the Secretary of the War Office in London. He said that 'I have repeatedly, since my attachment to Head Quarters here, drawn attention to the extreme improbability, on the face of it, of our assisting natives against Europeans considering that the maintenance of the prestige of the white man is one of the principles all over the world, of our administration'. From these letters one can see that the position of the British government was difficult, on one hand they could not forfeit the relations they enjoyed with the German government by not assisting them during the war. But if they openly assisted the German government this would not go down well with the African communities in the British colonies.

The Nama soldiers and communities of the !Khar'a-khoen and !Khobesemwere allowed to stay in Botswana, on condition that they not re-cross into Namibia, however this was not

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257 Government House 35/138, Letter to the Marquess of Lansdowne from Mr. J.B. Whitehead, Berlin, 30 June 1905
258 Government House 35/138, Letter to the Secretary to the War Office, London from Lieutenant Colonel F.J.A. Trench, Attached to German Forces in South West Africa, 30 September 1905
adhered to by the Nama communities. Simon Kooper and Hendrik Witbooi spent time in Botswana, only returning to Namibia when food supplies had run short in 1905. In January of the following year, Simon Kooper was found with a Nama community, probably of both !Khara-khaoen and /Khobesen clans in Botswana, and in March it was reported that he had returned again to Namibia.\footnote{Prime Minister's Office 214, Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police from Colonel Neylan, Upington, 15 January 1906, 1 March 1906. Most of the /Khobesen however returned to Namibia with their leader Hendrik Witbooi during the war, only some were still living with Simon Kooper. Also some /Khobesen must have surrendered with Isaak Witbooi and Samuel Isaak after the death of Hendrik Witbooi in October 1905 in Namibia.}

The information about Simon Kooper’s whereabouts is relayed in two telegrams to the Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police in Cape Town from Colonel Neylan who was in charge of the border at Upington. His information in the first telegram was from Sub-Inspector Attwood who patrolled on camel in the desert, who had seen Simon Kooper.\footnote{Prime Minister’s Office 214, Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police from Colonel Neylan, Upington, 15 January 1906.} The second telegram was from another ‘reliable source’. In this telegram different facts are mentioned about the same period, which shows how life the rumours were of the whereabouts of leaders such as Simon Kooper.\footnote{Prime Minister’s Office 214, Telegram to Commissioner of the Cape Mounted Police from Colonel Neylan, Upington, 15 January 1906.} It also shows that some reports by the German or British intelligence of the war activities were erroneous.

These reports further show how easily the Nama civilians and combatants slipped through the border intelligence. Lieutenant Colonel Trench stated that the Nama crossed the border into Botswana as the border was not be monitored properly because it ran for
several kilometers, making it too wide for efficient control of immigrants.\textsuperscript{262} The Nama communities were thus able to easily cross and re-cross the border regions without the knowledge of the British authorities.

Hendrik Witbooi and Simon Kooper also on occasion sent for soldiers to return from exile to continue the war against the German government. Some Nama soldiers had deserted them, such as Peter Kard and his following that had moved east to Lebultu in Botswana, while others felt obliged to their leaders and returned to the battlefront.\textsuperscript{263} Simon Kooper wrote to the Governor of the Cape Colony on the 12th of May 1907, complaining that his men that had deserted him during the war should be ordered to return to him.

He wrote, 'I, Captain Simon Kooper wishes to be remembered to you. Because the case is thus. I have been at this job for three years, and am still at it, and from time to time my men have deserted me, without my consent, and they are now in your country with my weapons, and they don't want to come back to me, therefore I am sending you this letter. I have asked these people three times, through the officials at Rietfontein, and they replied that they had no right beyond the "Nosop" ... I am thus suffering double loss of my people, which he does not want to deliver to me, half of the people have died of starvation and half have died of ______ and half have died of fever... I am responsible

\textsuperscript{262} Government House 35/138, Letter to the Secretary to the War Office, London from Lieutenant Colonel F. L. Trench, Attached to German Forces in South West Africa, 30 September 1905

\textsuperscript{263} Prime Minister's Office, Letter to the Resident Commissioner, Mafikeng from H. V. Ellis, Khulis, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 14 May 1906
as Captain for these people to the Almighty God. Therefore I am compelled to be concerned before the Lord": 264

Simon Kooperc and his community for most part lived in the border regions, between the Auob River, near his headquarters of Gochas and the Nossob River. This area he claimed was part of the traditional land of the !Khara-khoen community. When the British border police visited him, he would often explain that his land that he and his people have always moved on was between the Auob and Nossob Rivers in South Africa, north and east of the Nossob in Botswana and north and west of this same river in Namibia.  265

He also emphatically stated that he did not understand how people across the seas would draw lines on the map, demarcating who's land is who's. 266 If this is correct, Simon Kooper as the custodian of the land for his community was well within his rights to move freely in the area that he did during the war. Because of this, Simon Kooper and his community were thus reported to be on the Nossob River at Gei-Ap in the Cape Colony by the Sub-Inspector of the British Border Patrol Police in Botswana, H.V. Eason in August 1906.  267

264 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Letter to the Governor of Cape Town from Captain Simon Kooper, Great Namaqualand, 12 May 1907.
265 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Letter to the Under Colonial Secretary, Defence and Police branch, Cape Town from the Commissioner Commanding the Cape Mounted Police, 30 October 1907, p. 4-5.
266 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Letter to the Resident Commissioner, Mafikeng, from the Assistant Resident Magistrate, Rietfontein, J.F. Herbst, 10 February 1908.
267 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Letter to the Resident Commissioner, Mafikeng from H.V. Eason, Sub-Inspector of the British Border Patrol Police, 30 August 1906.
The Acting Governor at Windhoek, Oskar Hirnager sent a telegram to the Governor of the Cape Colony, W.F. Hely-Hutchinson, in early 1907 requesting that the British government disarm and confine the Khara-khoen community if found in the Cape Colony.268

The Sub-Inspector of the Cape police, Selby in May 1907, questioned Jeremiah, a Nama commander under Simon Kooper who had been living with twelve Nama in Botswana. The Nama commander stated that the rest of his people were in Namibia with Simon Kooper and were commencing peace talks with the German government. On the 4th of May, a Nama commander under Simon Kooper arrived in Koesean from, which is where this Nama community of Jeremiah was living in Botswana. Simon Kooper had sent Lucas Gertse to ask the British policeman to visit him. He stated that he could not come to Koesean as he was awaiting the German negotiators.269

These peace negotiations must have fallen through, because in August the German government was again requesting that the British government prevent the Nama community of Simon Kooper to enter Botswana since he was living in close proximity to the border. Frederick Von Lindequist also informed Lord Selbourne that military action was soon to be taken against Simon Kooper and his community. Lindequist wrote, ‘I now take the liberty to inquire as to whether your Excellency would be prepared to lend a

268 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Letter from the Consul General for Germany, Cape Town with telegram enclosed to the Governor of the Cape Colony from Acting Governor in Windhoek, 11 April 1907
269 Prime Minister’s Office 214, Report on the Hottentot Chief Simon Kooper to the Officer Commanding the Cape Mounted Police, Uppington from the D.C.O Selby, Sub-Inspector of the Cape Mounted Police, Rietfontein, 11 May 1907
neighbourly hand...by ordering the Bechuanaland Border Police to co-operate with our forces in preventing Cooper to evade into British territory. 270

Simon Kooper and his community however did enter Botswana and could be found there in early October 1907 on the Nossob River, north of Rietfontein. The British police, who were on patrol duty and were visiting the Nama community at the time, asked Simon Kooper why he had not surrendered to the German government. His reply was that the German government was shooting the Nama after they had surrendered to them. He in turn asked the policeman whether the British government was now in cahoots with the German government. 271 Simon Kooper knew about the engagement against Jacob Marenga that led to his death in Botswana in September. In fact Nama, including Jacob Marenga's son who was present when his father died, joined Simon Kooper after the death of Jacob Marenga. 272

They British government at this time was investigating the places to which Simon Kooper and his community could flee in Botswana if attacked by the German government, so as to offer assistance in preventing their movement. 273 The British government also tried to restrict the sale of weapons and ammunition to the Nama in Botswana. 274 In all fairness to the British government, they did not want their territory to

270 Prime Minister's Office 214, Private letter to Lord Selbourne from Frederick Von Lindequist, Windhoek, 14 August 1907
271 Prime Minister's Office 214, Report of Visit of Cape Mounted Police to Simon Kooper, 1 October 1907
272 Prime Minister's Office 214, Report to the Officer Commanding Cape Mounted Police, Rietfontein from Sergeant Austin, 16-17 December 1907
273 Prime Minister's Office 214, Report on the Disturbances on Anglo-German Colonial Frontier to the Commissioner Commanding Cape Mounted Police, Major F.H. Elliot, 8 October 1907
274 Prime Minister's Office 214, Report on the Disturbances on Anglo-German Colonial Frontier to the Commissioner Commanding Cape Mounted Police, Major F.H. Elliot, 8 October 1907
become a war zone and that we can understand, however they allowed the sale of such supplies to the German army from their territory. An ongoing investigation into illicit trade in ammunitions and weapons to Nama soldiers in Botswana, led the police to question a trader, George Gumbrill. He often traded on the Nossob River in Botswana. He gave the British intelligence further information about the gun running that Simon Kooper and his community were involved in.275

Gumbrill stated that in early October 1907, as he was trading on the Nossob River, he arrived at the camp of Simon Kooper and his community, 300 women and men. Gumbrill noted that some men had weapons that they had probably traded with European and Tswana traders in Botswana.276 In early 1908, criminal proceedings took place in which George Gumbrill was accused of trading in stolen livestock, taken from the British scout Robert Duncan, by Simon Kooper and his men. George Gumbrill was found in possession of the livestock with R.D. branded on them. He had not mentioned in the earlier testimony that he himself traded with Simon Kooper and could be liable for trading in arms with him as well.277

The German forces exasperated by Simon Kooper and his army's pillaging in the border regions compiled a report in which, von Estorff, showed the Governor of the German colony that Simon Kooper and his men were involved in several engagements in 1907,

275 Prime Minister's Office 214, Sworn statement by George Gumbrill, Rietfontein, before J.F. Herbst, 2 November 1907
276 Prime Minister's Office 214, Sworn statement by George Gumbrill, Rietfontein, before J.F. Herbst, 2 November 1907
277 Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to the Resident Magistrate from the Assistant Resident Magistrate J.F. Herbst, Gordenia, 10 February 1908
even after the war had been lifted. One of these engagements resulted in the death of Robert Duncan at Daberas in southern Namibia in June and the driving of his livestock and sale thereof to traders such as George Gumbrill in Botswana. This report was written in the hopes of getting support from the English government to carry out a military engagement against Simon Kooper while he was in Botswana.

At the end of October 1907, the Governor in Windhoek, Friedrich Lindequist proposed that "the German troops proceed to attack Simon Cooper, and may, if necessity arises, cross the frontier into the Kalahari...while the English Police on the British side holds itself in readiness for co-operation." One can assume what this co-operation between the German and British government entailed from the fact that Jacob Maranga had met in the previous month.

Simon Kooper and his community living in the border region and being involved in raids from time to time were of great concern to the German government. His community was considered the last to be subjugated to German rule and thus a swift plan to eliminate the threat of this community was intended. Simon Kooper and his community hindered the British government as well. The Assistant Magistrate at Richtfontein, J.F. Herbst wrote in February 1908 that there were reasons why Simon Kooper and his following should be removed from Botswana, apart from the fact that they were making Botswana their military base. He said that there were European farmers who willing to settle on the

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278 Prime Minister's Office 214, Report to the Imperial Governor from von Etoroff, Windhoek, 20 December 1907
279 Prime Minister's Office 214. Letter from the Imperial Governor of German South West Africa, Windhoek, 31 October 1907
Nossob River. These farmers were prevented from doing so because of fear that the Nama soldiers would threaten their livelihood.280

The German forces embarked on an offensive strike on Simon Kooper and his community, in what W.D. Haacke writes as the 'final battle of the Nama War'.281 This battle took place after Nama soldiers that had attacked a German unit near Koes had been followed through the Kalahari Desert into Botswana.282 On the morning of 16th March near Seathub the German force attempted to surround the camp of the Nama. Simon Kooper had escaped the day before, and thus escaped the heavy fight that resulted in fifty-eight Nama dead.283 Also several women, including Kooper's wife and seven men were captured with cattle and small livestock.284 Captain von Erckert, who had led the German forces into battle, lost his life as well as thirteen soldiers. Seventeen German soldiers were wounded as well.285

Even though Simon Kooper and his community suffered heavy losses in this attack, the German government was not confident that he and his soldiers would cease their resistance in the area. Through drawn out correspondences between the High Commissioner of South Africa, Lord Selbourne, the Governor of German South West

280 Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to the Resident Magistrate from the Assistant Resident Magistrate J.P. Herbst, Gordonia, 10 February 1908
281 W.D. Haacke, The Kalahari Expedition, p. 1
282 W.D. Haacke, The Kalahari Expedition, p. 4
283 W.D. Haacke, The Kalahari Expedition, p. 10
284 Prime Minister's Office 214, Telegram to Prime Minister C/o Stationmaster, Port Elizabeth from H. Currey, 24 March 1908
285 Prime Minister's Office 214, Telegram to Prime Minister C/o Stationmaster, Port Elizabeth from H. Currey, 24 March 1908
Africa, Oskar Hintrager, the Governor of the Cape Colony Walter Hely-Hutchinson and other officials it was planned to actively engage with Simon Kooper and his community. The British government was not convinced that Simon Kooper and his community posed such a threat anymore.

Besides this, they admitted that it would be a difficult engagement owing to the environs of the Kalahari Desert, where water could not be found. Only tsamma could be depended on and 1908 was yet to have a good tsamma season. The British would responsible for footing half the bill for the engagement and this they thought not viable at the time, seeing that they already were spending so much because of the war for border patrols and rations for refugees from Namibia.

