

CANINES, CARNIVORES, CAPITALISM, COLONIALISM:
SOME TRANSFORMATIONS IN HUNTING, AGRICULTURE, AND LABOUR IN
SOUTHERN NAMIBIA, 1915-1930s

By

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis investigates how political, economic, and environmental structures affected how the colonial state in South West Africa, today Namibia, addressed labour concerns. With increased settlement of poor-white farmers from South Africa into the southern districts of Namibia in the first few decades of South African rule, labour shortages became more apparent, and the state took measures to subsidise the white farming industry by providing low interest loans and advances for purchasing equipment, livestock, fencing, etc. The colonial state indirectly subsidised them further by *actively constraining* the only competition these settlers had in the agricultural market: black Namibian farmers. It is argued that enforcement of taxes, particularly the “Dog Tax” formed a central component of this labour recruitment.

Based on archival and oral history research, this thesis shows that a unique constellation of political, economic, and environmental structures emerged such that without state subsidy for vermin-proof fencing and jackal poisons, dogs became the main tool for for black Namibians to control vermin numbers in the arid South. Farm labour shortages and discourse around illicit hunting with dogs motivated heavy enforcement of the dog tax, resulting in pressures on wages, pastoral activities, and ultimately the self-sufficiency of black Namibians. This research also shows the contemporary relevance of historical dispossession of Namibian land and labour.

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A completed thesis is rarely the product of one person's efforts alone. Inevitably, as one looks back on the work he has completed, the input of others becomes far more clear. Just as much of this work was conceptualised through long rambling telephone calls, taxi rides, and (of course) half-drunk happy hour debates as through formal “academic” channels. So many individuals played a role, and my thanks to them is more than overdue.

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This project would not have been possible without the help of Mr. Josef Rooi of ǀGâbes, who patiently drove with me throughout the Bondelswarts Communal Areas, hunting down

interviewees and teaching me valuable lessons about Nama history. Special thanks must also be given to Mr. Timotheus Morris, who introduced me to the history of Warmbad. In addition, I wish to thank Ronnie Mathewis, who patiently translated for me many of the interviews conducted in Warmbad. My thanks also to Mr. Abraham Christiaan and Mr. Daniel Kalopa, without whose help this project could not have succeeded.

While the research for this thesis was conducted entirely in Namibia, a great deal of the debate and conceptualisation of how I would frame this information occurred elsewhere. In Michigan State University's African American & African Studies program, I found a receptive and dynamic cohort of graduate students and faculty with whom I could discuss my work. Special thanks must go to Shingi Mavima, Ola Nwabara, Tara Mock, Joyce Farley, Kathryn Mara, and Dr. Rita Kiki Edozie. Taking classes in MSU's History Department also introduced me to faculty and students who could guide me in my studies and research. Thanks is due to Dr. Nwando Achebe, Dr. Peter Limb, Dr. Jamie Monson, James Blackwell, Patrick Buck, Akil Cornelius, Robin Crigler, John Doyle-Raso, David Glovsky, Jorge Felipe Gonzalez, Amanda Haislip, Huy Anh Le, and Tara Reyelts.

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In conducting archival research in Namibia, one is bound to bump into other foreign graduate students doing the same thing. When the archives close and the night begins to fall, one inevitably makes the walk to the nearest restaurant or bar to discuss the day's findings. I appreciate the fruitful conversation with Stephanie Quinn, Christopher Hope, Efe Igor, and Lydia Walker. I hope that I have provided the same informed ear which you have for me.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

/-	Full Shilling
ADM	Administrator of the Protectorate
AGV	Agriculture and Veterinary Division
C	Commodity
d	Pence
DSWA	<i>Deutsch Südwest Afrika</i>
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KFI	Farming Industry Commission
LAN	Archives of the Lands Branch
LAR	Magistrate at Aroab
LKW	Magistrate at Karasburg/Warmbad
LLU	Magistrate at Lüderitz
LMA	Magistrate at Maltahöhe
LMG	Magistrate at Mariental/Gibeon
LOU	Magistrate at Outjo
LWI	Magistrate at Windhoek
M	Money
M'	Money + Δ M
NAW	Native Affairs, Windhoek
NEPRU	Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit
SWA	South West Africa
SWAA	South West Africa Administration

In his well known and controversial article “The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle,” anthropologist Marvin Harris argued that the Hindu prohibition of cattle slaughter was just as likely a rational form of economic adaptation than an “expression of irrational ideology.”¹ Use of traction power in agriculture, dung for fertilizer, construction, and fuel, as well as the meat and leather industry from naturally deceased bovines rendered a slaughter ban conducive toward a symbiotic relationship between man and cow. While many of Harris' theories, particularly “Cultural Materialism,”² have been critiqued for their neo-functionalist leaning – termed “economism” by Godelier³ – his ideas can provide us with a framework towards understanding of human-animal relationships and the history of animals. This paper draws from (and moves beyond) Harris' position that we should first understand the role animals play in the labour process, or what he terms *infrastructure*, in order to engage with the effects of “ideology”.

Let us now move to 1922 in Warmbad district, in deep Southern Namibia. It had been about seven years since South Africa took control of the former German colony, and large-scale land settlement of poor-whites from the Union was underway. In May, the Bondelswart Nama rebelled against the new administration, engaging in small-scale guerrilla confrontations and raiding several white-owned farms for weapons and livestock. Much to the chagrin of the League of Nations, the rebellion was put down with airplane bombing of the Bondelswarts communal areas, killing many combatants and civilians, as well as countless livestock. In both the run-up to and the aftermath of the rebellion, the Bondelswarts were outraged over the enforcement of the “Dog Tax” in the district. All dogs in urban and rural areas were subject to a steep monetary tax,

1 Marvin Harris, “The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle,” *Current Anthropology* 7, no. 1 (1966), 59.

2 Marvin Harris, *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

3 Maurice Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977 [1973]), 42.

putting pressure on the Bondelswarts' already struggling agro-pastoral economy. In popular memory today, many Bondelswarts associate dog taxation with rebellion and dispossession, and vice-versa.

This thesis seeks to explore why the Dog Tax was such a controversial and hated piece of legislation throughout Southern Namibia during the first few decades of South African rule. In so doing, I follow Marvin Harris' model of seeking first to understand the role of dogs in the Nama economy, from hunting game, to protecting small-stock from vermin, to licking wounds and testing water. Dogs were, and are, part and parcel of the labour process. I seek to interweave both environmental narratives of changing hunting regimes and vermin demographics with political and economic pressures of white settlement and the development of the commercial sheep economy in Southern Namibia.

This thesis shows that a unique constellation of structures emerged such that without state subsidy for vermin-proof fencing and jackal poisons, dogs became the main tool for for black Namibians in controlling vermin numbers in the arid South. Farm labour shortages and discourse around illicit hunting with dogs motivated heavy enforcement of the dog tax, resulting in pressures on wages, pastoral activities, and ultimately the self-sufficiency of black Namibians. Selective enforcement of regulations regarding taxation, vermin destruction, and hunting laws should be seen as a *subsidy* towards the budding white commercial farming industry in Southern Namibia during the first twenty-five years of South African administration.

The Dog Tax, among other regulations, can be looked at as not dissimilar to Marx's theory of Primitive Accumulation, "the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production."⁴ Southern Namibia was plagued with labour shortages for a number of reasons, and as an informal corollary to the 1920s Land Settlement Programme to bring in poor-

4 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I* (New York: Vintage, 1977 [1867]), 875.

whites from South Africa, the colonial state took steps to procure labour for these capital-poor farmers. Alongside the subsidies which white farmers were able to take advantage of to increase stock numbers, fence their farms, drill boreholes, and build dwellings, the colonial state indirectly subsidised them further by *actively constraining* the only competition these settlers had in the agricultural market: black farmers.

The central contentions this thesis puts forth are the following. First, understanding the genesis of capitalist social relations can help us further understand contemporary capitalism. Dispossession of land and labour in the early 20th Century constantly affects the lives of Namibians to this day. We should therefore view the past as a “moment” of the present, shaping and conditioning the present day and the future. Second, this thesis shows that in order to study taxes and other economic and political structures, one must take a more holistic and *longue durée* perspective; this will help to understand how very unlikely factors, such as vermin demographics, came to shape the implementation and effects of the dog tax. Third, I argue that in studying taxation, one must just as strongly emphasise *what* is taxed, alongside the fact that taxation is taking place. Not all taxes elicited armed rebellion. In the context of southern Namibia during this period, various ecological and political conditions necessitated an increased use of dogs for the purpose of protecting against vermin, such as jackals. Taxing dogs, as will become clear over the next few chapters, was particularly harsh because of the way these taxes engaged with other restrictions, fees, and regulations. Finally, we must interrogate taxation through the lens of “primitive accumulation” and Marxian Theory. This enables us to see the labour connections inherent within taxes and fees. It should also become clear that primitive accumulation is not as much a uni-linear process of peasant to proletarian; it is a messy and contingent force which is challenged and/or complied with at times.

Research and Resources

This thesis is largely based on archival materials collected between May 2015 and January 2016. All archival materials cited are from the National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek. It was necessary to read as critically as possible into colonial documentation, both to understand what was said, and, perhaps more importantly, what was not.⁵ Because, to many researchers and archivists, taxation (and the dog tax in particular) is a subject of little historical importance, much of the documentation was destroyed over the past thirty years. Certain districts, such as Keetmanshoop, destroyed nearly all of their court records for dog tax violations; for Warmbad, only a few case files remain. The reason for this destruction was presumably that space needed to be made for documents deemed more important. Certain towns and districts, such as Aroab and Maltahöhe – because there was a lot less going on, and therefore more archival space – can offer some insight into transformations in the region at large during this period. Some extrapolation is therefore necessary.

Furthermore, with subjects specific to the dog tax as a policy (not just to issues such as its enforcement), it was occasionally necessary to quote magistrates in districts outside of Southern Namibia, particularly in Karibib, Outjo, and Grootfontein. Effort was made, however, to consistently explore in more detail the effects on Southern economy and society. It should become clear, though, that in sheep farming districts of the South (and Outjo), the dog tax had an added degree of urgency. Utilising resources from other districts can still help us contextualise these developments further.

I also conducted a few weeks of oral history interviews in Southern Namibia, in what was then the Warmbad District's Bondelswart Reserve, now known as the ǀGamaseb Conservancy.

⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

These interviews were exploratory, and though they were able to give some pertinent comments periodically, they weren't used in this thesis as much as I would have liked. Certain individuals such as Mr. Timotheus Morris, Mr. Abraham Christiaan, Mrs. Angela Bezuidenhout, and Mr. Josef Rooi provided me with very helpful helpful information because they were well-versed in Bondelswart history, sheep farming, and the economic role of dogs.

My theoretical framework, explored in detail in Chapter One, is Marxian. My interest in the dog tax is both local and more broad in nature. I argue that understanding the political, economic, and environmental dynamics surrounding dog taxation can help us contextualise local transformations, such as the Bondelswart Uprising of 1922. My research shows that there were a great deal of materialist considerations behind these events, and the event perhaps should not be viewed through an “incipient nationalist” framework as it often has.⁶ Understanding ecological, political and economic dynamics, and how these structured labour relations in the region can help us see more profound underlying causes to the rebellion. Studying Marxian economic theory can provide us with a framework for better understanding these dynamics. Furthermore, understanding the Namibian case study reveals both the strengths and the limitations of Marxian Theory, particularly primitive accumulation. I show that one must not merely emphasise that taxation is taking place, in an abstract sense, but one must explore and unpack the significance of *what* is being taxed if one is to understand the ramifications of its enforcement. I seek to put Marxian theory and the Namibian specifics in dialogue with one another. For these reasons, I dedicate the entire first chapter to explaining the theory.

Regarding secondary resources, not as much as one would expect has been written on

6 See Tony Emmett, *Popular Resistance and the Roots of Nationalism in Namibia, 1915-1966* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 1999). And see SWAPO, *To Be Born a Nation: The Liberation Struggle for Namibia* (Luanda: SWAPO Department of Information and Publicity, 1981). And Peter J. Katjavivi, *A History of Resistance in Namibia* (Paris: UNESCO Press, 1988).

Southern Namibia.⁷ Ethnographic work conducted during the early 20th Century tends to be referenced a good deal, particularly the pioneering work of Social Anthropologist Winifred Hoernlé.⁸ Many other studies follow a more *volkekunde* ethnographic framework⁹ undertaken by either South African ethnologists (as opposed to social anthropologists) embedded into the colonial or apartheid system, or by German Missionaries, such as Heinrich Vedder.¹⁰ Many of these studies are obsessed with “origin” narratives and “racial science.” One thus learns rather little about Southern Namibia and its people.

Historical Studies have been conducted primarily on specific events; the German genocide of the Nama and the Bondelswart Uprising of 1922 tend to be the most commonly written about. It is worthwhile to note the pioneering work of Tilman Dederling in this regard.¹¹ The most well known historian of Southern Namibia, however, is Brigitte Lau, the former director of the National Archives of Namibia. Her M.A. Thesis “The Emergence of Kommando Politics in Southern Namibia, 1800-1870,” submitted to the University of Cape Town in 1982 (under supervision of Dr. Patrick Harries) remains, in my opinion, the most complete text on 19th Century Namibia to this date. It was published in modified form by the National Archives in

7 For a more contemporary review of ethnographic work on Namibia, see Robert J. Gordon, “(Sm)othering Others? Post-Millennial Anthropology in Namibia,” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 18 (2015), 135-151.

8 Winifred Hoernlé, “The Social Organization of the Nama Hottentots of Southwest Africa,” *American Anthropologist* 27, no. 1 (1925), 1-24. Also see Winifred Hoernlé, Peter Carstens, Gerald Klinghardt, Martin Elgar West, *Trails in the Thirstland: The Anthropological Field Diaries of Winifred Hoernlé* (Cape Town: UCT Centre for African Studies, 1987).

9 For more on the distinction between social anthropology and the German/Afrikaans *volkekunde* ethnographic tradition, see Robert J. Gordon, “Apartheid's Anthropologists: The Genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology,” *American Ethnologist* 15, no. 3 (1988), 535-553. See also, John S. Sharp, “The Roots and Development of Volkekunde in South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (1981), 16-36.

10 Heinrich Vedder, “The Nama”, in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (Cape Town: Cape Times Ltd., 1923).

11 Tilman Dederling “Air Power in South Africa 1914-1939,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2015), 451-465; “Petitioning Geneva: Transnational Aspects of Protest and Resistance in South West Africa/Namibia after the First World War,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (2009), 785-801; and “War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39, no. 2 (2006), 275-294. His monograph, *Hate the Old and Follow the New: KhoeKhoe and Missionaries in Early Nineteenth Century Namibia* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997) engages with a longer period of time, though it is outside of the scope of this present thesis.

1987.¹² I must also mention the work of Jeremy Silvester, whose 1993 dissertation, from the University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, on land settlement policies and implementation in Southern Namibia has informed my thesis immensely.¹³ Finally, Reinhart Kößler's work on the Witbooi and Berseba communities has contributed particularly to my understanding of the so-called "Native Reserves" in Southern Namibia and the broader, international implications of these policies.¹⁴

Finally, comparison studies complement the archival and historical work I have conducted on Southern Namibia. Because many statistics in the region were either not collected or were destroyed, I often have to draw from South African historiography, particularly studies dealing with the North-West Cape and the Karoo. William Beinart's *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa* and Fredrik Lilja's *The Golden Fleece of the Cape* prove crucial in this regard.¹⁵ These texts helped me grasp transformations in jackal numbers and predation rates during the periods falling under this study. Some large data sets were collected in Namibia, but not until the 1970s;¹⁶ therefore, I am reliant on anecdotal evidence in the Namibian Archives and my oral history work, and on statistical evidence from South Africa.

12 Brigitte Lau, "The Emergence of Kommando Politics in Southern Namibia, 1800-1870," Unpublished M.A. Thesis (University of Cape Town, 1982). Brigitte Lau, *Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time* (Windhoek: National Archives, 1987).

13 Jeremy Silvester, "Black Pastoralists, White Farmers: The Dynamics of Land Dispossession and Labour Recruitment in Southern Namibia," Unpublished Dissertation (University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993).

14 See Reinhart Kößler, "From Reserve to Homeland: South African 'Native' Policy in Southern Namibia," NEPRU Occasional Paper No. 12 (Windhoek: Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit, 1997). And his *In Search of Survival and Dignity: Two Traditional Communities in Southern Namibia under South African rule* (Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan, 2005).

15 William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment, 1770-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Fredrik Lilja, *The Golden Fleece of the Cape: Capitalist Expansion and Labour Relations in the Periphery of Transnational Wool Production, c. 1860-1950* (Uppsala: Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 2013).

16 J.E. Lensing & Eugène Joubert, "Intensity Distribution Patterns for Five Species of Problem Animals in South West Africa," *Madoqua* 10, no. 2 (1976), 131-141.

Organisation and Layout

This thesis will flow as follows. Chapter One, “Capitalism and Theories of Primitive Accumulation”, will provide an in-depth exploration into Marxian theories of social relations, capitalism, primitive accumulation, and taxation. I will complement these with studies into the interplay between base and superstructure, power and ideology. Understanding capitalism from a Marxian perspective is crucial to grasping the severity of the dog tax and the other pressures being placed upon black Namibians in Southern Namibia during this time period.

Chapter Two, “Economic and Labour Conditions in Southern Namibia, 1915-1930s”, will explore the politics of land settlement and labour shortage in Southern Namibia. Capital-poor white settlers, the early beneficiaries of the 1920s Land Settlement Programme, found their farms undermanned due to increased stock accumulation and pastoral mobility of black Namibians during the early South African period. White settlers petitioned for more “efficient” use of the Native Reserves to address the “Labour Question.” By the end of the 1930s, because of colonial state subsidies towards purchasing farm equipment, borehole drilling, increasing stock numbers, and fencing, these white farmers were able to transition into the lucrative Karakul pelt industry, enabling them to tap into the growing migrant labour system bringing workers in from Ovamboland, Northern Namibia.

Chapter Three, “Transformations in Fauna, Carnivora & Canines in Southern Namibia”, will investigate the reasons behind and ramifications of increasing jackal and vermin numbers in Southern Namibia during late German and early South African rule. It will become clear that the changing quantitative and qualitative aspects of “meat” on the veld in Southern Namibia necessitated either Jackal-proof fencing or increased use of dogs to protect sheep and other small-stock from exponentially rising vermin numbers. This chapter should be read alongside

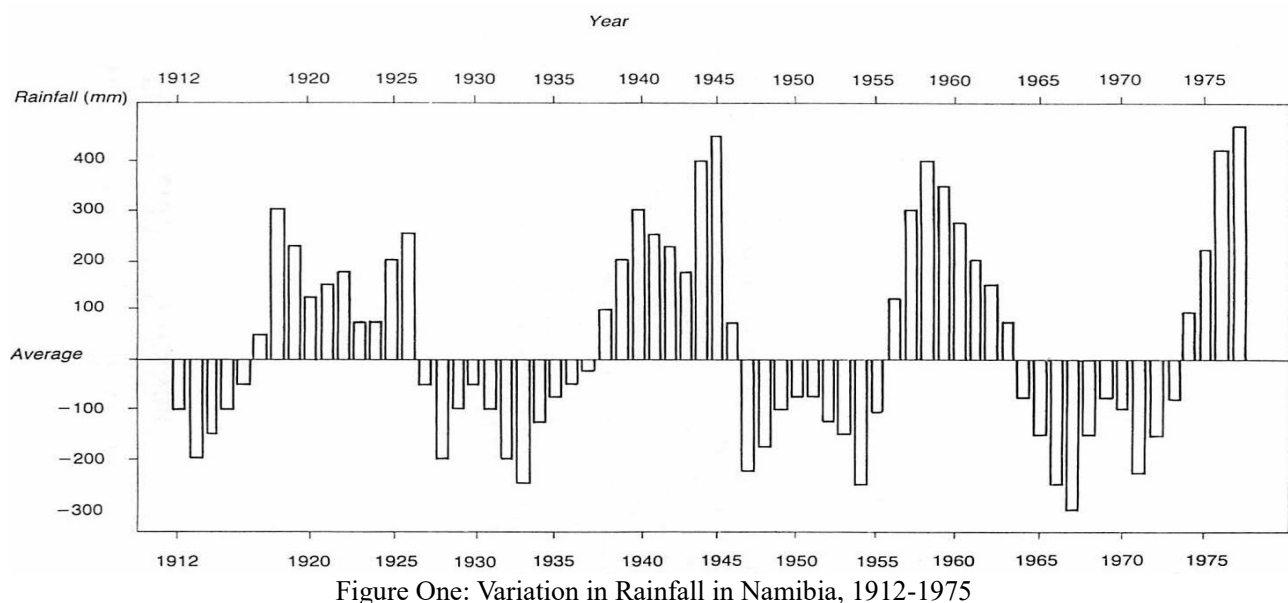
chapter two, as these narratives were operating both parallel to each other, and overlapping at times. Neither chapter needs to be read first.

Finally, in Chapter Four, “Taxing Dogs, Destroying Vermin: Contradictions in Colonial Law”, I will explore how taxation formed a central vertebrae of the backbone of labour recruitment in the region. Because of the ecological transformations of the previous several decades, the dog tax became one of the most hated of these. I show that contradictory colonial policies regarding vermin destruction and taxation enabled white Namibians to form and join Vermin Hunting Associations, granting them exemption from the expensive dog tax as long as they hunted vermin. Many white-owned dogs were effectively tax-free so long as they engaged in the very activity that many blacks had to pay the dog tax to do. The chapter also explores debates regarding illicit hunting with dogs of game. Finally, it shows how the dog tax helped lead to the 1922 Bondelswart Uprising.

In the Conclusion, I appeal for a materialist understanding of dogs and animals, as well as the contemporary relevance of historical dispossession of Namibian land and labour.

This thesis is a study of taxation, labour, and ecology in Southern Namibia from the beginning of South African occupation (1915) until roughly the end of the 1930s. This study brings to light crucial insights into the development of agricultural capitalism during this time period. As will be elaborated upon in subsequent chapters, Southern Namibia was plagued with major labour shortages throughout this period. This shortage was for three major reasons.

First, the population density in this region was rather low to begin with, compared with other regions of Namibia. Rainfall levels were – and are – low and erratic, leading to drought on a regular basis; this was not conducive towards heavy investment in precolonial settled agricultural crop production. Therefore, mobility was essential, and long-distance shepherding activities were common. Access to grazing pasture was crucial for successful stock accumulation by the Nama.



Second, the genocide by the Germans of the Nama and the Herero severely depleted the

population of these regions, an enormous number of people were killed, with many more fleeing towards Botswana and South Africa. Statistics on the human costs of the war vary depending on source – the genocide itself is a controversial historiographical debate¹ – but according to Marion Wallace, the population of the Nama (inclusive of all nations) decreased by about a third between 1903-1908.² The Herero mortality rate was somewhat higher, according to Wallace, and the number is likely more than half the Herero population that perished or fled into exile.³

While some have acknowledged that the dislocation of war brought many Namibians into wage labour,⁴ the sheer cost in lives negated any large effect this could have had for commercial agriculture and industry in the territory. It was for this reason that many urban employers and mining companies began importing labour from Ovamboland and from Northern Rhodesia and Portuguese Angola. Labour from Liberia was small but significant in certain urban areas such as Lüderitz. It should be noted that Ovambo migrant labour during the German and early South African periods was rarely directed towards the agricultural sectors of the economy until the 1930s, as many of the white farmers settled in by the Land Settlement Programme of the 1920s could not afford the higher wages and transport and capitulation fees required to import contract

1 This is a highly contested aspect of Namibian historiography, and it has been the source of a longstanding debate in Namibia and in Germany. See Brigitte Lau, “Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904,” in *History and Historiography: Four Essays in Reprint* (Windhoek: MSORP, 1995), 39-52. Werner Hillebrecht, “Certain Uncertainties: Or Venturing Progressively into Colonial Apologetics” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 1 (2007), 73-96. Jürgen Zimmerer & Joachim Zeller (eds.), *Genocide in German South West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath* (Monmouth: Merlin, 2008). Andreas Eckl, “The Herero Genocide of 1904: Some Source-Critical and Methodological Considerations,” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 3 (2008), 31-61. Matthias Häußler, “From Destruction to Extermination: Genocidal Escalation in Germany’s War against the Herero, 1904,” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 10 (2011), 55-81.

2 Marion Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 178.

3 Ibid., 177. This is consistent with Werner Hillebrecht’s analysis of warfare strategies: “The Nama, contrary to the Herero, did not get involved in large set-piece battles where they were inevitably inferior. Instead they concentrated on exploiting their advantages; their knowledge of the terrain, so that they could lay ambushes and disappear without trace; their knowledge of where to find the most important water holes [etc.]” See Werner Hillebrecht, “The Nama and the War in the South,” in *Genocide in German South West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath*, edited by Jürgen Zimmerer & Joachim Zeller (Monmouth: Merlin, 2008), 151.

4 See Horst Drechsler, *“Let Us Die Fighting”: The Struggle of the Herero and the Nama against German Imperialism, 1884-1915* (London: Zed Books, 1980), 231-243.

workers.⁵

Third and finally, the internment and deportation of large numbers of German settlers during the First World War, in such well-known camps as Aus, led to increased self sufficiency and stock accumulation by black Namibians, what Wolfgang Werner terms “self-peasantisation”.⁶ As will be explored in-depth in the next chapter, increased grazing was able to be had, and a noticeable growth in stock numbers among select groups of Nama and Herero was noticed. This was multiplied by the decreased presence of police and state officials in the frontier districts of Southern Namibia, which enabled increased mobility for shepherding practices. Furthermore, when many of the settlers were released to their farms and many “poor whites” were settled with support from the SWA government, agricultural wages were notoriously low, and few Nama were willing to accept them in the face of increased pastoral prosperity. In addition, wages in mines, towns, and in railroad and road-building gangs were far higher.⁷ Only with increased drought, land scarcity, and monetary demands of taxation did it become more necessary for the Nama to take up work on white farms.

This scarcity of labour, I argue, was a major reason why the colonial state chose to take administrative measures to pressure the Nama to take up wage labour on white-owned farms. As will become clear, like other state measures such as loans to settlers and advances on building materials and feed, selective taxation in Southern Namibia should be seen as a *subsidy* towards the growing white commercial agricultural sector, at the expense of black pastoral existence.

Before I move into a discussion of labour in Namibia during this time period and how taxation policies were intricately linked to these considerations, I must elaborate on my

5 SWAA A.521/13/3: Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into Certain Aspects of the Native Labour Question in the Territory. Gobabis. July 28, 1939.

6 Wolfgang Werner, *'No One Will Become Rich': Economy and Society in the Herero Reserves in Namibia, 1915-1946* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 1998).

7 SWAA A.521/12: Magistrate Warmbad to Registrar, Extra-Territorial and Northern Natives, Windhoek. 22 March 1938.

theoretical framework which guides my study. I follow a Marxian understanding of capitalism and labour, and in order to avoid confusion, it is necessary that I briefly explain this perspective. This chapter will elaborate on Marxian theory, Primitive Accumulation, and the significance of my study in furthering these debates.

Marx's Understanding of Social Relations

All economic theories bring with them entry points: assumptions from which the theory originates, and with which the theory is guided. Neoclassical theory, for example, assumes self-maximising individuals with unlimited wants, but limited means (or as Wolff & Resnick put it: “endowments”).⁸ Contained within this logic is the anthropological *homo economicus*, the hyper-rational, economically maximising individual.⁹ In contrast, Marxian theory's entry point is *class*: “the economic processes of producing and distributing surplus labour.”¹⁰

Unlike in Neoclassical theory, there is no assumption of individuality in Marxian theory; in fact, there is the exact opposite. Marx emphasises the *social relations* that exist, embedding individuals from birth.¹¹ In simplistic terms, one doesn't emerge from his/her mother's womb as an *individual*; individuality is only possible in the context of social embeddedness. In Marx's *Grundrisse*, he notes the following:

The human being is in the literal sense a political animal, not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society. Production by an isolated individual outside society . . . is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living *together* and talking to each other.¹²

8 Richard D. Wolff & Stephen A. Resnick, *Economics: Marxian versus Neoclassical* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 143.

9 Maurice Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977 [1973]), 44.

10 Wolff & Resnick, *Economics*, 144.

11 Michael Heinrich, *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital* (New York: Monthly Review, 2012 [2004]), 45-6.

12 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Penguin, 1993 [1858]), 84. emphasis mine.

This is in line with Marx's earlier theories of man as a *species being*; alienation/estrangement via wage labour separates man and tears him away from his “species life.”¹³

Why emphasise this? Marx has a dual conception of commodity value: use-value (based on consumption), and exchange-value (based on equivalence).¹⁴ According to Marx's theory of value, nothing inherently contains exchange value: this is a socially and historically contingent phenomenon. The fact that one coat is worth twenty yards of linen (Marx's oft-repeated example) is for reasons that have nothing to do with the use-values of these commodities. Furthermore, if twenty yards of linen are also worth 10lbs of tea or 40lbs of coffee, the situation becomes even more complex; something must determine value.¹⁵

Marx, therefore, defines value as *socially necessary labour time*, which he defines abstractly as “the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society.”¹⁶ So what makes the coat worth twenty yards of linen has nothing to do with the coat or the linen, per se, but that in a definite society and in a definite time period, the social relations into which individuals are embedded require roughly the same labour-time to produce the commodities. This leads Marx to conclude that value is *immaterial, but objective*:

Let us remember that commodities possess an objective character as values only in so far as they are all expressions of an identical social substance, human labour, that their objective character as values is therefore *purely social*. From this it follows self-evidently that it can only appear in the social relation between commodity and commodity.¹⁷

In short, exchange-value exists because of one commodity's relation to another as commodities produced by human labour, a very social activity. David Harvey seeks to clarify why direct attempts to measure value will inherently fail: “To find value in a commodity by just looking at a

13 Karl Marx, *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans: Dirk J. Struik (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 114.

14 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I* (New York: Vintage, 1977 [1867]), 125.

15 David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital* (New York: Verso, 2010).

16 Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, 129.

17 Ibid., 138-9. emphasis mine.

commodity is like trying to find gravity in a stone. It only exists in relations between commodities and only gets expressed materially in the contradictory and problematic form of the money commodity,” the universal equivalent commodity.¹⁸

The complexity of value, both in its most basic (abstracted, socially necessary labour-time) to its most intricate (stocks and prices) was largely ignored by classical and neoclassical economists, who treated exchange value as a natural occurrence. This is fundamentally problematic because it fails to consider the historical and social relations of production which take place, and that it is only because of these relations that value appears in that form. In short, these economists neglected to take seriously *class* in historical and social analyses.