The Cape Government suggested that they pay Simon Kooper a stipend for the rest of his life, on condition that he ceased hostilities against the German government. Simon Kooper and his community were to be allotted land that they could settle on in Botswana, preferably far from the border regions so as to prevent them from violating the border. The Cape government said that this is how they had dealt with their problem with leaders of hostile nations in South Africa, and it proved to be effective. The German government, though disappointed that the British government did not offer troops to fight the Nama community, conceded to this plan.\footnote{Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to the High Commissioner of South Africa, Lord Selborne from Governor of South West Africa, O. Hintrager, Windhoek, 30 October 1908} If they had no guarantee that the British would send troops against Simon Kooper, they could not violate the border and also could not attack
him as he would simply flee further into Botswana making it difficult for the German forces to track him down.

On the 12th of January 1909 Mr Surmon and Herbst representing the Botswana and Cape governments met up with Simon Kooper and his community at Khaillwepan south west of Lehutupu. There Simon Kooper and his council of elders were told about the intentions of the British government if they ceased the resistance against the German government.

They were told that Simon Kooper would remain the leader of the community, but would be responsible to the British government for their behaviour. The !Kara-khoen were to keep their weapons but the purchasing of ammunition was regulated by the laws in Botswana. The Nama community would be settled on a reserve and would not be permitted to leave this land unless they had permission to do so. It was explicitly relayed that they were especially not allowed near the German colony without permits from the British government. In order to maintain their livelihood they would be given a subsidy and livestock. The German government would pay for three-quarters of this subsidy, but the Nama would not be informed of this.

Simon Kooper and some of the Nama elders were suspicious of these plans as presented by Mr. Surman and Herbst. Simon Kooper plainly stated that he was weary of Europeans, as his experience with them in the last fifteen years was not good. A Nama elder wanted

287 Prime Minister's Office 214, Summary of proceedings at meeting of Mr Surman and Herbst with Simon Kooper and his Raad near Lehutupu, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 18 May 1909
288 Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter from the High Commissioner, Johannesburg to Sub-Inspector of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police, W.B. Surmon, 8 December 1908
to know how they had come with a peace message when the German and Nama people had not made peace themselves. Simon Kooper said that he heard the German forces were planning to attack them soon. The Nama men also wanted to know why they were being removed from the place that they were now settled.289

The British contingent reassured the Nama men that it was unlikely that German forces planned to attack them. Also the Nama could choose on what land they wanted to stay, so long as it was not close to the border with Namibia. Hut tax, which all Africans had to pay to the British government in Botswana, was waived for three years since the Nama community was unable to pay it.

After lengthy deliberations an agreement was signed with Simon Kooper and fifteen elders that stated that Simon Kooper was to receive a regular stipend. They also agreed to live on demarcated land south of Lehututu, not move out of this area without permission and live in peace and discontinue hostilities with the German government on the 23rd of January 1909.290 The German government was pleased that the affair had a peaceable outcome and congratulation was given to the officials involved. The German consulate at Johannesburg on behalf of the German government would pay the pension to Simon Kooper.291

289 Prime Minister's Office 214, Summary of proceedings at meeting of Mr Surman and Herbst with Simon Kooper and his Raad near Lehututu, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 18 May 1909, p. 7

290 Prime Minister's Office 214, Summary of proceedings at meeting of Mr Surman and Herbst with Simon Kooper and his Raad near Lehututu, Bechuanaland Protectorate, 18 May 1909, p. 9
Thus Simon Kooper and the community never succumbed to the harsh treatment of the German government in prisoner of war camps in Namibia. However they were confined to a reserve in Botswana and were never able to return to the land, which they had considered to be their land by birthright. Simon Kooper passed on in 1913 at Lokwabe, Botswana where descendants of !Khara-khoen could still recently be located.292

"I Am Sending Across the Orange River My Nation and People"363

Nama women, children and the aged fled across the !Gariep River on a large scale from the ravages of the war into the Cape Colony. As is the case in war, the women and children suffer the most. There were a greater number of women and children that were in the concentration camps in Namibia and in the refugee camps in the Cape Colony. Most Nama women, children and elderly in concentration camps in Namibia for example, endured humiliation, forced labour and violence of all kinds, including rape by German officers and high death rates owing to insufficient rations.

The traditional leaders seeing that their women, children and aged were not safe and fearing the worst of the war would affect them sent them to the Cape Colony. The communities sent there consisted of the !Gami#num and !Aman clans of the Nama. The !Gami#num fled first in 1903 and returned when there was peace signed between them

291 Prime Minister's Office 214, Letter to the Governor of Cape Colony from the Imperial Governor of German South West Africa, 9 March 1909
292 W.D. Haacke, The Kalahari Expedition, p. 16
293 Words by Cornelius Fredericks in a letter to the Resident Magistrate of Port Nolloth, Government House 35/147, Letter to the Resident Magistrate, Port Nolloth from Cornelius Fredericks, 19 July 1905
and the Germans. They crossed the border into the Cape Colony when resistance resumed in 1904.\textsuperscript{294} !Gami\#num leaders such as Jacob Marenga often fled to the Cape Colony during the war. Jacob Marenga and other leaders were outlawed in the peace negotiations between the !Gami\#num and German government in January 1904, and thus fled to the Cape Colony and remained there until they were well equipped to fight the German forces. On another occasion in mid 1904, Jacob Marenga and several soldiers were located at Bissepoort in the Cape Colony.\textsuperscript{295}

The !Aman leader, Cornelius Fredericks wrote a letter to the Resident Magistrate at Port Nolloth when he sent his people across the border, expressing the hope that he would protect his people that he was sending to Port Nolloth.\textsuperscript{296} Cornelius Fredericks wrote, 'I am obliged to write you this letter respecting my people and nation- all from Bethanie. As the Germans murder women and children to a very large extent, and shoot down young people without taking them prisoners, I do not see my way clear to live with old men, women and children consequently I am sending across the Orange River, this the 19th day of July 1905, this my people and nation to the British Government, especially to your Highness the Resident Magistrate of Port Nolloth'.\textsuperscript{297}

Cornelius Fredericks explained that on occasion when he captured people he had sent them back to the German forces but they had not done the same when they captured his

\textsuperscript{294} Attorney General's Office 1359 (2), Telegram to the Commissioner Commanding C.M.P. from Police, Springbokfontein, 14 December 1903, 6 January 1904, Government House 35/137, Telegram to Commissioner Commanding C.M.P. from Sub-Inspector Adams, Springbokfontein, 28 November 1904

\textsuperscript{295} J. Masson, Jakob Marenga, An Early Resistance Hero of Namibia, p. 27

\textsuperscript{296} Government House 35/147, Letter to the Resident Magistrate, Port Nolloth from Cornelius Fredericks, 19 July 1905
people. He also stated, 'I am unable at present to give the total number of the people as many of them have already crossed the Orange River, which I could not count. The number of women is 110, children 82 and men 11'.

Jacob Marenga, Abraham Morris and Johannes Christian attempted to send people into the Cape Colony in October 1905, but they were denied passage. At this he said that the British police must be unaware that the German soldiers shoot the women and children. He also complained that they were not allowed to buy clothing and supplies for his people in the Cape Colony, but the German soldiers were permitted to purchase supplies for the war. Major Berrangé at Upington in a telegram to the Commissioner Commanding the Cape Mounted Police in Cape Town wrote that he advised Nama
women and children to cross into the Cape Colony as it was indeed the case that German soldiers shoot at them.  

The Resident Magistrate in Gordonia anticipated that Nama would flee into their territory from the war because a similar incident had taken place in 1897, where Nama from the Afrikaner clan had crossed into the Cape Colony. He thus sought for a stronger police presence on the border to regulate the influx of the refugees. A directive explaining how to deal with the 'native refugees from German Territory' was set up by the Attorney General in November 1903. He reported that the British government would receive the refugees and give them shelter and rations on condition that they do not re-cross and continue fighting with the German forces. Armed Nama were to be disarmed and refrain from assisting soldiers across the border and abide by the law of the Cape Colony. The Nama were not to be sent back against their will and had to perform a service for the British government if they could not find work themselves.

These Nama people lived in refugee camps at Kinderly near Steinkopf, Sprinbokfontein, Port Nolloth, Hartbeeste River and Geelbosdraai in the Gordonia District. Some were even scattered in the Richtersveld area. Able Nama were forced to work for farmers in the region or in mines at Nabapeep, O'okiep and Concordia in the Northern Cape.

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300 Government House 35/138, Telegram to the Commissioner Commanding the C.M.P from Major Barrange, Upington 11 November 1905
301 Attorney-General's Office 1359, Letter to the Secretary to the Law Department from the Resident Magistrate, Gordonia, 17 November 1903
302 Prime Minister's Office 199, Report of the Attorney General on the Native Refugees from German Territory. Damara and German refugees also crossed into the Cape Colony during the war. I am not sure whether Damara means Herero in this case.
303 Government House 35/138, telegram to the Commissioner Commanding the C.M.P from Major Barrange, Upington, 11 November 1905
Province. By April 1906, 1562 women and children and 501 men had come into Cape Colony. The latest group to have crossed on the 2nd of April were 300 women and children with several sick men and wagons sent by Jacob Marenga under the care of Dirk Witbooi. These refugees were sent to Geelbosdraai. The British government encouraged the refugees to work, as this would minimise the cost from taxpayers of the Cape Colony. In an urgent telegram to the Secretary of the Law Department the Resident Magistrates at Springbokfontein stated that he was expecting 155 refugees for which he would continue to find work at the mines.

Even though the refugees were being assisted with shelter and rations by the British government, their condition, according to a man that had passed by the camp at the Roman Catholic Mission station at Matjeskloof, was deplorable. This man signing his name as H.S.S. at O'okiep in Little Namakhoeiland, wrote 'I went to Matjeskloof today, saw the 'Father' in charge of the mission, and with him went round the camp. During the last 10 days, 590 refugees, of which only about 20 are men, have been sent from Steinkopf and Port Nolloth...a very large proportion are dying from starvation, insufficient clothing and scurvy. They were sent up in wagons and dumped down on the bare veldt, four died on the road, and three the first night at Matjeskloof. They have now been at Matjeskloof eight days, during that time 15 more have died, mostly young women and children'.

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304 Government House 35/147, Minute from Prime Minister's Office, 25 April 1906
305 Government House 35/147, Minute from Prime Minister's Office, 3 May 1906
306 Attorney General's Office 1359, Telegram to the Secretary to the Law Department from Resident Magistrate, Springbokfontein, 3 January 1904
The Resident Magistrate of Namakhoeland argued that the Nama people were not dying of starvation but admitted that on the journey two died, one from diarrhoea and other from scurvy. He also said that those that had been living at Kinderly near Steinkopf and Port Nolloth were sent to Matjeskloof near Springbok because of their poor health, so as to be close to the resident doctor. This shows that the Nama were probably in an unhealthy state as described above. The Resident Magistrate said that the refugees' diet consisted of wheat or meal, salt and sugar. The refugees could also use the stock that they had brought across the border. They were also given rice and more fat after a while. The Magistrate argued that since they were more than eight in a family, all their food together could sustain them. When they arrived in Matjeskloof this diet was supplemented with bread for people over the age of fourteen. The sick were given a ration of meat, lime juice and vegetables.

Dr. Cowan who used to see to the medical needs of the refugees in the area stated in a letter to the Resident Magistrate that it was only since the refugees were sent to Matjeskloof in mid 1906 that they were given proper food by the government. Before this he said the Nama people were dying of malnourishment and insufficient clothing. According to him the alarming death rates would increase if the people had not been provided with better food and blankets.

307 Government House 35/147, Report by H.S.S., O'okiep, Namaqualand, 17 July 1906
308 Government House 35/147, Letter to the Under Colonial Secretary from Resident Magistrate, Namaqualand, 4 August 1906
309 Government House 35/147, Letter to the Under Colonial Secretary from Resident Magistrate, Namaqualand, 4 August 1906
310 Government House 35/147, Letter to Resident Magistrate from Dr. Cowan, 4 August 1906
311 Government House 35/147, Report by H.S.S., O'okiep, Namaqualand, 17 July 1906
Another individual, like the Resident Magistrate at Namakhoeland argued that the Nama had sufficient supplies. Mr. Rorich who went to Matjeskloof in August 1906 to take Nama children as servants for his church members exclaimed that the refugees were being fed too much, which according to him explained why they had treated him badly at the camp. The refugees I assume treated him this way knowing what his intention of coming to the camp was. He stated that potential servants that could be distributed to farmers were encouraged to be lazy as they were being wilfully supported. He added that ‘the BushmanHotnot, being as he unluckily is, the lowest in the scale of our South African Races, cannot, may not, in my humble opinion, be regaled or treated in the way it is being done at Springbok. It cannot but have a demoralising effect on them; it will certainly do them, and eventually our parts, more harm than good’.312

More Nama people entered the Cape Colony after the war proclamation delivered by Lothar Von Trotha in May 1905. These Nama streamed into the Cape Colony, and the British government anxious about how to sustain the refugees requested the German consul in Cape Town to assist with funds.313 In reply to this the Acting Consul for Germany, Von Jacobs said that the Proclamation actually encouraged peace to the Nama so that they would remain in the country and not burden the Cape government with unnecessary costs. The German consul said that the German government was willing to

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312 Government House 35/147, Letter to the Colonial Secretary from W.S.E. Rorich, Bowesdorp, 8 August 1906
313 Government House 35/138, Secret telegram, 18 May 1905
provide food and shelter for the Nama in German territory but could not do so if they live in the Cape Colony.\textsuperscript{314}

In fact, Lothar Von Trotha in August 1905 requested that the Governor of the Cape Colony affect the return of 300 women, children and aged that had crossed into the Cape Colony. He argued that the refugees were in a miserable condition and should be sent to Swakopmund through Port Nolloth or to the German station at Ramansdrift from where they would be transported into the interior.\textsuperscript{315} These Nama people were being referred to like chattels that could be dispensed with whichever way these governments pleased. The intention of the German forces was, probably on their return to Namibia, to send them to concentration camps in Swakopmund or Luderitz, which was a similar or worse environment in which they lived in the Cape Colony. However the Cape government stated that the Nama sought asylum and could not be returned against their will.\textsuperscript{316}

It was observed that some refugees that came into the Cape Colony would re-cross into Namibia, despite the fact that the British government had warned them against such an action without a permit. The British government threatened that such people such as the Nama risked not being allowed to enter the Cape Colony and protected by the British government.\textsuperscript{317} The German government often complained that the refugees were aiding the soldiers in selling stolen livestock, smuggling weapons or supplying them with food.