Marx's Understanding of Class and Exploitation

For the purpose of this study, the key argument Marx makes regarding class and production is two-fold. First, all societies, regardless of time period, location, and size, must organise labour in such a way that a surplus is produced. This surplus is quantitatively more than producers require for day-to-day reproduction as labourers. Second, one major way to distinguish one society from another is how this surplus is organised and redistributed. According to Resnick & Wolff, Marxian *class analyses* studied “the exposure of who produced and appropriated surpluses within that society, who received distributions of that surplus from its appropriators, and how the larger social context (its politics, culture, economy, and history) both shaped and was shaped by these class processes.”¹⁹

Class, in a Marxian sense, is derived from the labour process and differs greatly from liberal and post-structuralist theorists that largely equate *class* with *caste*, implying that

¹⁸ Harvey, *Companion Vol. 1*, 37.

¹⁹ Stephen A. Resnick & Richard D. Wolff, *New Departures in Marxian Theory* (London: Routledge, 2006), 2.

“prestige” and “privilege” are essential components. This largely downplays modes of production and contains no *a priori* need to engage with capitalism at all.²⁰ Now while in certain circumstances, caste-based analyses are useful in analysing racial, gender, and religious dynamics, we should understand caste as a dynamic interaction between class and non-class processes. Neglecting the labour process and the role of surplus value de-materialises *class*, often reducing it to notions of ideology, consciousness, and identity.

Much of this confusion and conflation between class and caste stems from equating *power/domination* with *class/exploitation*. Unlike exploitation, power is a much more diffuse and contingent force, which can be expressed in both class-based and non-class-based contexts.²¹ For example, Agamben explores power relations as they pertain to sovereignty and law, particularly the power to declare “exception” from law, embodied in the concept of *homo sacer*: he who may be killed with impunity.²² Power, according to Agamben, lies in the definition and application of what he terms a *state of exception*: “The state of exception is not a dictatorship (whether constitutional or unconstitutional, commissarial or sovereign) but a space devoid of law, a zone of anomie in which all legal determination – and above all the distinction between public and private – are deactivated.”²³ Foucault, in a similar yet divergent way, sees power intricately tied to language and discourse and their ability to become internalised as rules and norms disciplining the body. Thus develops his concept of *biopower*, influencing everything from sex, to population control, racism, and capitalism.²⁴

In contrast, *exploitation* is a definite, material relationship between a labourer and the

20 See, for example, Mike Cole, *Critical Race Theory and Education: A Marxist Response* (London: Palgrave, 2009), 23-45.

21 J.K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick & Richard D. Wolff, “Introduction: Class in a Poststructuralist Frame,” in *Class and its Others* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 13

22 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 73.

23 Giorgio Agamben, *The State of Exception* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 50.

24 See Michel Foucault, *A History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990 [1978]), 140-3.

surplus product, and it derives from the nature of *capital*. Capital is not merely money, value, wealth, or profit; capital is *self-valorizing* value. It is value which exists to reproduce itself over and over again.²⁵ Capitalism differs from all other production systems because the goal is no longer satisfaction of needs, but rather the production of surplus and the expansion of capital. Let me explain further.

Think of the classic Marxian equation $C \rightarrow M \rightarrow C$.²⁶ One producer makes Commodity A (potatoes, perhaps). He produces far more potatoes than he needs, and he chooses to sell some so that he can obtain some of another producer's Commodity B (wine, perhaps). Based on the determined socially-necessary labour-time that went into producing these commodities, the exchange is made at a certain ratio, and each producer has satisfied his need. This is *not* an equation for capital because the desire to exchange was based on a desire for a specific use-value, potatoes or wine.²⁷

Consider a different equation, $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M'$.²⁸ This is Marx's abridged formula for capital. In this equation, a value is advanced for the purpose of production of commodities, which will eventually be sold for profit: ΔM . The explicit purpose of the $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M'$ capital equation is an increased return on the initial sum invested in the labour process; this is not about use-values, but exchange-value embodied in money. On a material level, the investment can be in the form of land, machinery, raw materials, and most importantly, wages. This process is constantly turning over, with most of M' being reinvested into a new circuit of capital production.

How is it, then, that the capitalist is able to reap increased returns at the end of the equation? Marx argues that a special commodity must be inserted into the circuit – labour power.

It is worthwhile to quote Marx at length:

25 Heinrich, *Introduction*, 87.

26 C = Commodity. M = Money.

27 See Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, 257.

28 $M' = \text{Money} + \Delta M$.

In order to extract value out of the consumption of a commodity, our friend the money owner must be lucky enough to find within the sphere of circulation, on the market, a commodity whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, whose actual consumption is therefore itself an objectification of labour, hence a creation of value. The possessor of money does find such a special commodity on the market: the capacity for labour, in other words, labour power. We mean by labour-power, or labour-capacity, the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being, capabilities which he sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind.²⁹

Labour Power is the *capacity* to labour, or in Harvey's words, “the physical, mental and human capacities to congeal value in commodities.”³⁰ In the $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M'$ circuit, part of the value invested is paid in the form of wages for the commodity *labour power*. This is a standard exchange of private properties, not unlike potatoes and wine. This is money (a commodity whose use-value is its exchange-value) for labour power (a commodity whose use-value is its ability to create more value than it costs).

Why is labour power able to do this? Why is it alone able to produce ΔM ? Unlike the classical political economists before him, and many neoclassical economists after him, Marx understood that labourers are not actually paid for the labour that they performed. Wages are compensation for *labour power*. Labour is not actually sold in these transactions; only the *ability*, the *capacity* to labour is sold.³¹ A daily wage is compensation for a day of labour, rather than compensation for what is produced. A working day, therefore, consists of a specified amount of compensated labour-time, time for which the wages cover, and a specified amount of uncompensated labour-time, time for which the labourer works for the profit of the employer.

This is what Marx understands *exploitation* to be. This is conceived of as a “social theft,” a *crime* by which one group of people coercively steals the labour, value, and time of another group of people. As Resnick & Wolff point out, while economic gains in the form of wage increases, welfare benefits, and unionisation may make this social theft less perceptible and

29 Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, 270.

30 Harvey, *Companion, Vol 1*, 98.

31 Heinrich, *Introduction*, 91.

harsh, there is still an alienated existence of workers: “if human beings must be free to be fully human, then neither slavery nor exploitation is compatible with a full humanity.”³² Within wage labour, these moments of unpaid labour-time are micro-slaverys, existing throughout the working day, the working year, and the working life.

Addressing this phenomenon, Donald L. Donham points out that liberating oneself from this system is more complicated than liberating the mind, the consciousness; it requires a fundamental material change in how society organises its labour. He writes: “As long as society is organised in such a way that one group's existence is coercively supported by the labor of others, individuals cannot, in the end, get free of themselves.”³³ These “groups,” as Donham puts it, are Marx's conception of *class*. While it necessarily interacts with other forces, class is a *material* relationship between individuals and groups regarding how labour and surplus are organised. *Power, domination* and *ideology*, such as Foucault's and Agamben's analyses above, represent how these relationships are maintained and experienced.

Marx's Understanding of Primitive Accumulation

Michael Heinrich concisely points out the paradox of labour power as a commodity, and it is worthwhile to quote at length:

That the owner of money encounters labour-power *as a commodity* on the market is not a matter of course. Two conditions have to be satisfied for this to be the case. First, there must be people who act as *free proprietors* of their own labour-power, who are therefore in a position to sell their labour-power. A slave or a serf is therefore not in such a position, since the sellers of labour-power must be *legally free people*. But if these people have the means of production at their disposal and can produce and sell their own commodities or can subsist from the products of their own labour, then they will probably not sell their labour power. They are only *driven* to sell their labour-power – and this is the second condition – if they do not own any means of production, if they are therefore not only legally free but also free of substantive *property*. Then they actually treat their labour-power as a commodity. The existence of workers who are 'free' in this double sense is an indispensable social

32 Resnick & Wolff, *New Departures*, 4.

33 Donald L. Donham, *History, Power, Ideology: Central Issues in Marxism and Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 191

precondition of capitalist production.³⁴

Heinrich reveals that there is nothing natural about this situation; it is the result of specific, definite historical developments leading up to this relationship.³⁵ Specific circumstances must have led to workers being *free* as Marx points out, “in the double sense that they neither form part of the means of production themselves, as would slaves, serfs, etc., nor do they own the means of production, as would be the case with self-employed peasant proprietors.”³⁶

Michael Perelman, in his text *The Invention of Capitalism*, notes that classical political economists, such as Adam Smith, James Steuart and others actually grew frustrated with the laissez-faire doctrine which they eventually became known for. Rural producers were remarkably tenacious in holding onto pre-capitalist modes of production; Smith and others were less-than-convinced that market forces alone would transform divisions of labour along capitalist lines. They advocated for “state interventions” into the lives of these rural people in order to inhibit their abilities to produce for their own needs and find self-sufficiency, thereby drawing them into waged labour relations.³⁷

Though he didn't dedicate a significant amount of space in his writings to elaborate upon it, Marx was among the first to realise this; there is nothing “natural” or “inevitable” about waged labour relations. This was a purposeful process which had to be set into motion; borrowing from – and going beyond – Adam Smith, he terms it Primitive [*ursprüngliche*] Accumulation. It is often translated as “Previous” or “Original” Accumulation; though for the purpose of this thesis, *primitive accumulation* will be used.

Marx's conception of primitive accumulation is as follows:

34 Heinrich, *Introduction*, 91. Emphasis is his.

35 Ibid., 92.

36 Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, 874.

37 Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* (Durham: Duke, 2000), 4.

The capital-relation presupposes a complete separation between the workers and the ownership of the conditions for the realization of their labour. As soon as capitalist production stands on its own feet, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, which creates the capital-relation can be nothing other than the process which divorces the worker from the ownership of the conditions of his own labour; it is a process which operates two transformations, whereby the social means of subsistence and production are turned into capital, and the immediate producers are turned into wage labourers. So-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the prehistory of capital, and of the mode of production corresponding to capital.³⁸

Unlike Adam Smith, who saw “previous accumulation” in somewhat mythical terms, unchallengeable and inevitable, like original sin, Marx saw this as a deeply historical, and perhaps even an intentional phenomenon.³⁹ Perelman terms Smith's “previous accumulation” as both *excessively* historical – relegating the phenomenon to history, and therefore complete – and *insufficiently* historical – relying on a mythical view of the past.⁴⁰ Marx explains further:

This primitive accumulation plays approximately the same role in Political Economy as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote about the past . . . In actual history it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder – in short, force – play the greatest part. In the tender annals of Political Economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and “labour” were from the beginning of time the sole means of enrichment, ‘this year’ of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.⁴¹

In short, the divorcing of the labourer from the means of production is a deliberate process which non-Marxist branches of political economy tend to downplay. This was by no means inevitable or unavoidable; it is historical.

It is important to remember that Marx's use of the words “so-called” alongside primitive accumulation in the eighth part of *Capital Vol. I* was intended to counter Smith's “idyllic” view of it, and also remind the observer that primitive accumulation is a central part of capitalism and continues to take place to this day. Hence, primitive accumulation exists simultaneously with

38 Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, 874-5.

39 Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism*, 26.

40 Ibid., 25.

41 Marx, *Capital, Vol. I*, 873-4.

more “formal” capitalist accumulation. David Harvey modifies Marx's concepts of primitive accumulation, using the term “accumulation by dispossession” to describe more contemporary forms of primitive accumulation – land grabs, eminent domain, privatisation, etc.⁴² Indeed, a significant amount of literature has been published in recent years describing conservation practices within the lens of contemporary primitive accumulation.⁴³

Marx, however, chose not to focus on primitive accumulation until Part VIII – the final section of *Capital* – because he wished to emphasise the more coercive, exploitative, yet banal functioning of markets, exchange, and wage labour. Though primitive accumulation is acknowledged by Marx to be a central feature of capitalist accumulation from the historical through the contemporary, focusing heavily on it emphasises the purposeful, agency-oriented exploitation that to many can seem obvious, while the early chapters on the commodity, exchange, and labour power went unnoticed by early classical political economists.⁴⁴

Marx sought to analyse capitalism structurally, and while one can garner certain moral principles from his works, that was not the source of his analysis. Primitive accumulation, according to Marx is an *essential* component of capitalism; whether deliberate or not, capitalism could not, and will not exist without it, for it is the force which puts these more mundane aspects into motion. This is contrary to the arguments of Max Weber regarding what he terms, “adventure” capitalism. According to Weber, this unethical “spirit” underlying the enterprises of a number of capitalists was something that needed to be overcome in order to usher in a more ethical spirit of capitalism. In his words: “Now just this attitude was one of the strongest inner

42 See David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford, 2003). Sharryn Kasmir & August Carbonella, “Dispossession and the Anthropology of Labor,” *Critique of Anthropology* 28, no. 1 (2008), 5-25.

43 Alice B. Kelly, “Conservation Practice as Primitive Accumulation,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 4 (2011), 683-701. Dan Brockington, *Fortress Conservation: The Preservation of Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002). Bram Büscher, “Letters of Gold: Enabling Primitive Accumulation through Neoliberal Conservation,” *Human Geography* 2, no. 3 (2009), 91-4.

44 Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism*, 29-31.

obstacles which the adaptation of men to the conditions of an ordered bourgeois-capitalistic economy has encountered everywhere.”⁴⁵ Now that we have an understanding of capitalism and primitive accumulation from a Marxian standpoint, we can immediately see the issues with Weber's analysis. While primitive accumulation may indeed have certain qualities of “adventure” (Weber compares these capitalists to pirates),⁴⁶ it is not a less-moral version of capitalism; it is the history of capitalism, and indeed a central component to its maintenance.

On Conducting Marxian Analyses

In *Capital*, Marx provided two simultaneous analyses that were inherently related and should be read alongside one another. As mentioned above, he focused heavily on *epochal*, or structural analyses of the logic of capitalist accumulation and development. His chapters on the commodity, exchange, money, labour power, etc. are prime examples of this. Alongside the epochal/structural analyses are his historical analyses – such as his chapters on the working day and primitive accumulation – which attempt to show how these structures came about in the first place, and how daily life in particular contexts was shaped by these structures and social relations. Donald L. Donham's work on historical anthropology influences my methods and views heavily; he writes:

I have argued that Marx's *Capital* is not a historical analysis, and yet it retains the power to inform analyses of change. It does this not by "predicting" exactly what will happen but by ordering a series of possibilities around a set of central, unstable contradictions. I see this form of structural explanation as one moment in a necessarily complex methodology, one that prepares the way for actual historical explanation. What I argue for, therefore, is not a rejection but a motivated transition from structural analyses (which are understood as heuristic and therefore incomplete) to fully historical analyses (which are seen as conditioned).⁴⁷

One cannot properly conduct a Marxian analyses of any phenomenon without a nuanced

45 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2005 [1930]), 23.

46 Ibid., 23.

47 Donham, *History, Power, Ideology*, xiii.

use of both kinds of analyses. If not utilised in conjunction with epochal analyses, historical analyses cannot fully show the internal contradictions within social relations that condition historical outcomes; one is left with a fetishisation (in a Marxian sense) of individual agency. If not considered with historical specificity, one cannot understand why particular structures developed in place A at time B. In short, if one understands the nuanced relationship between epochal and historical analyses, one can see how Marxian theory is not a deterministic, mechanical theory as it is often portrayed, but an intensely contextual analysis of societal change.⁴⁸

Discussions of epochal and historical analyses are intimately tied to the debates over “base” and “superstructure,” on in Donham's particular emphasis, between “Power” and “Ideology.” Many Marxists have applied Marx's epochal analysis of capitalism towards noncapitalist societies without delving further into historical analysis into how material inequalities are articulated. As Donham has pointed out, inequalities are indeed material, but they may be articulated through various “class” and “non-class” means. Privileging the so-called “economic” may very well result in a gross misunderstanding of a situation. His work on south-western Ethiopia illuminated these issues well; Donham explains further:

The notion that poor people have to “sell” their labor power to rich people in order to survive is no more economic than the idea that Maale women have to “marry” men in order to enjoy fertility. Both are superstructural systems of meanings and practices that institute and uphold (different) bases. On this view, the analysis of modes of production becomes a matter of (1) locating effective power differences over material production as these are reflected in differential control over the total product and (2) analyzing the meanings and practices that tend to reproduce such powers. There should be no presumption that (2) conforms to our notions of what is economic. On this reading, ideology is not something that simply legitimates power (the top that stabilizes the four struts). Rather, it provides the very terms in which power regularly becomes power (the tabletop that makes legs legs).⁴⁹

Ideologies, therefore, may have little “rational” validity, but nevertheless, they still hold

48 For more on this, see Bertell Ollman, *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

49 Donham, *History, Power, Ideology*, 196.

significant influence and may very well lead to severe material inequalities between individuals, groups, genders, etc.

What does this mean in practice? Michael Perelman gives us an example that could provide some guidance into conducting the sort of Marxian analysis Donham is seeking. In 1671, “Game Laws” came on the books throughout the English countryside and Scottish Highlands, penalising those persons who “neglect their trades and employments [to] follow hunting, fishing, and other game to the ruin of themselves and their neighbours.”⁵⁰

Perelman notes that even though this sort of law contains within it a degree of capitalistic tropes, the intention was anything but. He notes that “the intent of the legislation was to promote a hierarchy of class relationships, not necessarily capitalistic in nature.”⁵¹ Furthermore, as Munsche points out, “The Game Laws were born out of a desire to enhance the status of the country gentlemen in the bitter aftermath of the Civil War. Their message was that land was superior to money.”⁵² Looking at the English economy from a Marxian perspective, these laws were deeply feudal in nature, as they intended not to commodify hunting so much as transform it into an aristocratic activity, to be the sport and heritage of landowners and gentry.⁵³

Despite their feudal *intentions*, the English Game Laws had deeply capitalistic *functions*. The large numbers of game and high commodity prices in the Scottish highlands led many Scots to choose to hunt and self-provision instead of taking up waged labour. Enforcing the game laws, according to Perelman, divorced hunters from the means of production and the product (their prey). Furthermore, the fact that they gentry were allowed right of access onto all lands to pursue

50 Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism*, 39.

51 Ibid.

52 P.B. Munsche, *Gentlemen and Poachers: The English Game Laws, 1671-1831* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 164. Cited in Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism*, 39.

53 See. Edward I. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 68.

game resulted in tremendous amounts of damage towards peasants' crops.⁵⁴ The English Game Laws, therefore, represented an instance where the interests of the gentry and of capital coincided nicely, "The gentry could enjoy the prestige of hunting, while the capitalists could enjoy the labor of many of the people who were forbidden to hunt as a means of subsistence."⁵⁵

While ideologies, such as that of hunters vs. poachers, carry weight in shaping historical outcomes, we cannot dismiss the structural and material effects of these ideologies. As Donham pointed out above, "analy[sing] of modes of production becomes a matter of (1) locating effective power differences over material production as these are reflected in differential control over the total product and (2) analyzing the meanings and practices that tend to reproduce such powers."⁵⁶ "Non-economic" intentions may indeed have "economic" effects. As will be shown in later chapters, intentions and ideologies towards pursuing certain labour and environmental policies in Namibia may indeed have structural effects that mirror primitive accumulation. *Intention* need not factor into whether or not primitive accumulation *occurs*. It is something which must be analysed structurally.

Primitive Accumulation and Historical Analysis

Marx's *Capital* is primarily a structural understanding of capitalism and social relations; while it contains historical analysis (as pointed out above) it is often lacking at times, and Marx spends little time applying his theories and models to specific contexts. Regarding primitive accumulation, he does dedicate some time to discussion of the enclosures movement in England and the Scottish Highlands, and he explores the significance of E.G. Wakefield's writings on colonialism.⁵⁷ But we should remember that Marx is not a historian; that sort of analysis is not

54 See Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism*, 41, 47.

55 Ibid., 45.

56 Donham, *History, Power, Ideology*, 196.

57 See, Marx *Capital Vol. 1*, 931-940.

his goal, and in-depth historical study of his theories in definite temporal and geographical contexts must fall to subsequent scholars. In the third volume of *Capital*, he points out his and Engels' ultimate goals:

In presenting the reification of the relations of production and the autonomy the acquire vis-à-vis the agents of production, we shall not go into the form and manner in which these connections appear to them as overwhelming natural laws, governing them irrespective of their will . . . This is because the actual movement of competition lies outside our plan, and we are only out to present the internal organization of the capitalist mode of production, its ideal average, as it were.⁵⁸

Marx sought to critique and correct existing political economy by presenting a theory about capitalism. In so doing, he would reveal a theory of society, a theory of social change, paving the road for others to follow and conduct the necessary contextual studies, both historical and contemporary, to put his ideas to the test.