\textsuperscript{314} Government House 35/147, Letter to Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope from the Acting Consul General for Germany, Cape Town, 29 May 1905
\textsuperscript{315} Government House 35/147, Letter to Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope from the Acting Consul General for Germany, Cape Town, 4 August 1905
\textsuperscript{316} Government House 35/147, Minute from the Prime Minister's Office, 14 August 1905
and other supplies.\footnote{Government House 35/138, Heliogram to Sub-Inspector Burges from J Nolan Neylan, Biesiepoort, 3 May 1905} Constant communication was kept between the Nama that lived in the Cape Colony and Namibia, because they wanted to know how their kinsfolk fared and assist each other.\footnote{Government House 35/147, Telegram to Governor of Cape Colony from Secretary of State, 21 March 1906} Jacob Marenga with 200 of his soldiers at Biesjespoort in May 1906 attempted to send livestock to the refugees that were at Geelbosdraai. The British police refused this action because they suspected the Nama had stolen the stock in the war and would also sell the livestock to people in the Cape Colony.\footnote{Government House 35/155, Report from Sub-Inspector T.A. Voules, Ramansdrift, 28 June 1905}

The British and German government were at odds about who was to pay for the maintenance of the Nama refugees in the Cape Colony. The German government refused in the end to meet this demand as they argued that the whole endeavour, of keeping Nama refugees in the Cape Colony, was prolonging the war in Namibia. They argued that the Nama were murderers and robbers that they would not assist, nor should the British government.\footnote{Government House 35/138, Telegram to Commissioner Commanding C.M.P. from Major Elliot, Upington. Major Elliot commanded the British force that attacked Jacob Marenga, several men and women on 20 September 1907. Jacob Marenga, five men and two women died in this incident.} In reply the Cape government said that they did not agree with this line of argument ‘for the information which is in the possession of this Government goes to show that the treatment of captured German troops by these guerillas has been most humane and that they have conducted themselves in this respect extremely well’.\footnote{Government House 35/147, Statement concerning the views of the German government with respect to the payment of the costs for the refugees from German South West Africa}
After the !Gami#nun signed the peace terms with the German government in December 1906, less than half of the refugees that crossed into the Cape Colony returned to Namibia. On the morning of 26th of January 1907, Father Malinowski of the Heirachabis Mission station in Namibia interviewed refugees at Matjeskloof. Joseph Christian, second in command of the !Gami#nun, Jacobus Christian and Abraham Morris were among the Nama people at this refugee camp. Father Malinowski secured the refugees that earnest peace had been signed between the !Gami#nun and German government. They were informed that Johannes Christian wanted them to return home and that the German government provided them with livestock. The German government would also provide for their passage into the country via Ramansdrift. Joseph Christian wanted to visit Nama refugees that were labouring in the area and in Richtersveld to inform that they could return to their country if they so wished to.\(^{323}\)

About 800 refugees mostly from Matjeskloof left within a couple of days of meeting with Father Malinowski. Abraham Morris refused to return to Namibia and planned to live in the Cape Colony with his family even though peace terms had been signed with the German government. There still were refugees that remained in the Cape Colony, some of which were working in various places.\(^{324}\) Even in 1909 there were complaints that the many refugees who had entered the Gordonia district were squatting on Crown land and refusing to work for farmers keen to enlist them into service. These refugees consisted of

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\(^{323}\) Government House 35/147, Letter to the Secretary of the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from the Civil Commissioner’s Office, Springbokfontein, 28 January 1907

\(^{324}\) Government House 35/147, Letter to the Secretary to the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from the Resident Magistrate, Namaqualand, 22 March 1907
Nama and Damara people that fled to this district from time to time, even after peace had been declared in Namibia.\footnote{Attorney General's Office 1764, Letter to the Resident Magistrate from the Office of the Inspector, Upton, 2 May 1907} 

Chapter 5

Memories of War

'To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves, that the line stretches all the way back, perhaps, to God; or to Gods. We remember them because it is an easy thing to forget: that we are not the first to suffer, rebel, fight, love and die, The grace with which we embrace life, in spite of the pain, the sorrows, is always a measure of what has gone before.'\footnote{P. Young, The Machinery of War, adapted from words of a Santayana, , p. 12}

'She who forgets her Herstory is condemned to relive it.'\footnote{A. Walker, In these Dissenting Times, Revolutionary Petunias, p. 1}

The stories of Nama women and children in the war whether on the battlefield, in concentration camps, as deportees or refugees to neighbouring countries are the least addressed memories of the Nama-German war. Ouma Anna Visser who was a child during the war had her story featured in the 'Republikein' on Monday, 12 January 2004, as she passed on the week before. The reporter wrote, 'dondering het sy by 'n versorgings op Mariental haar laaste asem uitgeblaas en saam met haar het 'n stuk geskiedenis wat
strek uit die voorige eeu, die Nama oorlog teen die Duitsers en die beskermende hand van
die Namaleier, Simon Kooper, heengegaan. 328

Ouma Anna Visser was a child when she fled with her guardians, Oupa /Gapumab and
his wife and child from !Gochas to Botswana under the leadership of Simon Kooper.
Oupa /Gapumab and his wife were killed on their return from Botswana to Namibia by
German soldiers. Ouma Anna Visser was captured with her mom and other prisoners and
taken to Keetmanshoop, where the men were hanged and the women released. 329

The stories of women and children in the war such as that of Ouma Anna Visser are scant
despite the fact that they were active participants in the war. Ms Johanna Kahatjipara who
spoke about the role of Ovaherero women in the war at Ohamakari on the 14th of August
2004 said, ‘I was fortunate to have been brought up by my grandmother and especially
my aunt who was a young girl during the war. When the brave Ovaherero men fought
this ghastly war, women formed an important part of the battle…they are the ones who
helped with the loading of the bullets in guns’. 330 The women and children also took care
of the sick and elderly and nurtured the community while constantly moving around in
harsh environs. They catered for the spiritual needs of the community and the funerary
rites of people that perished during the battles. 331

328 Republikein, Ouma Anna sterf na 126 jaar, 12 Januarie 2004, p. 1, On Thursday she breathed her last
breath at a Hospice at Mariental and with her left a large part of history that stretches from the last century
about the Nama war against the Germans and the protective hands of the Nama leader, Simon Kooper.
329 Republikein, Ouma Anna sterf na 126 jaar, p. 2

330 Ms. Johanna Kahatjipara, The Role of the Ovaherero Women During the War and the Road Ahead,
Ohamakari, 14 August 2004, p. 1
331 Ms. Johanna Kahatjipara, The Role of the Ovaherero Women During the War and the Road Ahead,
Ohamakari, 14 August 2004, p. 1
The numbers speak for themselves. More women and children were captured and placed in concentration camps, deported or fled to neighbouring countries. Thus more atrocities were committed against them during the war. It was easier to capture the women and children as they were not as well armed and mobile as their male counterparts were. German soldiers would often not spare the lives of women and children. In some cases their lives were spared on the battlefield only in the instance that transport was availed that could take them to the concentration camps. Women and children were treated as dispensable unless needed for labour, in which case they were placed in camps close to railway or harbour works from which they could easily be pooled. Even in these camps the human rights of these women and children were violated as they were overworked, beaten, raped and murdered. The rape and murder of women and children on the battlefield was rife but even more so in the concentration camps where they were even more defenceless and weak.

There is also the case of displaced women and children in west Africa, Cape Colony and Botswana devoid of community coherence and living off meagre rations they could find in inhospitable sites. In some cases these women and children were provided by the British administration with shelter and rations in the Cape Colony or Botswana but the conditions were still less than favourable, and they therefore suffered huge losses. Furthermore in west Africa and the Cape Colony the precarious situation of the Nama


333 J. Silvester et al. Words Cannot Be Found, p. 172
334 J. Silvester et al. Words Cannot Be Found, testimonies by Benjamin Burger and Edward Fredericks, p. 172
communities was taken advantage of, as these camps served as labour pools for European settlers.

Ms. Johanna Kahatjipara stated at Ohamakari on the 14th of August 2004 that, 'these acts of humiliation robbed our mothers and daughters of their dignity, their self-respect and as we were growing up, the weight of that history has been evident on their faces. How can we forget?'

The women and children formed important symbols of resistance during the war. The battlefield was however more than the site on which the battles took place. Other battles took place where prisoners of war were gathered; on the bodies of prisoners and on their psyche. It is here where the prisoners of war resisted in more subtle manners. Making sure that they and their communities survived the hardships of war was in itself an act of resistance.

Why Remember?

Remembering this war serves a purpose on many levels. Retelling stories of the war is a way of passing on knowledge to people who have a right to know what happened to their ancestors. More information about the Nama-German war is slowly being recovered and exposed in Nama communities. At the 99th commemoration of the war by the /Khobesen

335 Ms. Johanna Kahatjipara, The Role of the Ovaherero Women During the War and the Road Ahead, Ohamakari, 14 August 2004, p. 2
community at Goamus in 2004, a play held by the members of the community for the first time revealed that people from the community had been sent to West Africa in the last century. The names of the people as well as how many people had been deported were relayed to the listeners at this event.

Stories of the war inevitably empower people with knowledge of how the war had or has an effect on the political and socio-economic situation of their communities. One of the reasons why the Nama communities waged war against the German government was because of the alienation of their land and resources. During and after the war Nama communities were further dispossessed of their land and resources. If one looks at the current land distribution of Nama communities, one can see that it is a direct consequence of German colonial conquest intensified by dispossession of land during the South African administration.\textsuperscript{336}

The present King of the /Khobesen, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi remarked in an interview that ‘if we don’t emphasise that (the war)…we don’t want to see the repetition of what happened in the past where especially one of the events that is very painful is the loss of land we don’t have land if you don’t have land you don’t have a place to live…if we play with the peace in our country… the enemy can find it’s way to the people to invade it and then what happens what will happen is that we will lose that leadership, we will lose that

\textsuperscript{336} W. Werner, A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia, p. 135-7
freedom and they themselves the children the younger generation will be enslaved again’. 337

The reality of the war is harrowing for individuals that read, hear and see the atrocities of the war. I can testify to this from personal experience and from sharing a space with other people that talk about or study the war. One relives this war through narration in books, visual images, graves, battle sites, military posts, German colonial buildings and former sites for prisoner of war camps. The purging of the pain, sorrow, guilt and regret of the war is done either in public spaces and more so in private spaces. Remembering the war may also be an action of psychologically dealing with the events of the past, however difficult this may be.

Individuals or communities may also want to use the information of the war in a constructive manner such as to commemorate the war. The various sides that fought in the war may also want to concile and establish better relations. For this step to take place it is important that both parties bare the truth of what happened in the war and their feelings about the war. Various platforms that can establish the opening up of such debates are vital in Namibia.

There have been such platforms attempted both in Namibia and Germany especially in 2004, which was marked as the official year of commemorating the war in Namibia. Bishop Zephania Kameeta similar to his counterpart in South Africa, Bishop Desmond Tutu, chaired a ‘truth and reconciliation’ forum called the National Prepatory Committee

337 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
for the Commemoration of 1904. The preamble for the Committee reads, ‘the year 2004 brings back the memories of the resistance of all Namibians particularly the Nama and Herero/Mbanderu people, against colonialism. Therefore, different concerned groups and individuals have initiated discussions on how to commemorate 1904 in the light of various historical events as related to the colonial era’.

The aims of the Committee were to enable the nation to ‘heal the wounds of the past, help build our nation by strengthening and deepening the process of reconciliation, unity and transformation’ through ‘speaking out against the atrocities of the, talking about the wrong-doings of the past without hatred and seeking, but searching for signs of healing, encouraging people of different groups to come together and tell their stories with the aim of finding a better understanding and appreciation of each other’. 338

An exhibition that showed the effects of the war in Namibia in both the Herero and German communities was held by the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum and the University of Cologne in Germany in 2004. This exhibition showcased how Namibia and Germany share a socio-political history because of Germany’s colonial venture in Africa. 339 A cultural centre was opened near Okakarara and there are plans to open such a centre in southern Namibia. These cultural centres function as spaces where cooperation is to be fostered between the German government and communities affected by the war on issues concerning the war. In August 2005 at the Cultural Centre at Okakarara a photographic exhibition was opened by members of the Namibian and German government, as well as

338 Mission Statement adopted at a public meeting in Windhoek, 14 July 2003
339 The Namibian Weekender, Namibia-Germany: A Shared History, 30 July 2004
traditional representatives of the Herero and Nama communities. This photographic exhibition showed the centennial commemorations of the Herero community of the previous year.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia opened a traveling exhibition entitled 'Remember Namibia! Mission Colonialism and the Struggle for Liberation' in 2005. In the opening address in the brochure of the exhibition, Bishop Zephania Kameeta wrote, 'Remember Namibia! This exhibition focuses on the beginning of the anti-colonial struggle in Namibia in 1904 and its consequences. Its title is an urgent appeal. An appeal addressed to the German public – to let themselves be confronted with colonial history...to the people of Namibia – to remember for the sake of the future the long, bitter and bloody struggle for liberation which began on 12 January 1904'.

It is problematic that it is stated that the anti-colonial struggle began on the date that the Ovaherero community waged war against the German government, which is also the date that the commemoration programme was launched in 2004, because this excludes the struggle of communities such as the !Gami-#nun community who already in 1903 fought against the German government. In an article in 'New Era' about the Ecumenical Service on the Commemoration of 1904, held in January 2004 it was stated that ‘Namibians of all colours assembled at the Evangelical Lutheran Christus Church yesterday afternoon to mark the 100 years of genocide and atrocities committed against the Herero and Nama people on January 12, 1904’. 340
Communities in Namibia such as the Nama communities that suffered huge losses of people, land, and resources may want to seek redress. Remembering the war shows whether there is a case for these communities to seek restitution from the German government. This is presently a contentious debate in Namibia. Wole Soyinka in 'Muse of Forgiveness' states that 'truth alone is never enough to guarantee reconciliation'. Even on a platform such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa established after independence, the confessions of the perpetrators of 'political crimes' given amnesty could not halt some families appealing for criminal proceedings or some kind of justice.

Wole Soyinka further writes that reparations is a corrective measure against 'Eurocentric historicism' that overlooks the colonial wars against Africans and only focuses on histories such as that of the Jewish holocaust. In the case of Namibia the holocaust committed against the Nama, Damara and Herero communities are often excluded in the writings of world histories and debates on genocide and war crimes. Remembering the war is thus an ongoing resistance against past and present injustices.

**The Dilemma of Memory**

Remembering the war has its complexities because there are many 'layers' of the war story as remembered by individuals and communities. Simon Schama in 'Landscape and

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340 New Era, Namibians Pray for Healing, 12-15 January 2004
341 W. Soyinka, The Burden of Memory, p. 81
342 W. Soyinka, The Burden of Memory, p. 39
Memory’ writes that, ‘if a child’s vision of nature can already be loaded with complicating memories, myths, and meanings, how much more elaborate wrought is the frame through which our adult eyes survey... Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock’.  

This analogy may compare to the many versions of the war as recollected by individuals, the community, and the nation. Memory is constructed time and time again to fit into the present socio-economic and political identities of individuals or collectives in the private or public sphere. In the /Khobes community, for example, the fact that Hendrik Witbooi and other members of the community collaborated with the German government for ten years during their colonial conquests are events that are not stressed as much as the heroism of the community during the war against the Germans. What is oftentimes unmentioned is that many Africans from various communities in the country assisted the German army against other African communities throughout the war years.

343 H. Melber, Use and Abuse of Memory and History, p. 2, 3 (footnote 5)
344 S. Schama, Landscape and Memory, p. 6-7
345 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 3
346 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 3
What further complicates the writing of this war is that other perspectives of the war besides the official German version are scarce. Nama oral accounts of the war are rare because not many Nama people recorded the war in written form as it was unfolding. The most popular way of knowledge production in Nama communities, still today, is through oral storytelling. Many Nama people that could have passed on the history of the war died in the war. A few people that I approached for interviews told me that according to cultural norms, children are not allowed to be around adults when they discuss important matters, so in this way some of their ancestors did not relay information about the war to them. The interviewees that I spoke to were able to tell as much as they knew because their ancestors had an understanding that such knowledge should be passed on to them. There are however not many of these people alive that had such information passed on to them.

Shared knowledge of the war in communities in some cases has the result of excluding other stories that may reveal more knowledge or contest the 'official' version of the war. When we interviewed the ‘Under-Captain’ of the /Khobosen Mr. Christiaan Rooi he
spoke about the shared memory of the war of the community of Gibeon. We asked him to
tell us about how his family remembered the war, he was surprised that we wanted to
know his personal history, as no other person that had interviewed him was interested in
his family history. What became evident is that the stories that had been passed down to
him by his female ancestors that had been in the concentration camp on Shark Island,
Luderitz were more illuminating than the collective narrative of the war as retold in the
community. 347

Individuals and communities thus remember the war differently, as they ‘construct,
deconstruct and reconstruct’ it within their contexts. 348 The problem is that parts of the
story remain forgotten. Another issue is that these often competing constructs of the war
seek to maintain hegemony and threaten to silence other versions of the past. It is often
the case, and certainly so in Namibia, that whoever has the power in terms of gender,
class and race will be able to dictate a grand narrative of the war. 349

John Gillis writes in ‘Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity that,
democratic societies need to publicize rather than privatize the memories and identities
of all groups, so that each may know and respect the other’s versions of the past, thereby
understanding better what divides as well as unites us’. 350 In a country like Namibia
where there is a long history of silencing speech and action, there desperately needs to be

347 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 42
348 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 4
349 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 3
350 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 20
an opening up of the debate around the war, instead of a top-down ‘writing’ of a homogenous experience of the war.351

Fighting War with Words

One of the most contentious arguments about the war certainly is the genocide debate. Researchers, such as Brigitte Lau, have questioned whether the figures of people that died during the war prove that the German government committed genocide or if the German Army actually acted according to the extermination orders issued by General Lothar Von Trotha against the Herero and Nama communities.352 The general public in Namibia mostly informed by the findings of these researchers has taken up these debates and what has ensued is a battle to correct or falsify the history of the war. This war of words amongst researchers that study the war and the public has led to the development of a precarious historiography of the war.353

At the end of a ‘Commemorative Conference’ dubbed ‘Namibia’s largest ever gathering of historians’, held at the University of Namibia in August 2004, titled ‘1904-2004, Decontaminating the Namibian Past’, the participants set up a resolution for circulation at

351 J. R. Gillis et al, Commemorations, p. 29

352 B. Lau, History and Historiography, p. 39-50

353 In her article, ‘Uncertain Certainties’, Brigitte Lau, argues that the genocide committed by the German Army against the Herero and Nama communities during the war is a myth. She states that by arguing that the German Army committed such crimes casts the Herero and Nama in the eurocentric role of victims. Tilman Dederling in ‘The German-Herero War of 1904’, analyses Brigitte Lau’s arguments and sums them up as ‘unconvincing’. In the histories that are written more recently (Henning Melber, Use and Abuse of Memory and History: From the German Colonial Genocide to the Holocaust, Jan-Bart Gewald, Herero genocide in the twentieth century: Politics and Memory) it is taken as a matter of fact that genocide was committed against Namibians a century ago.
the end of the conference. A consensus could not be reached whether only the Herero community was affected by the war or whether war crimes had been committed to other communities like the Nama, Damara and San during the war! After a period of haggling over which communities should be included, the participants decided that the wording of the resolution should be, 'we agree that there is unambiguous evidence that the German government committed genocide during the period of colonial occupation...we call upon the government of the Federal Republic of Germany to honour Herero demands for the reparation and to offer just compensation to similarly-affected groups'.354 The debate has thus moved passed from whether or not genocide was committed by the German government, to which communities besides the Herero community should be compensated for war crimes!

As mentioned earlier remembering the war in the Nama communities has centered on the idea of celebrating the war as a resistance against German colonialism. What has been recognised by Nama communities is that the Nama suffered adversely because of the war and because of that the condition in the communities today is that of abject poverty. These communities feel that some form of restitution should take place, but have not taken steps to make this a reality. There have however been greater strides taken in recent years to articulate their plight and negotiate with the Namibian and German government to redress the injustices of the past. This has been catalysed by the action of the Ovaherero community, as they have taken far-reaching steps to lay the responsibility at the foot of the German government for compensation for genocide committed against their community. There has also been a growing scrambling of closing a reparations deal

354 S. Lennox, Windhoek Resolution, via electronic mail, 29 August 2004
from the side of the German government. The response of this is that various interest
groups have surface to claim a stake in the reparation deal.

At a !Aman commemoration in January 2005 at Luderitz, where members of their
community were prisoners of war on Shark Island, their leader David Frederick stated
that his community had lost land to colonialists through robbery and that his people had
suffered further during the war. He further stated that even after independence the
situation in the community was not favourable because even though the government had
bought land for redistribution, the !Aman were not benefiting from such schemes.355

The king of the Kai-ǁ/ Khaun, Petrus Simon Markus Kooper stated during a meeting of
Nama people at Itsawises in 2005 that Nama leaders should unite so that solutions can be
found for the consequences of ‘cultural genocide’ committed against their respective
communities.356 In an interview for a local magazine, ‘Insight’, Petrus Simon Markus
Kooper stated that the reason why the Nama communities were not agitating for
compensation for genocide was because these communities were not unified. He also said
that the Nama communities could not ask for compensation from the German government
just because the Herero community was doing so.357 The Under Captain of the /Khobesen
at the same occasion, Christiaan Rooi reiterated the same sentiment, ‘it’s (compensation)
a sensitive issue. We cannot just jump on it because someone is talking about it now.
Everything must be talked about based on historical facts’.358

355 The Namibian, The !Aman clan prefers dialogue, 7 January 2005
356 The Namibian, Chief urges cultural revival, 4 March 2005
357 Insight, Whose Genocide: Why are only the Herero taking the bull by the horns?, September 2004, p. 21
358 Insight, Whose Genocide: Why are only the Herero taking the bull by the horns?, September 2004, p. 21
The king of the /Khobesens, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi presented a paper at the Land Reform Conference in June 1991 on behalf of the Witboois Traditional Group. In his presentation he stated that, 'we would like to introduce our case along historic lines...on October 29, 1905 our fore-father Capt. Hendrik Witbooi gave his life for this land, and we deem this opportunity as our historically qualified right to reaffirm his position again today...we should not deliberately loose sight of the policy of affirmative action...This policy should be put into effect when considering the land issue. It must be borne in mind that it might happen that the policy of affirmative action will come into conflict with the policy of national reconciliation, but one will have to give way when it comes to redressing socio-economic imbalances'.

In a speech on 'the occasion of the Ecumenical Service Commemoration of 1904', Hendrik Witbooi stated that 'as a free nation indeed we are free to call to memory what has been done to our people even after 100 years before this day. Why? The effects of what happened hundred years back to us, as a nation is still visible in our daily lives. The scars are still cemented in our societies and needs healing...national reconciliation is a biblical concept and I'm glad that our churches are spearheading this commemorative initiative. He further states that 'today we still find so many Namibians, especially amongst our Christians complaining about what they can get out of our attained independence. My answer is very simple. Dissatisfaction and discouragement are not caused by the absence of things, but by the absence of a vision.'

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At the Land Reform Conference the Nama-German war was evoked for the case of land restoration. This was in 1991 after independence when issues of redress were still strongly advocated for, whereas in a church commemoration of the war in 2005, ‘national reconciliation’, ‘unity’, ‘brotherhood’, ‘co-operation’ and ‘nation building’ are the words that are circulated on the lips of the speakers.

It seems that the majority of Nama communities in Namibia opt for ‘co-operation’ with the Namibian and German government on the issue of reparations. The Nama communities have taken a back seat or a wait and see approach in the reparation argument. Other Nama communities have appealed for restoration by negotiating with the Namibian and German government for assistance towards the development of their communities. The !Gami-!nun community for example held discussions with the Namibian government to buy back the hot springs from a businessman from Springbok in the Northern Cape. At their centennial commemoration of the war, the Minister for Regional and Local Government and Housing, Joel Kaapanda announced that the hot springs were to return to the community. The /Khobesent community secured funds from the Initiative for Reconciliation and Development (IRD) for their centennial commemoration at Gibeon of the Nama-German war in October 2005.

A consultative workshop of Nama traditional leaders was held at Keetmanshoop on the 27th of April 2005. The workshop was held as a way of opening up the debate between Nama communities and the German government through the Namibian-German Initiative

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360 Speech by Honourable H. Witbooi, Deputy Prime Minister, Ecumenical Service Commemoration of 1904
for Reconciliation and Development (IRD) on issues of development aid as consequences of shared colonial history. Before the workshop took place, the Nama traditional leaders were consulted about the aims of IRD, the proposed cultural and tourism centre in southern Namibia (similar to the cultural centre built at Okakarara) and the agenda for the workshop that was to follow. The Nama communities that were consulted through their leaders were the Kai-/Khaun, Topnaar, //Eicha-/ais, Vaalgras, Isaak, Goliath, Soromaas, Blouwes, !Gamijnun and /Khobesen Traditional Authorities. 

Many issues were brought up during consultation such as that reconciliation should include the restoration of the human dignity and attempts should be made for the attainment of economic empowerment of the Nama. Nama leaders expressed that Nama culture should be strengthened through financial support by the German government that will allow for the research and documentation of Nama indigenous knowledge. They proposed that the cultural centre should foster such an aim as well as be a place where the youth can acquire skills for the job market. It was mentioned that women and unrecognised Nama communities should participate in the discussion so as empower them. It was stressed that Nama communities should take ownership of the discussions and manage their own development goals.362

Some of the concerns raised by Nama leaders during the workshop were how payments to affected groups were to be made? They also wanted to know what the criterion was for receiving development aid. Another concern was why the Namibian government had to

361 The Namibian, Into the future through the past, 21 November 2003
be involved in how the funds were managed by the different communities? They wanted to know how different this development aid scheme was from the cooperation funds by the German government, as these funds often do not reach the Nama communities. The Nama leaders stated that communities have different needs and should be taken into consideration in the development aid process. A recurring theme in Nama communities in the debate about reparations is that the German government should help Nama communities acquire land as part of the land redistribution process.  

The Ovaherero community, especially after independence, has been the most outspoken community about the atrocities committed by the German government during the war. The community has also taken steps to redress the consequences of the Herero-German war. In July of 1964 the Herero community objected to the commemoration of the war at Waterberg by the German community. A statement by Clemens Kapuuo of Chief Hosea Kutako's Council read, 'we have received information that certain members of the German community, the so-called 'Alte Kameraden' have decided to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Waterberg which was followed by the extermination order...to our minds there is little difference between the extermination order of General von Trotha and the extermination of Jews by Adolf Hitler'. The secretary of the Windhoek division of Alte Kameraden replied that the Hereros were not exterminated

362 S. H. Isaaks, Confidential Consultancy Report, Namibian-German Initiative for Reconciliation and Development (IRD), p. 2-10
363 S. H. Isaaks, Report of Consultative Workshop of Nama Traditional Leaders, Canyon Hotel, Keetmanshoop, 27 April 2005, p. 4-8
364 The Ovaherero community holds an annual commemoration for their ancestors that fell during the Herero-German War since the 1920s. Political organisation such as the South West African National Union (SWANU) and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) used the anti-colonial wars as inspiration for political activity during the liberation struggle.
during the war of 1904 and that their activities of commemoration would continue indefinitely.\textsuperscript{365}

In 1982 the Herero community mobilised themselves under the Herero Resettlement Committee for the repatriation of Herero people that had fled to Botswana during the Herero-German war.\textsuperscript{366} In the 90s this process was accelerated and the Namibian and Botswana governments were tasked to assist in the repatriation of nearly 3000 people at first but in the consecutive period more returnees were expected.\textsuperscript{367} During the same period the Herero community marched through Windhoek and gave petitions to German representatives in Namibia. In 1993 the German representatives did to give the petitioners an audience stating that they dealt only with the Namibian government, as they could not interfere with the internal issues of sovereign states.\textsuperscript{368} When the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl visited the country in 1995, he evaded members of the community and stated that reparations would not be given to the community.\textsuperscript{369}

Under the auspices of the Hosea Kutako Foundation, Herero Chief Kuaima Riuako sent another petition to the German Chancellor two years after his visit to Namibia. The Chief explained that the issue was one between the German government and the Herero community and that aid that the German government was giving to Namibia excluded the reparations due the Herero community.\textsuperscript{370} The German President Roman Herzog claimed