Regarding primitive accumulation, many scholars engaging with Marx's theories in African contexts are equally broad in their applications, leaving many questions unanswered. In his recent article on the subject, Rune Skarstein seeks to apply theories of primitive accumulation to contemporary reports of “land grabbing” in East Africa.⁵⁹ He links large-scale land sales to foreign companies (both public and private) primarily to the so-called “biofuel rush” - using land for sugarcane production into ethanol – which dispossesses African smallholder farmers at the expense of large government tax revenues from the biofuel production.⁶⁰ Smallholder agriculture, therefore, is seen as an “impediment to economic development.”⁶¹

While Skarstein's polemic article raises some interesting questions and necessitates future research, it is a work-in-progress at best. Since no field work, interviews, archival work, or longitudinal research was conducted (it was entirely based upon previously published work and

58 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. III* (New York: Penguin, 1991 [1894]), 969-70.

59 Rune Skarstein, “Primitive Accumulation: Concept, Similarities and Varieties,” in *Framing African Development: Challenging Concepts*, edited by Kjell Havnevik, Terje Oestigaard, Eva Tobisson, and Tea Virtanen (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 135-168.

60 Ibid., 163.

61 Ibid., 158.

online statistics in the World Bank and Land Matrix databases), we learn little of how these “land grabs” are actually taking place. We are left with assumptions that legal ownership of land equates with these so-called development projects taking place as planned with universal land alienation, as Skarstein implies. Studies of primitive accumulation must indeed have polemic and contemporary activist relevance, but the economic structures which they present and analyse must be grounded and locally relevant.

The same applies, in some respects, with Matthew Forstater's article on colonial taxation and primitive accumulation, a topic very close to my own research.⁶² Forstater, like Marx, is trained in economic theory, not African history; for this reason, we should understand the both the strength's and the limitations of his work. Drawing mostly from the writings of Frederick Lugard, Basil Davidson, and John McCracken, he convincingly argues how compulsory taxation played important roles in “monetizing the colony.”⁶³ Crucially, Forstater argues for the distinction between direct taxation (i.e. hut tax, poll tax, land tax, etc.) and indirect taxation (i.e. income tax). It is useful to quote Forstater at length:

Several points concerning the role of direct taxation in colonial capitalist primitive accumulation need to be made. First, direct taxation means that the tax cannot be, e.g. an income tax. An income tax cannot assure that a population that possesses the means of production to produce their own subsistence will enter wage labor or grow cash crops. If they simply continue to engage in subsistence production, they can avoid the cash economy and thus escape the income tax and any need for colonial currency. The tax must therefore be a direct tax, such as the poll tax, hut tax, head tax, wife tax, and land tax. Second, although taxation was often imposed in the name of securing revenue for the colonial coffers, and the tax was justified in the name of Africans bearing some of the financial burden of running the colonial state, in fact the colonial government did not need the colonial currency held by Africans. What they needed was for the African population to need the currency, and that was the purpose of the direct tax. The colonial government and European settlers must ultimately be the source of the currency, so they did not need it from the Africans. It was a means of compelling the African to sell goods and services, especially labor services for the currency.⁶⁴

The taxes and fees I elaborate upon in this thesis – Dog Taxation, Grazing Fees, Dipping Fees,

62 Matthew Forstater, “Taxation and Primitive Accumulation: The Case of Colonial Africa” *Research in Political Economy* 22 (2005), 51-65.

63 Ibid., 55.

64 Ibid., 60.

Labour Exemption Passes, and others – are all direct taxes. In order to engage in certain practices which had little to do with wage labour, Namibians were taxed. This necessitated cash possession and exchange. While Forstater's training in African history is very limited, this distinction is crucial; “self-peasantisation” and removal of oneself from waged labour economies would not necessarily lead to less taxation. The problem with Forstater's article is that his “African context” is strictly theoretical; like Skarstein, he conducted no field work or archival research. It is for this reason that he doesn't engage with the specificity of *what* is taxed; a central argument of this thesis is that because of specific ecological and political transformations, dog taxation became much more important as a way to facilitate primitive accumulation.

The Purpose of this Study

My thesis fills in historical gaps in writings on Primitive Accumulation in southern Africa. This is a study grounded in Namibian history, seeking to bring in theories of primitive accumulation, as opposed to the other way around. Furthermore, this thesis will illuminate and build upon a few themes in Namibian and southern African history and historiography. First, this project will re-center labour within Namibian history, specifically as it relates to the development of apartheid in Namibia and the further entrenchment of racial politics. During my specified time frame, most Namibians regularly engaged with the growing colonial state presence through payment (or non-payment) of taxes and fees; lurking behind these taxes was potential punishment with prison labour if they go unpaid. We must take seriously both kinds of labour – that which is required to raise funds to pay taxes, and that which is given as punishment – as crucial in transforming indigenous shepherding, agricultural, and animal husbandry practices and in solidifying the white commercial agriculture sector in Namibia.

Second, I seek to show the importance of the rural in studying southern African labour history. In so doing, I show the usefulness of Marxian theories of Primitive Accumulation in analysing the spread of capitalist social relations. Rural transformations and pressures determined the terms of labour migration and urbanisation, two of the crucial issues apartheid legislation sought to solve. While Jeanne Penvenne (Mozambique) and Colin Bundy (South Africa) have written brilliant studies on the subjects,⁶⁵ taxation and colonial fees are still an under-researched aspect of capitalist state formation in rural areas.

Third, this thesis elaborates on ways in which Namibians negotiated and/or resisted these state interventions. Primitive accumulation is a contingent process, and it can often result in sites of resistance, struggle, compliance, and collaboration. Terrance Ranger elaborates further:

I do not believe that the might of colonial capitalism was so overwhelming that African cultivators could not at all affect what was happening to them . . . Nor do I believe that the protest of African peasants were always against the penetration of capitalist relations or that they necessarily bore the pathos of the structurally determined losers. In some circumstances, at least the protest of African peasants could take the form of an unequivocally class struggle *within* the context of capitalist relations rather than against penetration. Indeed, in some circumstances, there were peasant victories to be won even in colonial Africa.⁶⁶

We cannot look upon primitive accumulation in Namibian history as a uni-linear trajectory from self-sufficient agro-pastoral endeavours to colonial wage labour. These developments were uneven, and capitalist social relations were contested and/or complied with in unique ways.

Finally, this thesis shows the contemporary relevance of studying the birth of accumulation and capitalist social relations. This necessitates understanding why Marx engaged in (albeit limited) historical reconstruction; Christian Lotz elaborates on this:

65 Jeanne Marie Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lorenzo Marques, 1877-1962* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1994). Colin Bundy, "We Don't Want Your Rain, We Won't Dip': Popular Opposition, Collaboration, and Social Control in the Anti-Dipping Movement, 1908-16," in *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape, 1890-1930*, eds. William Beinart & Colin Bundy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 191-221.

66 Terrence Ranger, "Growing from the Roots: Reflections on Peasant Research in Central and Southern Africa," *Journal of southern African Studies* 5, no. 1 (1978), 128. Emphasis his.

Marx is here not simply interested in historical development; rather, the analysis of primitive accumulation is a reconstruction of what, in the present, we are used to call “capital” and “capitalism.” It is the beginning *of* capitalism, which cannot be reduced to a cause-effect relation. If we conceive the origin of capitalist as the *genesis of capital* rather than a separated origin that fell from heaven, then we understand that the past is something that is *within and a part of the present* and *within and a part of capital*. . . Violence, dispossession, expropriation, enrichment, class struggle, and oppression is, consequently not something that we have left behind as a first stage of what now seems to be capitalism with a human face; rather it is part of its genesis and therefore part of the daily expression of capitalism.⁶⁷

Studying the history of capitalism and the history of primitive accumulation helps us move beyond positivistic understandings of history as something fully *in* the past, and therefore complete, towards an understanding of the past as what Lotz terms a “moment of the present.”⁶⁸ Historical events pertaining to the spread of capitalist social relations are not merely dates on a calendar, but rather moments in a *process* of capital creation, what we saw above as the $M \rightarrow C \rightarrow M'$ formula. The creation of labourers dependent on selling their labour power is not merely a historical event, but a constant struggle for capitalists to this day. Examining this process helps us understand and contextualise potential sites of struggle, and bottlenecks in this process where resistance and gains can be made.

The following chapter will engage with land settlement and struggles over labour and labour shortage in Southern Namibia during the first few decades of South African rule. It will set the stage for chapter three, which engages with environmental and ecological transformations in the region which further structure social relations, paving the way for the dog tax (chapter four).

67 Christian Lotz, *The Capitalist Schema: Time, Money, and the Culture of Abstraction* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 97. Emphases are his.

68 Ibid., 98.

An economic history of Southern Namibia is a history of agriculture, agricultural labour, and how each interacted with the local ecology. Unlike in South Africa, mining and urban industry did not make up the mainstay of Namibia's gross domestic product until well after the Second World War.¹ For reasons which will be explored below, the slump in agricultural production during the late German period and the martial law period of South African occupation (1915-1920) was gradually eroded over the first few decades of South African rule. This was largely due to state-subsidised innovations in Karakul sheep breeding techniques and the creation of an increased supply of agricultural labourers from the second half of the 1920s through the 1930s. Indeed, as Silvester points out, still “in the mid-1940s the contribution [to GDP] by the commercial farming sector was still more than triple that of the manufacturing and mining sectors combined.”²

The main hindrance to successful white commercial agriculture in southern Namibia was a lack of “free” waged labour, in the Marxian sense. As the German period came a close, many Nama and Herero were able to rebuild cattle and small-stock herds, as well as reclaim a degree of pastoral mobility which had been severely constrained during the brutal German occupation. In his well-known dissertation on the Herero reserves, Werner borrows Terrence Ranger's theory of “self-peasantisation” to describe this phenomenon.³ According to Ranger, self-peasantisation “involved the deliberate and painful adoption of a number of strategies designed to maximise the potentials of peasant production: strategies which meant important innovations in the division of

1 Marion Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 235.

2 Jeremy Silvester, “Black Pastoralists, White Farmers: The Dynamics of Land Dispossession and Labour Recruitment in Southern Namibia,” Unpublished Dissertation (University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993), 15.