\textsuperscript{365} The Windhoek Advertiser, Hereros Oppose Waterberg Celebrations: Alte Kamerad Denies 'Extermination', 29 July 1964
\textsuperscript{366} New Era, Botswana Repatriation: More Wish To Return, 19-25 March 1992
\textsuperscript{367} The Namibian, Batswanas to return home, 15 May 1992
\textsuperscript{368} Tempo, Herero's stel weer eise aan Duitsers, 28 March 1993
\textsuperscript{369} The Namibian, Photo: Strong Feelings, 18 September 1995
\textsuperscript{370} New Era, Chief Petitions Kohl, 17 October 1997
that the Herero community could not claim reparations ‘as international rules on the protection of rebels and civilian populations were not in existence at the time of the conflict’ when he was handed a petition during his visit to Namibia in 1998.371

After attempting to take the issue to the World Court the community appealed for support from South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Organisation of African Unity, United Nations Organisation and the United States of America.372 The community finally filed a case in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in 2001 for the ‘cold-bloodedly employed explicitly-sanctioned extermination, the destruction of tribal culture and social organisation, concentration camps, forced labour, medical experimentation and the exploitation of women and children in order to advance their common financial interests’ by the Deutsche Bank, Woermann Line (S Afrmarine) and the German government.373

The German government has been skirting around the issue of the war crimes committed against communities in Namibia such as the Ovaherero, Nama, Damara and San communities. In response to the call for reparations from the Ovaherero community in the 90s, the German government banked on the fact that ‘Namibia receives the highest per capita development from Germany’, which was meant to reach all the communities in Namibia including the Ovaherero community.374 The German ambassador to Botswana remarked in 2005 that Namibia since independence had received 500-million Euro in aid

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371 The Namibian, Hereros pledge to take Berlin to World Court, 25 August 1999; Hereros to pursue new channel on reparations, 13 October 2003
372 Windhoek Observer, Herero people hand over petition to Berlin mayor demanding reparation, 6 May 2000
373 The Namibian, Hereros up the ante in reparations drive, 5 September 2001; Hereros add German govt to claim, 20 September 2001
374 The Namibian, Hereros pledge to take Berlin to World Court, 25 August 1999
aimed towards the development of the country and for this reason his government could not pay reparation to the Ovaherero community.\footnote{The Namibian, Botswana Hereros wait in vain for reparations, 26 July 2005}

Another example of the German government’s illusive politics regarding the reparations debate, is that the genocide committed against Namibians in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century has not been officially acknowledged in all German quarters. In an interview in a documentary about the war, the German ambassador to Namibia, Mr. Massing was asked whether he acknowledged that genocide was committed by the German government a hundred years ago. His response was that he could not use the term ‘genocide’ as this could jeopardise his government’s position in the court case that the Ovaherero community had opened in the United States of America.\footnote{New African, Namibia Cold Discourse upon Chronic Pain, ‘If Germany were to admit that it was genocide, then the case for reparations will find basis in merit’, January 2004. These are the words that I heard in a documentary aired during a film festival in Windhoek in 2004.}

The German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul gave an apology on behalf of ‘Germans’ at the centennial commemoration of the Herero community in Okakarara on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of August 2004. She stated, ‘today I want to acknowledge the violence inflicted by the German colonial powers on your ancestors, particularly the Herero and the Nama…we Germans accept our historical and moral responsibility and the guilt incurred by Germans at that time’.\footnote{The Namibian, Botswana Hereros wait in vain for reparations, 26 July 2005}

In light of this apology the German government in mid 2005 hastily offered the Herero, Nama and Damara communities of Namibia through the Initiative for Reconciliation and
Development (IRD)\textsuperscript{378}, a N\$160 million reconciliation package. The Herero-Mbanderu Genocide Committee stated that the communities that were offered this ‘deal’ should have been approached and negotiations should have been held between the parties. The committee further said that ‘no amount of money or development projects can erase the legacy of genocide. We are looking for justice. Germany alone committed the genocide against our people. However German alone cannot dictate the terms of settlement of this dispute, or define the monetary worth of our suffering’.\textsuperscript{379}

The Namibian government has adopted a policy of national reconciliation, which means that the German and Namibian communities affected by the war are expected to peaceably reconcile their differences. This policy for example was reiterated in August 2003 when Deutsche Pfadfinder Bund attempted to commemorate German soldiers that had fallen at Waterberg during the Herero-German war. A statement by the President of Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma requested the German group to cancel the event, as it would betray the tenets of the Namibian Constitution. The President further stated that ‘after the attainment of independence, our people...have vowed never again to allow the dark days of the genocide and apartheid colonialism to recur in our country. It is mainly for this reason that the people of Namibia have chosen the policy of national reconciliation as a national policy-a policy that has so far ensured that we move as one nation to attain socio-economic growth...it has also brought peace, security and stability’.\textsuperscript{380}

\textsuperscript{377} D+C, ‘The atrocities committed would today be termed genocide’, vol. 31, 2004:10
\textsuperscript{378} The Namibian, German-Namibian initiative feared to be in danger, 15 August 2005
\textsuperscript{379} The Namibian, German offer lacks respect: US group, 15 June 2005
\textsuperscript{380} Windhoek Observer, A bid to court the Herero, 9 August 2003
The President stated that the commemoration should be called off because ‘out of some eighty-five thousand Herero-speaking Namibians only fifteen thousand survived the German colonial government’s genocidal extermination order...for the Nama speaking Namibians it was equally catastrophic. A subgroup of Nama-speaking Namibians was wiped out completely’. 381

In a letter to ‘The Namibian’, a writer using the pseudonym U Jamani, made a point about how only thirteen years later the government realised that the German commemoration at Waterberg posed a threat to its young democracy. He further inquired whether the German group would not be allowed to go to the Waterberg graves for the whole year or just in August, when the battle had taken place between the Herero and German soldiers in 1904. 382

National reconciliation seems to be a catch phrase whenever the government sees fit to use it, what about the fact that it is in the interest of national reconciliation that people are supported by the government when appealing for reparations for atrocities committed in the colonial wars. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1995 said that the demonstrations that were staged by the Herero community when the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl came to Namibia were ‘embarrassing’ to the Namibian government. 383 The Namibian government has stressed that the issue of war reparations would not be dealt with on a community level but rather as a nation. Theo-Ben Gurirab also remarked that ‘the Germans did not differentiate against a bunch of Africans’ and that the Herero and Nama

381 Windhoek Observer, A bid to court the Herero vote, 9 August 2003
382 The Namibian, On Waterberg Sensitivities, 15 August 2003
may have been especially targeted but that other communities in Namibia were also affected. Yes, other communities were affected by the war but specific communities were targeted by the German government for the purposes of extermination during the war so there clearly is a strong case for specific communities to seek redress from the German government.

The policy of the Namibian government has the result of suppressing the dialogue between the government and the communities affected by the war. There has hardly been a dialogue between the government and these communities to initiate a plan of action of how to address the consequences of the war. This may have silenced some of the voices in the communities that want to speak out against the violence committed against their ancestors or seek redress from the German government. Only after the war apology at Ohamakari in 2004 did the government feel that it was opportune to press for reparation claims.384 Why did the Namibian government wait for the German government to ‘formally’ apologise before taking action on this issue?

383 The Namibian, War reparations on Govt agenda, 31 September 1995
384 The Namibian, Gurirab urges dialogue with Germany on Herero killings, 16 August 2004
What Remains?

Hendrik Witbooi of the /Khobes community kept documents during the war, some of which were salvaged by merchant August Engelbert Wulff from Bremen Germany, from his house set alight by German soldiers at Rietmond in 1904. These documents were bought by the Bremen Overseas Museum and the originals were returned to the former President of Namibia Dr. Sam Nujoma on his state visit to Germany in mid 1996. German soldiers took another book that belonged to Hendrik Witbooi during the war. This book was rediscovered by a Mr. Goebel of Munich, Germany and was returned after negotiations with the German government to the National Archives in 2005. A copy was given to the king of the /Khobes during their centennial commemoration on the 29th of October 2005. These documents are invaluable testimonies of the Nama-German war from the viewpoint of an indigenous voice.

The Namibian government honoured Hendrik Witbooi and Jacob Marenga by erecting tombstones at Heroes Acre. This ceremony took place at a burial site for heroes and heroines of Namibia, just outside Windhoek on the 26th of August 2002, which is the Namibian Heroes Day. In his inauguration speech, the President of Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma described Heroes Acre as a sacred shrine befitting heroes and heroines who with 'their acts of gallantry, courage and valour inspired the future generations of Namibians

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385 New Era, Germans Finally Surrenders Legend's Documents, 27 June-3 July 1996
386 New Era, Germany/Namibia Have Special Bond – Massing, 1 November 2005
to fight with vigour and determination, defeat the enemy and restore the honour of the motherland on the 21st March 1990.\footnote{357}

The first two names that were presented by the President were that of Hendrik Witbooi and Jacob Marenga with the following words: '...the German Imperial Government sent troops to occupy the territory...their intent was to conquer and subjugate our people and to exploit and pillage the resources of our motherland...Some of the Nama people were also imprisoned along the Skeleton Coast where they later died in their thousands. Up to this day, their skeletons could [sic] still be seen with the naked eyes [sic] as the winds constantly blow away the sand dunes which cover their remains...Confronted with this inhumane treatment...our peace-loving people were left with no other choice but to rise to arms and fight back...Among them was a revolutionary and determined leader and military tactician by the name of Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi...Jacob Marenga who was another revolutionary leader succeeded Kaptein Witbooi'.

\footnote{357}{The Unknown Soldier. Heroes' Acre Inauguration Speech of the President of Namibia, 26 August 2002}
There are numerous mass graves from the period of the Nama-German war strewn in places where battles took place or close to where prisoners of war were kept. I did research in Aminius and Huguis in eastern Namibia where many mass gravesites can be found. A colleague and I were guided to these graves while researching about the wars between the Kai-/Khaun and the German army. Our informants relayed that these were graves of Nama that had fallen during the war with the Germans. These graves were scattered all over the dunes and marked by white stones. The /Kai-/Khaun, Kai-/Khaun, !Kara-khoen and /Khobesen all fought in this area against the German Army. The /Kai-/Khaun lived in the area and were amongst the early inhabitants of Namibia to revolt against the German government in the late 19th century. The /Khobesen fought there in March 1905. A Roman Catholic Father, François Jaeger who was instrumental in setting up the Roman Catholic Mission in Aminius was killed by /Khobesen soldiers in March 1905. His grave can be found in Aminius alongside the graves of German soldiers that fell during the war. The !Kara-khoen under the leadership of Simon Kooper fought at a place called Toasis, which is located to the south of Aminius.

Other informants that we spoke to in the area confirmed that these were graves of Nama people, but could not specify which graves belonged to which Nama clan. In contrast to this, some miles from where we found these graves in Aminius, the graves of German soldiers that fell during the war were marked with tombstones which were fenced all

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388 Mr Markus Kooper and I conducted interviews in Aminius and Huguis in March 2005. This work was conducted for the AACRLS. Mr. Markus Kooper intends to write a book on the history of the Kai-/Khaun community of !Hoaches.  
389 A.P.J Beris, From Mission to Local Church, p. 106  
390 A.P.J Beris, From Mission to Local Church, p. 106
around. These graves are well taken care of by members of the community who clean the
graveyard at every end of the year.

In comparison to the neglected cemeteries and mass graves of the Nama that fell during
the Nama-German war there are numerous well kept cemeteries for German soldiers in
the country like the one in Aminius. These graves show when the soldier’s fell, where the
soldiers fell and which company they were fighting under. Other cemeteries that
commemorate the Nama-German war are the cemetery of the German soldiers and Boer
settlers at //Kub in the Kalkrand district. Further south at Nomtisas in the Maltahohe
district a cemetery was built for German civilians that fell during the war. Another
cemetery lies at Farm Mooifontein in the Bethanie district. This farm served as a military
post during the war years. These are recognised as national monuments and were
proclaimed as such during the 1960s after the promulgation of the National Monuments
Act of South Africa which applied to Namibia even after independence.

Similar to the cemetery in Aminius other cemeteries or graves of German soldiers have
not been nationally recognised but are visible to the communities in which they are
found. For example a gravestone at Gross Nabas commemorating the battle between a
German company and /Khobesen soldiers under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi in
January 1905, a grave of Lieutenant Stuurman in Jerusalem and a gravestone at !Gochas
in memory of Captain von Erckert.

391 A. Vogt, National Monuments in Namibia, p. 68,69,93
392 A. Vogt, National Monuments in Namibia, p. xiv
Besides these, other vestiges of the German army are monuments in Keetmanshoop which read, "in commemoration for the settlers of the Keetmanshoop District who were killed or assassinated in the 1904-1907 uprisings of the indigenous peoples." The equestrian monument in Windhoek of a German soldier unveiled in 1912 relays the same sentiments as the monument in Keetmanshoop. On the plaque of the monument it states, "in honourable commemoration of the brave German soldiers...to preserve this country during the 1903-1907 Herero and Hottentot uprisings and during the 1908 Kalahari Expedition...also in honourable memory of German civilians who fell victim to the indigenous peoples".

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393 A. Vogt, National Monuments in Namibia, p. 92
394 A. Vogt, National Monuments in Namibia, p. 105
What all these 'remains' have in common is that they honour the German memory of the war. There are no nationally recognised counter memories of the war in the form of monuments, memorials and plaques on how Nama communities view the war. Nama communities have taken the initiative to recognise the war through markers, such as war monuments and tombstones. The !Aman community of Bethanie erected a monument on Shark Island near Luderitz in 2004, where members of their community were kept in concentration camps during the war. The monument reads 'We Commemorate Our Heroes, Captain Cornelius Fredericks, 1864-1905, 167 men, 97 women, 66 children, sons, daughters and children of !Ama Community. Bethanie, Namibia.'

The Kai-/Khauan of !Hoachalnas repatriated their King Manasse Noreseb from the battle site in eastern Namibia to the springs at !Hoachalnas. At his grave a plaque with the names of all the kings of the Kai-/Khauan community was unveiled at the 99th Commemoration of the war in !Hoachalnas, which I was able to attend. The /Khobesen community have erected a tombstone and monument in honour of Hendrik Witbooi at Gibeon. Remains of the Nama people that were killed in the Nama-German battle at Hornkranz were repatriated and buried in the graveyard at Gibeon next to the tombstone of Hendrik Witbooi.

A plaque of the kings at the grave of King Manasse Noreseb on the 99th commemoration of Heroes Day of the Kai-/Khauan community, M. Biru
The Nama communities also maintain the legacy of the war through annual events where the community retells the war stories. These events are vital spaces where the communities are able to piece together knowledge about the war and to inspire community members' to search for further evidence of the war. Other Nama communities such as the !Gami#nun, Kai-//-Khaun and !Aman also remember the war in very significant ways as well. The !Gami#nun have been commemorating the war since 1977. And this community celebrated their centennial festival in 2003. The Kai-//-Khaun, similar to the /Khobesen marked their centennial commemoration in 2005 at !Hoacha!nas.

The present leader of the /Khobesen, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi when asked about how inclusive their festival was of other communities in southern Namibia said that 'each community...like the !Hoacha!nas, the Warmbad bondels, the Bersebaners /Kai-//-Khauan, the Oorlams or the Stephanus group of Vaalgras and many for instance the Fredericks !Aman...The Witboois actually started to organise themselves to commemorate the annual festivities of the tribe of the clan and that was emulated later on and we together took hands. We invited also those people...to come and they saw what we were doing they saw what was achieved through this and then also the idea of Outa !Nanseb because through that it was not a mere commemoration of the war but to mobilise the people against the new colonialism...new war that is now invading the apartheid the apartheid South Africa brought that...we have not yet succeeded in what we really wanted because we could not unite the people. The tribalism which was the main enemy instilled by the enemy apartheid enemy was still actually taking stronger in the minds of the people.

396 New Era, Bondelswarts Mark 100 Years, 24-26 October 2003
because each of these tribes not all of them but some leaders in these tribes they felt that if they unite they will lose their identity'.

In the same way that the /Khobesena community commemorate the leader of the community at the time of the war, Hendrik Witbooi, so too do the other communities celebrate his counterparts. The !Aman remember Cornelius Fredericks, the Kai-Khaun, Manasse !Noreseb and the !Gami-#nun Jan Abraham Christian, Jacob Marenga, Johannes Christian and Abraham Morris. By this example it may be assumed that the other Nama communities emulated the /Khobesena tradition of commemorating the Nama-German war.

Gaogu Gel-Tses: /Khobesena Heroes Day

A community that has had a long tradition of commemorating the war in Namibia is the /Khobesena community of Gibeon. It is thus apt to view its tradition in more detail as it gives an indication of how a Nama community has viewed the event of the war over a span of eight decades.

397 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
Gaogu Gei-Tses, as the commemoration is known by the community, literally means ‘the Great Day of the Kings’ or Heroes Day. Ouma Alwina Peterson\textsuperscript{396} who lives in Gibeon says that Gaogu Gei-Tses was initiated by David Witbooi also known as !Nanseb /Huwuob. He was the leader of the community from 1928 to 1955.\textsuperscript{399} The commemorations were held at Kranzplatz, and when Hendrik Samuel Witbooi became the leader, the event was moved down here to these parts (Gibeon). All the kings of the /Khobesen clan are commemorated on this day. Also how Outa !Nanseb (/Gamab !Nanseb)\textsuperscript{400} wrote letters to other leaders in the country to appeal to them to unite with him and fight against the threatening German power that was taking over their land.

\textsuperscript{396} Ouma Alwina Peterson is the daughter of Rev. Markus Witbooi, one of the elders that revived the commemoration event.
\textsuperscript{399} Booklet for the 82\textsuperscript{nd} Anniversary of Heroes Day, Gibeon, 1987, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{400} /Gamab !Nanseb is Hendrik Witbooi’s name in KhoeKhoegowab.
also relayed at this event. The stories are also dramatised by members of the community.\textsuperscript{401}

The ‘Under-Captain’ of the Khobesen clan, Christian Rooi recalls how in the 1950s, Hendrik Samuel Witbooi led commemorations depicting how Hendrik Witbooi and his army fought in the war against the German army. ‘As the name indicates this day is about the kings, so all the leaders of the Khobesen clan are commemorated on this day. But because Hendrik Witbooi fought and fell in the war against the Germans, his story plays a major role in the commemoration event. How Hendrik Witbooi negotiated with the German government are amongst the stories that are retold at this event’.\textsuperscript{402}

\textsuperscript{401} translation of interview conducted in Khoekhoegowab with Ouma Alwina and Oupa Hars Peterson, Gibeon, 27 July 2003
\textsuperscript{402} translation of interview conducted in Khoekhoegowab with Mr. Christian Rooi, Gibeon, 2004
Rev. Hendrik Witbooi the present leader of the /Khoesan community, that has been coordinating the commemoration event since the beginning of his reign in 1978, stated that the commemorations have a history stretching from the 1930s. He said that 'especially 1936, around there, it started to take shape where my father, he was not a chief, but he was a pastor that time, he was the teacher, started and then also he was assisting the Captain, he started with the organising that commemoration. It was mostly by remembering the history of late Captain Hendrik Witbooi and others but it was especially around the late Captain Hendrik Witbooi'.
The people came together and but that was exclusively, seen to be exclusively for Witboois. As the people did not know about its origin and were not properly informed...about the day, the commemoration. So the men, horsemen with white hats, of the Witbooi tribe were coming together and were actually commanded to ride their horses especially to the places of the Captains, which was at that time the place of the Captain, the residence of Captain was Kranzplatz, so they came to Kranzplatz celebrating the commemoration, but later on it continued to expand on the day, the meaning, the content of the programme, the meaning of the history...as Captain Hendrik Witbooi's contribution and resistance to the German colonial occupation was actually celebrated in that way to show...his bravery his courage his spiritual guidance from above, that is why it was celebrated on the side partly from the side of the horse riders because he died during the war on the 29th of October 1905, so that's how he died and he was, is still regarded as the hero of the resistance struggle.\textsuperscript{493}
'When it was started it was only regarded as a Witbooi day but from sometime after
1976, I can say 75, 76, we changed the content and the image of the commemoration, of
the day, the contents of the programme, by also not involving only Witboois but also to
involve other people because through that we wanted to emulate the struggle of Outa!
Nanseb. Because he was inviting the other heads other leaders chiefs...that they must
come together, they must stand together against the invasion of their country by
Germans, by foreign powers...we opened up the commemoration for other tribes, other
nations...we believed as Outa !Nanseb said, we would be stronger and in a position to
defeat the enemy. So that’s how we involved the community as a whole on this day.' 404

'There are several activities that take place on the day. First of all when we started we
thought that it would be appropriate that first the, when people were settled the first thing
they made sure was that they must have water so the fountain of Gibeon, at Gibeon is
being regarded as the reason why people settled at Gibeon, that fountain !Goregu ra abes
it was called...normally the commemoration takes place during the weekend...where
people come together at the fountain and the brass band plays something about the
fountain and people sing religious songs, hymns and prayers are said on that day and
thereafter people are given ceremonially, in a ceremonial way water to drink from the
fountain'. 405

404 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
405 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
When asked whether the younger generation had a consciousness of the war, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi said that ‘I don’t think so because… I don’t blame them for that… they have not experienced it. But what we tried even during that commemoration is that we had a play that Germans attacked Witboois and Witboois were resisting, retaliated so during that process we also involve the community, that is the younger generation the children, and the women and everybody was involved, so that we bring it closer to the understanding of the people… to some extent those who have seen the play really got the understanding’.406

Even though what is being remembered at this event are the kings that led the /Khobesen community in southern Namibia, as mentioned above, the Nama-German war features extensively during the commemoration. What is remembered during this event are the wanderings of the /Khobesen women and children in inhospitable areas during the war407, how the Nama guerrillas outsmarted the German soldiers, how Nama leaders cooperated during the war, their fate in concentration camps, deportation to west Africa, how

406 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
Hendrik Witbooi fell in the war and how the news of his death reached his wife and family.

These commemoration events are significant as a space where the traditional cohesion of a community is strengthened. Allegiance to a certain identity whether it is to a specific ethnic group or clan is fostered through wearing traditional insignia such as the white cloths that the men wear around their hats. These white cloths were worn by the /Khobesem soldiers during the war as they belonged to the !Uri-kam or White Comb Society.

The symbols of the Nama tradition are emphasised throughout the commemoration event. These symbols range from Nama folk tales being told around a fire, the Nama stap, reminisces of a Nama homestead in the past to Nama women in traditional dresses and accessories. This should be seen in the light of how a community attempts to restructure itself after colonial wars such as the Nama-German war and after the continuation of oppression during the rule of the South African government. During these years the Nama communities witnessed violations, disappearance, migration, forced removals and
death of multitudes of their people. This resulted in the low morale of a people, the
destruction of familial bonds and the collapse of traditional observances important for the
political, social and economic development of a community.

Rev. Hendrik Witbooi thus points out that 'when you tell about the commemoration of
this day then it is so interlinked with other events. So first of all the pride of the people,
being Nama people, being Witbooi tribe, clan was very much visible. And is still visible
because the women are dressed in properly dresses, Nama dresses and then few other
decorations they put on their faces, on their bodies and dresses. So that is also highlighted
being a tribe, being a clan. You must know your origin, that is one thing, very important
to know your origin, where you are from and where you are now. But then at the same
time to also know the history and the resistance struggle of Old Captain Hendrik
Witbooi'.

Women dress in traditional Nama outfits and accessories during the commemoration event.
M. Hiva

[Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004]
The resistance of the community against dominant authorities is an important theme that is thread through the history of the community and reinforced during the annual commemoration event. The /Khobesen community does not only remember the Nama-German war but also retells of earlier wars between the community and the German government. Rev. Hendrik Witbooi explains that, ‘as far as we the Witboois are concerned we understand 1904 when the, that is only when the genocide started…but even before that people were killed already killed its not only with the genocide in 1904, people were already killed and many people died before 1904…As far as we are concerned, the Witboois, it does not mean only from 1904 (commemorations), but even before 1904 where the actual wars started, say for instance Hornkranz attack, where Witboois, 1893, 1892, 93,…so why should we only start commemorating…our people died in big numbers so we cannot only start from 1905, so for us we have to start from Hornkranz massacre, even before that when the Germans invaded the country’.\(^{409}\)

The conversation between Hendrik Witbooi and Curt von Francois on the 9\(^{th}\) of June 1892 at Hornkranz was printed in the booklet for the centennial commemoration of the war at Gibeon. In the conversation, Curt von François explained to Hendrik Witbooi that even though his community would be under German protection he would still be able to rule his people. Hendrik Witbooi’s response was ‘that I cannot see. It is incomprehensible and strange, I cannot see how it is possible…when one chief stands under the protection of another, the underling is no longer independent, and is no longer master of himself, or of his people and country. He is an underling, and all who are underlings are subjects of

\(^{409}\) Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
their protector...so I see no truth or sense in the suggestion that a chief who has surrendered may keep his autonomy and do as he likes.  

Leaders of this community such as Dawid Witbooi, Hendrik Samuel Witbooi, Petrus Jod Jr., Markus Witbooi and Rev. Hendrik Witbooi carried on this resistance as shown by their predecessor, Hendrik Witbooi. They did this along the lines of land, traditional polity and the church. This ‘spirit of resistance’ was infused in the annual commemoration event held by the community. After the war as some members of the /Khobesen community returned to their community base of Gibeon, they appointed Isaak Witbooi as their traditional leader. However the South African administration stressed that this appointment was not a reversion to the former days where traditional leaders had jurisdiction over large tracts of land and people. His jurisdiction was limited to the Gibeon location. Isaak Witbooi however intervened in the issues that concerned the Nama community in the area at large. Along with this community he resisted further removals to Tses, after the settlement at Witbooisvlei proposed by the authorities was a disaster for his community. The community was then moved close to Gibeon near their church and school, not because this was their wish but because they were a welcome labour pool to farmers in the district.

410 A. Heywood et al, The Hendrik Witbooi Papers, Record of the meeting between Hendrik Witbooi and Curt von Francois, Hoornkrans, 9 June 1892
411 Petrus Jod Jr. and Markus Witbooi formed part of the leadership of the separatist church movement during the 1940s forming the African Methodist Episcopal Church in southern Namibia. This church was formed as a branch of the Ethiopian movement that was established in 1892 in South Africa. Shepherd Stuurman who had led a detachment of the /Khobesen soldiers during the Nama-German war was said to be an adherent of this Ethiopian movement.
412 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 184-185
413 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 205-207
414 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 208, 209, 210
Dawid Witbooi appointed in 1928 also received the lowly status of 'headman'. In this regard the traditional leader recognised by his community as such, had to make decisions for his community through a Superintendent appointed by the Department of Native Affairs.415 The poor land and waterlessness in Kranzplatz reserved for them in 1924, exacerbated their situation.416 Dawid Witbooi appealed to the authorities to alleviate his people from the problems of the reserve through measures suggested by the community.417 Dawid Witbooi and members of his community that supported his leadership were against South Africa incorporating the country as a mandate but did not express this publicly. Dawid Witbooi in fact denied that he was one of the petitioners to the United Nations Organisation on this matter.418

His successor, Hendrik Samuel Witbooi was however open about his resistance towards the South African administration and petitioned the United Nations Organisation in the 1950s stating that he was representing all the black people in the country, and not just his community. It was at this stage that the struggle of the /Khobesen community once again took on a national dimension.419 Hendrik Samuel Witbooi vehemently resisted the Odendaal Plan that was to enlarge the reserves. The Odendaal Plan had the consequence of limiting the power of traditional authority by encroaching on the jurisdiction of the land rights of the /Khobesen community.420 The national struggle was further taken up by members of the community under the leadership of Rev. Hendrik Witbooi in the late

413 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 231
416 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 76-84
417 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 80-81
418 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 234-235
419 R. Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 236-237
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1970s, as participants of an organisation that mobilised to defy the rule of the South African administration.\textsuperscript{421} Gibeon was the base of the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO) in southern Namibia.