3 Wolfgang Werner, *“No One Will Become Rich”: Economy and Society in the Herero Reserves in Namibia, 1915-1946* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 1998), 57.

labour, in staple crops, in locations of residence, and subsequently in technology and ideology.”⁴ Werner shows that in the process of deserting absentee and detained German employers during the First World War, “many labourers rustled [stole] cattle to lay the foundation for their new existence.”⁵

In response to these material and ideological gains on the part of black Namibians during this transitory and uncertain period, the South African administration in Namibia sought to restrict the mobility of African agro-pastoralists.⁶ The 1921 Native Reserves Commission and subsequent laws transformed and greatly reduced access to grazing land. Squatting on Crown Land was criminalised, with many shepherds being removed to reserves. Increased subsidies towards white settlers under the 1920s Land Settlement Programmes facilitated further dispossession of traditional land and grazing rights.⁷

Christo Botha has noted that until the 1966 Odendaal Commission, which encouraged the implementation of apartheid-style “homelands” in Namibia, “official policy and support concerning the stock-farming industry . . . were almost exclusively aimed at and supportive of the white stock-farming industry.”⁸ Nearly all of the policy commissions which were conducted during this period – Drought Investigation Commission, Farming Industry Commission, Land Settlement Commission, Long Term Agricultural Policy Commission, and others – had the

4 Terence Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe* (Oxford: James Currey, 1985), 31.

5 Werner, *Economy and Society*, 58.

6 I am using the term agro-pastoralists following Fuller's terminology: Agropastoralism involves a more diversified mode of production involving both planting crops and keeping stock. Depending on local conditions, climate, rains, etc., one can become more privileged over the other. In Southern Namibia, stock keeping was almost always dominant, though it was ordinarily complemented by gardening or other agricultural pursuits. See Bennet Bristol Fuller, Jr. “Institutional Appropriation and Social Change Among Agropastoralists in Central Namibia, 1916-1988,” Unpublished Dissertation (Boston University, 1993), 31.

7 Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace & Patricia Hayes, “Trees Never Meet” - Mobility and Containment: An Overview, 1915-1946,” in *Namibia Under South African Rule: Mobility & Containment, 1915-46*, edited by Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace & Wolfram Hartmann (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 18.

8 Christo Botha, “The Emergence of Commercial Ranching under State Control and the Encapsulation of Pastoralism in African Reserves,” in *Pastoralism in Africa: Past, Present and Future*, edited by Michael Bollig, Michael Schnegg & Hans-Peter Wotzka (Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), 236.

explicit aim of expanding the white commercial farming sector. The Land Settlement Programme provided low-interest loans and advances to white settlers for purchase of livestock, construction of homes, windmills and fencing, and even dipping tanks for the eradication of sheep scab.⁹ Importantly, the Land Settlement Programme did not explicitly look for candidates with large monetary assets or significant experience in farming. According to Silvester, “One of the prerequisites for the acquisition of land under the programme was that the application ‘must be of European descent’.”¹⁰ The Programme was about solidifying South African control over the territory, and filling in the holes in the thinly-spread German settlement in Southern Namibia. Furthermore, a senior officer in the South West Africa Lands Branch admitted that the Programme “was really an attempt to settle the poor white question.”¹¹

Issues of “repastoralisation” and “self-peasantisation”, capital-poor white settlers, persistent drought, and competition with mining and urban industry all contributed to acute labour shortages in Southern Namibia. This chapter serves to contextualise these developments from the end of German rule through the end of the 1930s, when the white farming industry transformed into specialised Karakul pelt producers, leaving behind other forms of small-stock keeping. This is not intended to be exhaustive in nature; it is intended to reveal the economic transformations throughout this period to help the reader understand how taxation functioned as a form of primitive accumulation, designed to answer the “labour question” in Southern Namibia.

9 Jeremy Silvester, “Beasts, Boundaries & Buildings: The Survival & Creation of Pastoral Economies in Southern Namibia, 1915-1935,” in *Namibia Under South African Rule*, 110. SWAA A.69/2: *Dipping Tanks (Advances) Proclamation 1922*.

10 Silvester, “Beasts, Boundaries & Buildings”, 107.

11 Quoted in *Ibid*.

Repastoralisation and Self-Peasantisation in Southern Namibia

In the wake of the German genocide in the first decade of the 20th Century, a 1907 ordinance was passed by the DSWA administration banning African ownership of large-stock, with a limitation of five (5) small-stock per black stock owner.¹² Silvester notes that this was not only about limiting cattle ownership for the purpose of slaughter, husbandry, and dairying, but also to limit the African ox-wagon transport industry.¹³ Labour shortage caused by extermination of large numbers of Nama and Herero during the war had to be rectified, and independent black economic activities were seen as a threat to the colonial economy. In what Horst Drechsler famously termed “The Peace of the Graveyard”, post-genocide Namibia was distinguished by a large increase in forced labour and prison labour, a continuation of the conditions of the wartime concentration camps.¹⁴ Outside of a few cases (i.e. the Bondels Reserve, Warmbad district, and the Berseba reserve, Keetmanshoop district), the existing “Native Reserves” in DSWA were dismantled with the aim of “removing any form of independent black political or economic organisation.”¹⁵

It should be noted, however, that the German administration in Southern Namibia was remarkably small, and that large tracts of land remained unsettled as crown lands; enforcement of these sorts of laws were anything but universal (See Figure Two).¹⁶ In fact, as Silvester points out, destruction of the reserves simultaneously with labour shortage caused by the genocide actually led to a degree of flexibility in choosing employers and districts; employers who needed

12 Silvester, “Beasts, Boundaries & Buildings”, 98.

13 Ibid. One could also see the South African “wheel tax” as functioning in the same way. More research is needed on this

14 See Horst Drechsler, *“Let Us Die Fighting”: The Struggle of the Herero and the Nama against German Imperialism, 1884-1915* (London: Zed Books, 1980), 231-243. See also Jonas Kreienbaum, “Guerrilla Wars and Concentration Camps: The Exceptional Case of German South West Africa (1904-1908),” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 11 (2012), 83-101.

15 Silvester, “Black Pastoralists, White Farmers,” 26.

16 See NAN Map Collection Plate 05993b: “Besitzstands-Karte von Deutsch Südwest Afrika” (1 January 1902).

labour were more than willing to avoid certain regulations, and Africans were able to avoid certain employers with reputations of corporal punishment.¹⁷ We should remember, however, that in rural areas, the German pass laws could be enforced by either police *or* European civilians, making evasion of the law, though possible, quite risky.



Figure Two: Land Settlement in Southern Namibia, 1902

During the First World War, roughly 1,500 non-officer combatants in the German *Schutztruppe* were detained at any given time in the prisoner of war camp at Aus, a remote settlement in Southern Namibia, roughly 125 km from Lüderitz and 215 km from Keetmanshoop.¹⁸ Many of these detainees were ordinary German farmers in Southern Namibia, who subsequently found themselves separated from their farms for significant periods of time. Many of their Namibian farm workers utilised their lands for grazing purposes, and often stole

¹⁷ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸ Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 212.

livestock to compensate for unpaid wages, poor treatment, and dispossession of lands.

The uncertainty of the future of the territory, the lack of colonial police, the detention of German settlers, and particularly good rains during the first few years of South African rule,¹⁹ all contributed to a scenario where black Namibians in Southern and Central Namibia were able to exert an additional degree of agency in rebuilding their independent livelihoods. This was a conscious effort, and it took a degree of planning and forethought if lands were to be reclaimed or flocks were to be rebuilt. Stock theft is an interesting case to examine, so we will turn to Keetmanshoop district.

Stock Theft in Southern Namibia: The Case of R.J. Badenhorst

The case of Rudolph J. Badenhorst in Keetmanshoop district provides us with an interesting example of “repastoralisation” during this transition period. Badenhorst migrated to DSWA from the Orange Free State around 1907 with Francina Bloom, a coloured woman with whom he was living, and her four children from a previous marriage: Christian Stefanus, Martha, Piet and Daniel. They arrived in Keetmanshoop district and began raising small-stock at Badenhorst's farm, Goudas.²⁰

In September, 1915, Badenhorst wrote to the Military Administration in Windhoek reporting stock theft and his subsequent inability to find black Namibian labour. When the war first broke out, Badenhorst left DSWA for Prieska in the Union to avoid being drafted into the *Schutztruppe*. He claimed to have left behind between 3,000 – 4,000 small stock on his farm under the supervision of his “stepson” Christian Stefanus.²¹ When he returned to Keetmanshoop, he found that there were only 963 sheep remaining. Out of confusion, he searched nearby farms

19 L. Neubert, *The Karakul Industry: Policy Options for Independent Namibia* (Lusaka: United Nations Institute for Namibia, 1989), 15.

20 ADM A.13/15: Affidavit of Christian Stefanus Bloom. 8 October 1915.

21 ADM A.13/15: Farmer R.J. Badenhorst to General Commanding Officer of S.W.A. - 28 September 1915.

and black locations, noting that there was significant increase in the numbers of African-owned small-stock in the area. In addition, nearly all of the sheep he found in the locations had the ears “mangled” - i.e. cut off low at the base of the ear.

Unlike cattle, sheep were not hot-iron branded for identification purposes, but rather, they were identified by certain cuts and notches into the ears of the sheep.²² They could also be tagged on the ears with identification numbers (although that generally did not come until later). Because it was not technically illegal at that time for the ears to be cut low, the administration responded to Badenhorst that they could not do anything unless he could prove ownership of the sheep, which he couldn't. Furthermore, they noted that on his farm, there were reports of “ill-treatment of natives and withholding of wages due to them.”²³

When the Magistrate at Keetmanshoop interviewed Christian Stefanus Bloom, Badenhorst's “stepson,” about the matter, he found that the situation was far more complex than a case of spur-of-the-moment stock theft. First and foremost, Badenhorst was never married to Bloom's mother, yet he pretended to be until her death in 1911. He fathered two children with her during that time. After Francina Bloom's death, Badenhorst began sleeping with Martha, Christian Stefanus' sister, aged sixteen, and he fathered another child with her, and gave the pretence to the white community in Keetmanshoop that Martha was his wife.

The magistrate further learned that this was anything but consenting. Christian Stefanus and Martha were regularly beaten with Sjamboks if they disobeyed their “stepfather.” Many of the servants were likewise beaten. Bloom claims that he was beaten by Badenhorst with a brick, knocked unconscious, and locked in a room for three days without food or water; he only

22 Cuts into the ears can also signify the rating of the breed or quality of wool. Different notches in may signify different sheep values, proving also that the flock has been inspected. See, A.D. Thompson (Senior Karakul Inspector), *Karakul Sheep: Government Flock and the Industry in South West Africa* (Windhoek: South West Africa Administration, 1938), 100-102.