Ten years into Rev. Hendrik Witbooi’s reign, in 1988, the theme of the commemoration was “100 jare van Volkstryd teen Koloniale magte”.\textsuperscript{422} The event was seen as a continuation of the struggle against colonialism that Hendrik Witbooi had started against the German government in 1888. The new colonialism, which the community was fighting against in 1988, was the apartheid administration of the South African government in Namibia. At the end of the booklet in which the programme and hymns are printed at every commemoration event, an annexure was attached of a timeline for the expected independence of the country, which was 31 December 1978. In exasperation an

\textsuperscript{426} For more discussion on this issue refer to Reinhart Kossler, In Search of Survival and Dignity, p. 238

\textsuperscript{421} Nama communities in southern Namibia joined SWAPO in October 1976 against the background of the oppressive administration of the South African government.
around. These graves are well taken care of by members of the community who clean the graveyard at every end of the year.

In comparison to the neglected cemeteries and mass graves of the Nama that fell during the Nama-German war there are numerous well kept cemeteries for German soldiers in the country like the one in Aminius. These graves show when the soldier’s fell, where the soldiers fell and which company they were fighting under. Other cemeteries that commemorate the Nama-German war are the cemetery of the German soldiers and Boer settlers at /Kub in the Kalkrand district. Further south at Nomtsas in the Maltahohe district a cemetery was built for German civilians that fell during the war. Another cemetery lies at Farm Mooifontein in the Bethanie district. This farm served as a military post during the war years. These are recognised as national monuments and were proclaimed as such during the 1960s after the promulgation of the National Monuments Act of South Africa which applied to Namibia even after independence.

Similar to the cemetery in Aminius other cemeteries or graves of German soldiers have not been nationally recognised but are visible to the communities in which they are found. For example a gravestone at Gross Nabis commemorating the battle between a German company and /Khobose soldiers under the leadership of Hendrik Witbooi in January 1905, a grave of Lieutenant Stuurman in Jerusalem and a gravestone at /Gochas in memory of Captain von Erckert.

391 A. Vogt, National Monuments in Namibia, p. 68,69,93
392 A. Vogt, National Monuments in Namibia, p. xiv
Besides these, other vestiges of the German army are monuments in Keetmanshoop which read, ‘in commemoration for the settlers of the Keetmanshoop District who were killed or assassinated in the 1904-1907 uprisings of the indigenous peoples’. The equestrian monument in Windhoek of a German soldier unveiled in 1912 relays the same sentiments as the monument in Keetmanshoop. On the plaque of the monument it states, ‘in honourable commemoration of the brave German soldiers...to preserve this country during the 1903-1907 Herero and Hottentot uprisings and during the 1908 Kalahari Expedition...also in honourable memory of German civilians who fell victim to the indigenous peoples’.
What all these 'remains' have in common is that they honour the German memory of the war. There are no nationally recognised counter memories of the war in the form of monuments, memorials and plaques on how Nama communities view the war. Nama communities have taken the initiative to recognise the war through markers, such as war monuments and tombstones. The !Aman community of Bethanie erected a monument on Shark Island near Luderitz in 2004, where members of their community were kept in concentration camps during the war. The monument reads 'We Commemorate Our Heroes, Captain Cornelius Fredericks, 1864-1905, 167 men, 97 women, 66 children, sons, daughters and children of !Ama Community, Bethanie, Namibia.'
The Kai-//Khuan of !Hoachalnas repatriated their King Manasse !Noreseb from the battle site in eastern Namibia to the springs at !hoachalnas. At his grave a plaque with the names of all the kings of the Kai-//Khau community was unveiled at the 99th Commemoration of the war in !Hoachalnas, which I was able to attend. The /Khobesen community have erected a tombstone and monument in honour of Hendrik Witbooi at Gibeon. Remains of the Nama people that were killed in the Nama-German battle at Hornkranz were repatriated and buried in the graveyard at Gibeon next to the tombstone of Hendrik Witbooi.
The Nama communities also maintain the legacy of the war through annual events where the community retells the war stories. These events are vital spaces where the communities are able to piece together knowledge about the war and to inspire community members to search for further evidence of the war. Other Nama communities such as the !Gami#nun, Kai-/Khaun and !Aman also remember the war in very significant ways as well. The !Gami#nun have been commemorating the war since 1977. And this community celebrated their centennial festival in 2003.395 The Kai-/Khaun, similar to the !Khobesen marked their centennial commemoration in 2005 at !Hoachalnes.

The present leader of the !Khobesen, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi when asked about how inclusive their festival was of other communities in southern Namibia said that 'each community...like the !Hoachalnes, the Warmbad bondels, the Borsebaners /Kai-/Khaun, the Oorlams or the Stephanus group of Vaalgras and many for instance the Fredericks !Aman...The Witboois actually started to organise themselves to commemorate the annual festivities of the tribe of the clan and that was emulated later on and we together took hands. We invited also those people...to come and they saw what we were doing they saw what was achieved through this and then also the idea of Outa !Nanseb because through that it was not a mere commemoration of the war but to mobilise the people against the new colonialism...new war that is now invading the apartheid the apartheid South Africa brought that...we have not yet succeeded in what we really wanted because we could not unite the people. The tribalism which was the main enemy instilled by the enemy apartheid enemy was still actually taking stronger in the minds of the people

395 New Era, Bondelswars Mark 100 Years, 24-26 October 2003
because each of these tribes not all of them but some leaders in these tribes they felt that if they unite they will lose their identity.  

In the same way that the /Khobesen community commemorate the leader of the community at the time of the war, Hendrik Witbooi, so too do the other communities celebrate his counterparts. The !Aman remember Cornelius Fredericks, the Kai-Khaun, Manasse !Norsob and the !Gami-#num Jan Abraham Christian, Jacob Marenga, Johannes Christian and Abraham Morris. By this example it may be assumed that the other Nama communities emulated the /Khobesen tradition of commemorating the Nama-German war.

**Gaogu Get-Tses: /Khobesen Heroes Day**

A community that has had a long tradition of commemorating the war in Namibia is the /Khobesen community of Gibeon. It is thus apt to view its tradition in more detail as it gives an indication of how a Nama community has viewed the event of the war over a span of eight decades.

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357 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
Gaogu Gei-Tses, as the commemoration is known by the community, literally means ‘the Great Day of the Kings’ or Heroes Day. Ouma Alwina Peterson\textsuperscript{398} who lives in Gibeon says that Gaogu Gei-Tses was initiated by Dawid Witbooi also known as !Nansmab //Huwaob. He was the leader of the community from 1928 to 1955.\textsuperscript{399} The commemorations were held at Kranzplatz, ‘and when Hendrik Samuel Witbooi became the leader, the event was moved down here to these parts (Gibeon). All the kings of the //Khoesken clan are commemorated on this day. Also how Outa !Nanseb (//Gemab ![Nanseb])\textsuperscript{400} wrote letters to other leaders in the country to appeal to them to unite with him and fight against the threatening German power that was taking over their land.

\textsuperscript{398} Ouma Alwina Peterson is the daughter of Rev. Markus Witbooi, one of the elders that revived the commemoration event.

\textsuperscript{399} Booklet for the 82\textsuperscript{nd} Anniversary of Heroes Day, Gibeon, 1987, p. 5

\textsuperscript{400} ‘Gemab ![Nanseb] is Hendrik Witbooi’s name in Khoekhoegowab
also relayed at this event. The stories are also dramatised by members of the community.\textsuperscript{401}

The ‘Under-Captain’ of the /Khobesen clan, Christiaan Rooi recalls how in the 1950s, Hendrik Samuel Witbooi led commemorations depicting how Hendrik Witbooi and his army fought in the war against the German army. ‘As the name indicates this day is about the kings, so all the leaders of the /Khobesen clan are commemorated on this day. But because Hendrik Witbooi fought and fell in the war against the Germans, his story plays a major role in the commemoration event. How Hendrik Witbooi negotiated with the German government are amongst the stories that are retold at this event’.\textsuperscript{402}

\textsuperscript{401} translation of interview conducted in Khoekhoegowab with Ouma Alwina and Oupa Hans Petersen, Gibeon, 27 July 2005
\textsuperscript{402} translation of interview conducted in Khoekhoegowab with Mr. Christiaan Rooi, Gibeon, 2004
Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, the present leader of the /Khobesen community, that has been coordinating the commemoration event since the beginning of his reign in 1978, stated that the commemorations have a history stretching from the 1930s. He said that especially 1936, around there, it started to take shape where my father, he was not a chief, but he was a pastor that time, he was the teacher, started and then also he was assisting the Captain, he started with the organising that commemoration. It was mostly by remembering the history of late Captain Hendrik Witbooi and others but it was especially around the late Captain Hendrik Witbooi.
The people came together and but that was exclusively, seen to be exclusively for Witboois. As the people did not know about its origin and were not properly informed...about the day, the commemoration. So the men, horsemen with white hats, of the Witbooi tribe were coming together and were actually commanded to ride their horses especially to the places of the Captains, which was at that time the place of the Captain, the residence of Captain was Kranzplatz, so they came to Kranzplatz celebrating the commemoration, but later on it continued to expand on the day, the meaning, the content of the programme, the meaning of the history...as Captain Hendrik Witbooi's contribution and resistance to the German colonial occupation was actually celebrated in that way to show...his bravery his courage his spiritual guidance from above, that is why it was celebrated on the side partly from the side of the horse riders because he died during the war on the 29th of October 1905, so that's how he died and he was, is still regarded as the hero of the resistance struggle.'

One of the highlights at the Khoesken Heroes Day is the procession of horse riders to the gravesite of their ancestors.

Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
When it was started it was only regarded as a Witbooi day but from sometime after 1976, I can say 75, 76, we changed the content and the image of the commemoration, of the day, the contents of the programme, by also not involving only Witboois but also to involve other people because through that we wanted to emulate the struggle of Oupa! Nasseb. Because he was inviting the other heads other leaders chiefs... that they must come together, they must stand together against the invasion of their country by Germans, by foreign powers... we opened up the commemoration for other tribes, other nations... we believed as Oupa! Nasseb said, we would be stronger and in a position to defeat the enemy. So that’s how we involved the community as a whole on this day.  

There are several activities that take place on the day. First of all when we started we thought that it would be appropriate that first the, when people were settled the first thing they made sure was that they must have water so the fountain of Gibbon, at Gibbon is being regarded as the reason why people settled at Gibbon, that fountain! Goregu ra abce it was called... normally the commemoration takes place during the weekend... where people come together at the fountain and the brass band plays something about the fountain and people sing religious songs, hymns and prayers are said on that day and thereafter people are given ceremonially, in a ceremonial way water to drink from the fountain. 

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404 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
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When asked whether the younger generation had a consciousness of the war, Rev. Hendrik Witbooi said that 'I don't think so because... I don't blame them for that... they have not experienced it. But what we tried even during that commemoration is that we had a play that Germans attacked Witboois and Witboois were resisting, retaliated so during that process we also involve the community, that is the younger generation the children, and the women and everybody was involved, so that we bring it closer to the understanding of the people... to some extent those who have seen the play really got the understanding'.

Even though what is being remembered at this event are the kings that led the /Khobes on community in southern Namibia, as mentioned above, the Nama-German war features extensively during the commemoration. What is remembered during this event are the wanderings of the /Khobes on women and children in inhospitable areas during the war, how the Nama guerrillas outsmarted the German soldiers, how Nama leaders cooperated during the war, their fate in concentration camps, deportation to west Africa, how

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406 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
Hendrik Witbooi fell in the war and how the news of his death reached his wife and family.

These commemoration events are significant as a space where the traditional cohesion of a community is strengthened. Allegiance to a certain identity whether it is to a specific ethnic group or clan is fostered through wearing traditional insignia such as the white cloths that the men wear around their hats. These white cloths were worn by the /Khobesen soldiers during the war as they belonged to the !Uri-kam or White Comb Society.

Members of the brass band with their !Uri-kam hats at a commemoration event, NAM 8116

The symbols of the Nama tradition are emphasised throughout the commemoration event. These symbols range from Nama folk tales being told around a fire, the Nama staple, reminisces of a Nama homestead in the past to Nama women in traditional dresses and accessories. This should be seen in the light of how a community attempts to restructure itself after colonial wars such as the Nama-German war and after the continuation of oppression during the rule of the South African government. During these years the Nama communities witnessed violations, disappearance, migration, forced removals and
death of multitudes of their people. This resulted in the low morale of a people, the
destruction of familial bonds and the collapse of traditional observances important for the
political, social and economic development of a community.

Rev. Hendrik Witbooi thus points out that ‘when you tell about the commemoration of
this day then it is so interlinked with other events. So first of all the pride of the people,
being Nama people, being Witbooi tribe, clan was very much visible. And is still visible
because the women are dressed in proper dresses, Nama dresses and then few other
decorations they put on their faces, on their bodies and dresses. So that is also highlighted
being a tribe, being a clan. You must know your origin, that is one thing, very important
to know your origin, where you are from and where you are now. But then at the same
time to also know the history and the resistance struggle of Old Captain Hendrik
Witbooi’. 408

Women dress in traditional Nama outfits and
accessories during the commemoration event.
M. Bwa

408 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
The resistance of the community against dominant authorities is an important theme that is thread through the history of the community and reinforced during the annual commemoration event. The /Khobesen community does not only remember the Nama-German war but also retells of earlier wars between the community and the German government. Rev. Hendrik Witbooi explains that, ‘as far as we the Witboois are concerned we understand 1904 when the, that is only when the genocide started...but even before that people were killed already killed its not only with the genocide in 1904, people were already killed and many people died before 1904...As far as we are concerned, the Witboois, it does not mean only from 1904 (commemorations), but even before 1904 where the actual wars started, say for instance Hornkranz attack, where Witboois, 1893, 1892, 93,...so why should we only start commemorating...our people died in big numbers so we cannot only start from 1905, so for us we have to start from Hornkranz massacre, even before that when the Germans invaded the country’. 409

The conversation between Hendrik Witbooi and Curt von Francois on the 9th of June 1892 at Hornkranz was printed in the booklet for the centennial commemoration of the war at Gibeon. In the conversation, Curt von François explained to Hendrik Witbooi that even though his community would be under German protection he would still be able to rule his people. Hendrik Witbooi’s response was ‘that I cannot see. It is incomprehensible and strange, I cannot see how it is possible...when one chief stands under the protection of another, the underling is no longer independent, and is no longer master of himself, or of his people and country. He is an underling, and all who are underlings are subjects of

409 Interview conducted with Rev. Hendrik Witbooi, Windhoek, August 2004
their protector...so I see no truth or sense in the suggestion that a chief who has surrendered may keep his autonomy and do as he likes.  

Leaders of this community such as Dawid Witbooi, Hendrik Samuel Witbooi, Petrus Jod Jr., Markus Witbooi and Rev. Hendrik Witbooi carried on this resistance as shown by their predecessor, Hendrik Witbooi. They did this along the lines of land, traditional polity and the church. This ‘spirit of resistance’ was infused in the annual commemoration event held by the community. After the war as some members of the /Khobesen community returned to their community base of Gibeon, they appointed Isaak Witbooi as their traditional leader. However the South African administration stressed that this appointment was not a reversion to the former days where traditional leaders had jurisdiction over large tracts of land and people. His jurisdiction was limited to the Gibeon location. Isaak Witbooi however intervened in the issues that concerned the Nama community in the area at large. Along with this community he resisted further removals to Tses, after the settlement at Witbooisvlei proposed by the authorities was a disaster for his community. The community was then moved close to Gibeon near their church and school, not because this was their wish but because they were a welcome labour pool to farmers in the district.

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Ten years into Rev. Hendrik Witbooi's reign, in 1988, the theme of the commemoration was '100 jare van Volkstryd teen Koloniale magte'. The event was seen as a continuation of the struggle against colonialism that Hendrik Witbooi had started against the German government in 1888. The new colonialism, which the community was fighting against in 1988, was the apartheid administration of the South African government in Namibia. At the end of the booklet in which the programme and hymns are printed at every commemoration event, an annexeure was attached of a timeline for the expected independence of the country, which was 31 December 1978. In exasperation an

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421 Nama communities in southern Namibia joined SWAPO in October 1976 against the background of the oppressive administration of the South African government.
address was made at the commemoration about how "onafhaklikheidskikplan stegs op papier sonder uitvoering". 422

Rev. P.A. Schmidt gave an address on the historical overview of the people’s struggle from 1888-1988 at the event and Rev. Hendrik Wilhooi explained how the implementation of resolution 435 by the United Nations affected the 100-year struggle of the community. 424 The commemoration as in this case was an event where information could be relayed about the political situation in the country. And where more support could be rallied against the South African government. This shows that these commemorations featured as a site of resistance against the South African government.

in the 1990s the commemoration programme took on a national dimension with the celebration of the independence of Namibia. It is interesting to note that the programmes that are printed for the commemoration event switch from Afrikaans used widely during the South African administration to English, which becomes the official language of the

422 On the cover of the booklet of the 83rd anniversary of the Khoskeni Heroes Day the theme is "100 Years of Heroic Struggle" however on the inside it states "100 Years of the People’s Struggle against Colonial Forces".  
423 The plan for independence is not acted upon it is only on paper
country at independence. Passages from the diary that Hendrik Witbooi kept, for example, were printed in Cape Dutch in 1987 and 1988 but in 2005 these were translated to the English language.\footnote{Booklet of the 83rd anniversary of Heroes Day, Gibeon, 1988}

The symbols of independence are further incorporated in the festivities. On the second day of the commemoration event in November 1991, there was a hoisting of the National Flag alongside the traditional white flag of the /Khobesen clan. The National Anthem was sung at the official opening and closing of the commemoration event. In November 1995 the National Defence Force (NDF) presented a parade in honour of the soldiers that fought during the Nama-German war. Also speakers at these events in 1991 and 1995 were German-speaking representatives of the national government such as Mr. Anton von Wiedersheim and Mr. Klaus Dierks. These important markers of transition show that even though the sequence of the events in the commemoration programme have been constant, the event becomes layered with meaning according to the context within which the community finds itself.

Added to the independence symbols such as the national flag and anthem, the community also included the African Union flag and anthem in November 2004 and October 2005. This gave the commemoration event an even bigger scope in which it functions. It is not only a commemoration event that has local and national significance, but forms part of anti-colonial resistance on the African continent. The African Union anthem reads, 'Let us all unite and celebrate together, The victories won for our liberation, Let us dedicate

\footnote{See booklet for Heroes Day of the /Khobesen community for November 1987 and October 1988.}
ourselves to rise together. To defend our liberty and unity. These words summarise a function of the commemoration event today.

The theme for the 99th anniversary of the /Khobesn Heroes Day was ‘towards 100 Years of Struggle, Sacrifice and Victory. This event was held at Goamus where Hendrik Witbooi and his community lived and fought during the war. The foundations of Hendrik Witbooi’s house and where he used to keep his livestock were pointed out to us on the way to where the horse riders were to demonstrate a battle scene. Some community members pointed out that some of the boulders served as hideouts for the Nama soldiers during the battle in the area.

At the event Rev. Hendrik Witbooi appealed to the German Ambassador to Namibia, Dr. Wolfgang Massing for financial assistance for the development of land such as Goamus. He suggested that semi-permanent structures could be set up at Goamus that the community could use in the future for commemoration events. The presence of a high-ranking official of the German government altered the atmosphere of the commemoration event. The Nama community through their leader was now able to address issues such as development aid directly to the German government official. During this time the policy of the German government had changed from not discussing issues of the war directly with the communities that were affected to openly addressing the communities about the war. This was seen when the German Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development apologised at the commemoration event of the Ovaherero community in 2004 for the atrocities that were committed against the Nama and Herero. Also the

126 Booklet of the Inauguration of Heroes Acre, The Unknown Soldier, 26 August 2002
German government had indicated that they were willing to aid the development of communities affected by the war through their programme called the Initiative for Reconciliation and Development (IRD).

In response to these appeals by the community, the German government sponsored some activities at the /Khobesen centennial commemoration in October 2005. The German government for example funded an exhibition opened in Gibeon at the commemoration event titled, 'Gamab !Nanseb: the Life and Times of Hendrik Witbooi and his People'. I had an opportunity to work on this exhibition with Jeremy Silvester of the Museums Association of Namibia. This initiative by the unemployed youth of Gibeon that had contacted Jeremy Silvester for assistance began as a project to establish a Museum in Gibeon that would be testament to the rich heritage of the settlement. The old prison building at Gibeon was to be renovated for the Museum. We unfortunately could not secure funds in 2005 to refurbish the building, but embarked on an exhibition of Hendrik Witbooi as a way of introducing the idea of a Museum to the community. We held discussions with the German representatives Dr. Wolfgang Massing and Mr. Karl Ahlers of the Initiative for Reconciliation and Development (IRD). The funding for the exhibition was approved and Rev. Hendrik Witbooi opened the exhibition on the 29th of October 2005.
The German Ambassador to Namibia, Dr. Wolfgang Massing in his speech at the house of Rev. Hendrik Witbooi remarked that "I am confident that today's event is another important step to come to terms with an unfortunate past and to build a better future together. I am very happy that the German side could contribute to the success of these memorable celebrations". After this he returned correspondence kept by Hendrik Witbooi that was confiscated by the German army during the war in 1904. The German Ambassador handed over the documents saying that "it is now my privilege and pleasure to hand over a copy of these letters to Honourable Captain Hendrik Witbooi as a gesture of friendship and reconciliation between our two countries and peoples".

The Damara and Herero community was invited to the event through their representatives. These were King Justus//Garnob of the Damara community, King T.D. Kambazembi, Chairman of the Joint Chief's Council and King K.A. Maharero, Maharero Royal House amongst other Herero Royal Houses. Nama leaders from east, west and south of Namibia were invited as well. Even though not all the invitees were present they

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427 New Era, Germany / Namibia Have Special Bond - Massing, 1 November 2005
were at times represented by their members of their councils or communities. It was significant that the Herero, Damara and Nama traditional authorities and members of their communities had gathered to commemorate the war in this way. These communities have to at some point discuss how it is they want to collectively commemorate the war in the country and how they want to develop their communities so as to alleviate the effects of the war.

There was great enthusiasm from the community that had been joined by Nama people from smaller settlements and farms near Gibeon. Members of the community had been preparing the festival grounds and rehearsing for the event from the 24th of October. Most of the people that came to the commemoration event arrived by bus organised by the Committee of the centennial commemoration on the 27th of October. Some of these people formed cultural groups that would deliver the rarest of musical spectaculars in the evenings under the meteorite stars, after a day of horse racing, historical presentations and fountain ceremonies.

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One of the highlights of the event was the procession on the 29th of October by the horse riders, cultural groups, Namibian Defence Force (NDF) brass band and the rest of the community from the Cornelius //Oaseb Secondary School to the battlefield close to the residence of late Hendrik Witbooi. At the battlefield the horse riders, women and children demonstrated how the community survived during the war and how Hendrik Witbooi fell at /Hei-/gaseb during the war. After this the community had to observe a moment of silence while a gun salute was delivered by the members of the /Khobesen Traditional Authority at the time of Hendrik Witbooi’s death.

The oral tradition surrounding the death of Hendrik Witbooi shows that when he was injured on the battlefield and passed on there was a great sandstorm. In an interview with Hans #Eichab he said that when a great leader passes, huge clouds gather in the sky and a sandstorm covers the air. The storm was so heavy on the day that Hendrik Witbooi died that the soldiers, who at this time were still defending themselves against the German soldiers, only knew where the enemy was from hearing the shots being fired at them. On the 29th of October 2005 during the speeches at the commemoration event at Gibeon there was a great sandstorm and lightning that was prospecting rain. The sandstorm was so big that the activities had to cease for a while. There was a silence in the community sensing the overwhelming spirit of Hendrik Witbooi acknowledged even by nature.
In Closing

The struggle for knowledge of the war, how it affected Nama communities and how these communities remember the war is far from over. To know the implications that this war had on Nama communities that resisted against the German government I had to first look at what happened during 1903-1908. Thereafter I could attempt to understand the views of the war in the communities today. I have included aspects of what happened during the war period so readers may understand the nature of the war. There are many more stories to be told and this research is another platform to open this discussion on the war events and how the war is being commemorated in southern Namibia.

I just recently sent in a proposal that was approved by a project of the National Archives of Namibia called the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Liberation Struggle (AACRLS). Part of the research that I am conducting for this project is a collection of stories about the war from members of communities that are affected by the consequences of the war. Some of these communities also hold annual commemorations of the war. This is the work that I have been attempting to carry out since 2004 and I will finally be able to travel to these communities to see if there are any people that have had the war history passed on to them. I will also be able to learn how it is that they commemorate the war in their private spaces. This project will hopefully unearth some of the stories that need to be recorded before they leave this earth with their custodians.
From the interviews that I have already conducted it is evident that there is scant knowledge on the concentration camps, the deportations of Nama groups to west Africa and the refugees in Cape Colony and Botswana. Also there seems to be an emphasis on the collective war memory of the community rather than on personal knowledge of the war. The oral historian of Gibeon, Mr. Christiaan Rooi for example relayed how the community was involved in the war. When he was asked about how the war affected his family, he told us about how women from his family searched for insects in the concentration camps because the chocolate that they received from German soldiers would give them diarrhoea. Time will show whether more people are willing to express personal memories because these stories will only enrich the collective memory of the war.

An important site where these war memories literally come to life is at the commemoration events held by several Nama communities in southern Namibia. These commemoration events that communities such as the !Aman, Kai-!//Khaun, !Gami#nun and /Khobesen communities hold annually are one of the ways in which these communities are able to survive the consequences of the war. These were the immense loss of human resources, dignity, identity and a destruction of traditional cohesion. During the colonial conquest the natural resources of these communities were expropriated to the extent that most of the members of these communities today live in disastrous circumstances of poverty. They are a landless people hungry for their rightful place in society.
It is not surprising that these commemoration events serve as sites of resistance such as that of the /Khobes恩 Heroes Day. Because Nama communities realise that the conditions in their areas are less than desired, they strive to address these issues also at the commemoration events so as to mobilise for a change in these communities. Land redistribution is a fundamental process that will improve the living conditions of the community. The continued development in housing, agricultural and farming projects, health and welfare services are also required. The progression of educational facilities, vocational training for the youth and the ownership of eco-tourism and cultural ventures are other objectives. Remembering in this context is used as a powerful tool for transforming communities.

These commemoration events serve as memories that complement and supplement the knowledge of the war in the country. These events help to raise the consciousness of the war because when people hear that a certain community commemorates the war they may want to know the historical events from the viewpoint of the community. They also act as counter memories to how the war story is disseminated in the country because it is often the case that some stories are made invisible by the national narrative of the war.

The commemoration events generally aid in the process of dealing with the atrocities of the war. Once one talks, studies and listens to the various viewpoints of the war one is able to take a standpoint on how to rid oneself of the negative past. These commemoration events by discussing the atrocities of the war are spaces where people can come to terms with the war events by mourning, commemorating and celebrating. A
participant at a history conference on the war in 2004 mentioned how the war is represented in bodies. What this participant was pointing out was how the body is an index of memory.

The fighting during the war was in the form of one body killing another body. The genocide committed against communities was the act of removing bodies of people from their life force. Scientific experiments that were conducted in Germany were done on the heads of people that were decapitated during the war and the rest of their bodies were left in the country. At commemoration events communities pay respect to their ancestors that fell during the war at their graves. Today you find mass graves of people that died during the war and their bodies were not laid to rest in a culturally appropriate manner nor are these bodies given the proper respect. How do the descendants mourn when not all the bodies of the people that died during the war can be accounted for? These are all aspects of the war that individuals and communities have to address before they can talk of reconciliation.

The reparation and reconciliation process should be addressed in a careful manner so as to be highly respectful of the people that lay down their lives for what they believed was a righteous cause. The process should achieve long lasing solutions to the problems that are faced by the communities in Namibia. The communities affected should earnestly open the discussion about the war and the reconciliation card should not be played so as to quieten down any issues that certain parties are uncomfortable to speak about. If communities cannot speak about the truth of what happened a hundred years ago, when
will they be able to not only speak about it, but act on a solution that will appease the adversely affected parties? Hopefully the recent meetings of these various communities at places such as commemoration events opens the way towards a mature action for how to negotiate past events. This will be a long journey for all the communities that are affected by the war in which they will have to rigorously participate, indeed 'toa tama !khams ge.'
Toa tama !khams ge: Remembering the War in Namakhoeland, 1903-1904

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