23 ADM A.13/15: Captain, for Major Native Commissioner, Windhoek to R.J. Badenhorst - “re: Complaints as to Scarcity of Native Labour” - 9 October 1915.

survived because his sister Martha slipped him small pieces of bread and sips of water from under the door. Bloom revealed to the Magistrate that the reason for Badenhorst leaving to Prieska was not only to avoid being drafted into the army, but also to avoid being prosecuted for indecency: fathering a child with a woman to whom he was not married. He fled just before the arrest was to be made.²⁴

If we read critically into these two testimonies – Bloom's and Badenhorst's – we can learn a great deal about stock theft during this period. Bloom admits that a few hundred stock were sold to pay for the workers' wages, food, and clothing during the time that Badenhorst was in Prieska (Badenhorst left very little money for these purposes). Bloom also notes that there was near universal hatred for and/or fear of Badenhorst among his workforce and their families. While it is not explicitly pointed out in the testimonies, it is quite likely that the stock were taken in a very *specific* and *planned* manner, reflecting what David Anderson terms a “moral economy.” In his history of Kalenjin professional stock theft rings in colonial Kenya, Anderson notes that within certain communities, protection against colonial prosecution for stock theft was achieved through silence and community collaboration.²⁵ While Kalenjin community leaders might choose to prosecute outsiders with colonial stock theft laws, locals thieves were often treated with a degree of solidarity.

This analysis aptly applies to the case of R.J. Badenhorst in Keetmanshoop district. This farmer was widely hated by his immediate family and his workers. Stock theft on a large scale took place in a distinctly planned manner – the ears were mangled to reduce identification purposes. Furthermore, with increased stock numbers, many of his former workers and their families were then able to purchase labour exemption certificates because they met the

24 ADM A.13/15: Affidavit of Christian Stefanus Bloom. 8 October 1915.

25 David Anderson, “Stock Theft and Moral Economy in Colonial Kenya,” *Africa* 56, no. 4 (1986), 412.

requirements of ten cattle or fifty small stock (what determined as “visible means of support” at the time).²⁶ Badenhorst was then left with reduced stock numbers and a lack of labour. Stock theft around this time, while often spur-of-the-moment, often carried with it political connotations of “repastoralisation” and “self-peasantisation” prominent during this period. Examples like this paved the way for the Native Stock Brands Proclamation of 1923, which required stock to be branded in a specific way, and which banned African ownership of irons.²⁷

Namibia and the Mandate: The Early Years

It should be noted that the first five years (1915-1920) of South African occupation of Namibia were characterised by uncertainty of the future of the territory. These years of “martial law,” according to Emmett, placed the South African administration in an unusual position, which helped briefly provide a degree of respite for Namibia's black population. He elaborates:

The South African administrators found themselves in the unusual situation of being faced not only with a hostile, or potentially hostile, black population, but also a hostile white population. In the other German colonies, most of the German settlers were expelled or repatriated. Namibia was unique among the mandated territories in retaining a large German community. The possibility of a black rebellion therefore posed a double threat to the military administration because the German community might take advantage of the opportunity to rebel against the occupying forces and reintroduce German rule.²⁸

For these reasons, the initial policies of the Martial Law administration were rather harsh towards German subjects, and somewhat conciliatory towards black Namibians. In order to present themselves as more enlightened rulers of Namibia, the South African administration

26 ADM 124 file 4672/5: Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Petition of Farmers and Inhabitants of Warmbad.” - 23 December 1917. SWAA A.50/27: Magistrate Windhoek to Officer in Charge of Native Affairs, Windhoek - “Vagrancy” - February 20, 1918. SWAA A.50/27: Secretary for S.W.A to Officer in Charge of Native Affairs, Windhoek - February 27, 1918. SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Assistant Native Commissioner, Windhoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek - “Farm Labour” - March 30, 1937.

27 SWAA A.219/2: *Native Stock Brands Proclamation of 1923*. African-owned cattle had to be branded with italicised lettering, and the brands were stored with the magistrate. Therefore, all cattle which needed to be branded had to be brought to the magistrate's office in town. Native reserves had a special brand each, and it was kept with the reserve superintendent. It was free of charge to have your cattle branded, but when one factors in that the beasts must be brought to the magistrate or superintendent, costs inevitably arise.

28 Tony Emmett, *Popular Resistance and the Roots of Nationalism in Namibia, 1915-1966* (Basel: P. Schlettwein, 1999).

chose to focus heavily on one aspect of German rule: corporal punishment.

In the first few years of Martial Law, the administration funded research into the nature of German colonial rule – translating law, gathering testimonies of both whites and blacks regarding labour conditions, ways of life, etc. The so-called *1918 Blue Book on Native Affairs* was highly critical of German rule, particularly the use of flogging, chains, forced labour, etc. It also printed numerous photographs taken during the colonial occupation, particularly the well-known postcard of lynched Herero. The *Blue Book* was critiqued heavily by German (and Afrikaner) settlers during the time period, and has continued to be seen in certain circles as a piece of “English anti-German propaganda” designed to facilitate international legitimisation of South African occupation of Namibia.²⁹ Scholars like Brigitte Lau controversially doubted many of the statistics provided regarding the genocide and concentration camps.

While a number of historians have responded to and condemned Brigitte Lau's theses on the Blue Book and the German period,³⁰ some of her theories regarding its use as propaganda may not be completely wrong. According to Jan-Bart Gewald & Jeremy Silvester, in 1920, once it became clear that a Namibia would be entrusted to South African under a League of Nations “Class C” Mandate,³¹ the impetus of South African policy changed from treating German settlers as potential enemy combatants to instead “building a unified white settler community.”³² Indeed, by the mid-1920s, copies of the Blue Book were being systematically removed from libraries and

29 Brigitte Lau, “Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904,” in *History and Historiography: Four Essays in Reprint* (Windhoek: MSORP, 1995), 42.

30 See Werner Hillebrecht, “Certain Uncertainties: Or Venturing Progressively into Colonial Apologetics” *Journal of Namibian Studies* 1 (2007), 73-96. And see Tilman Dederig, “The German-Herero War of 1904: Revisionism of Genocide or Imaginary Historiography?” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 1 (1993), 80-88.

31 Group C Mandates were those former German territories which were deemed not ready for independence or self-rule in the foreseeable future. These included Namibia, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and a few other of Germany's Pacific Island Colonies.

32 Jeremy Silvester & Jan-Bart Gewald, “Footsteps and Tears: An Introduction to the Construction and Context of the 1918 Blue Book,” in *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia – An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xxx.

government offices in Namibia and South Africa.³³ Germans were welcomed back into the settler ranks.

Emmett notes that some of the Laws which the Germans had on the books were repealed, only to be replaced with a nominally different law with the same function. For example, the Martial Law administration repealed the German *Dienstbuch* law which regulated movement of Africans and contained identity and employment information, only to replace it with the Union's pass laws.³⁴ It should be noted that the South African's did institute the stipulation that Africans could purchase a "Certificate of Exemption from Labour" if the individual could prove that he owned "visible means of support" of ten head of cattle or fifty head of small stock. A certain number of Namibians were able to take advantage of this, such as those on Badenhorst's farm, but many were unable to.

Kößler has argued that from very early on, the South African administration was looking to Namibia as an additional province of the Union of South Africa, rather than through the lens of a League of Nations Mandate. First and foremost, many black Namibians were dismayed by the Martial Law administration's decision to honour all land which the Germans confiscated and declared legitimately owned.³⁵ By the time the Mandate was approved by Geneva, there were already plans in the works to implement the 1920s Land Settlement Programme to solve some of the "poor white" issues in South Africa. Furthermore, the invading Union forces completed a rail link between Kalkfontein (Karasburg) and De Aar via Upington and Prieska; this solidified economic connections between the two territories.³⁶ In order to successfully implement a transition to South African rule and to adequately supply the new settlers in Southern Namibia,

33 Ibid., xxxii.

34 Emmett, *Popular Resistance*, 75.

35 Reinhart Kößler, "From Reserve to Homeland: South African 'Native' Policy in Southern Namibia," NEPRU Occasional Paper No. 12 (Windhoek: Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit, 1997), 5.

36 Giorgio Miescher, "Arteries of Empire: On the Geographical Imagination of South Africa's Railway War, 1914-1915," *Kronos* 38, no. 1 (2012), 23-46. This remains the only Namibian transnational rail connection to this day.

issues of African labour had to be addressed – the Native Reserves Proclamations proved key in this.

The Purpose and Practice of African Reserves

According to Silvester, the creation of “Native Reserves” in Southern Namibia was intended to serve two purposes. First, the reserves were a labour pool intended to serve nearby farms. Second, the reserves were supposed to provide storage for excess livestock, small and large.³⁷ It should be noted that Namibian reserves were not intended to function as “tribal homelands”; the reserves were economic creations, not cultural. During 1921, the same year of the Native Reserves Commission, the Secretary for the Protectorate remarked that

These reserves are not the same as the areas known as Native Reserves in the Union; they merely consist of farms set aside in each district . . . and there is no intention of creating reserves to which tribes could remove themselves and thus restore their old tribal methods of living under their chiefs.³⁸

Reserves were planned based on the cartography and labour demands of the districts in Namibia. Each district would receive a reserve to function as a labour pool, a location to which urban removals could be directed, and a location for the infirm, elderly, and children. While some of the Native Reserves were placed on traditional lands, many were created from scratch on unwelcoming, barren land.³⁹ The administrator of the territory, Gijs Hofmeyr wrote to Jan Smuts in 1921, that apart from providing labour to farmers, the reserves were located such that “concerted action or organised effort on the part of the natives as a whole [would be] difficult.”⁴⁰

Many of the Native Reserves were far too small and of poor land to lead to any definition of successful stock accumulation. The Soromas reserve in Bethanie District, even after two

37 Silvester, “Black Pastoralists, White Farmers,” 87.

38 SWAA A.158/1 (v1): Secretary for S.W.A. To Secretary for Lands, Cape Town – 20 March 1920. Quoted in Ibid., 42.

39 Ibid.

40 Quoted in Werner, *Economy and Society*, 107.

extensions, only measured 23,571 hectares. The Neuhoof reserve in Maltahöhe district measured only 20,500 hectares; some individual commercial farms in Maltahöhe district measure not much less. A few of the larger reserves were holdovers from treaties negotiated with the German colonial government. The Bondels Reserve in Warmbad district was founded as such based on the Ukamas submission treaty of 1906 which, after handover of weapons and ammunition, the Bondelswarts would received †Gâbes, †Haib, Wortel, Dreihoeck, the Warmbad location, and surrounding veld adding up to approximately 189,028 hectares.⁴¹ The Berseba reserve was also a holdover from negotiations with the Germans.⁴²

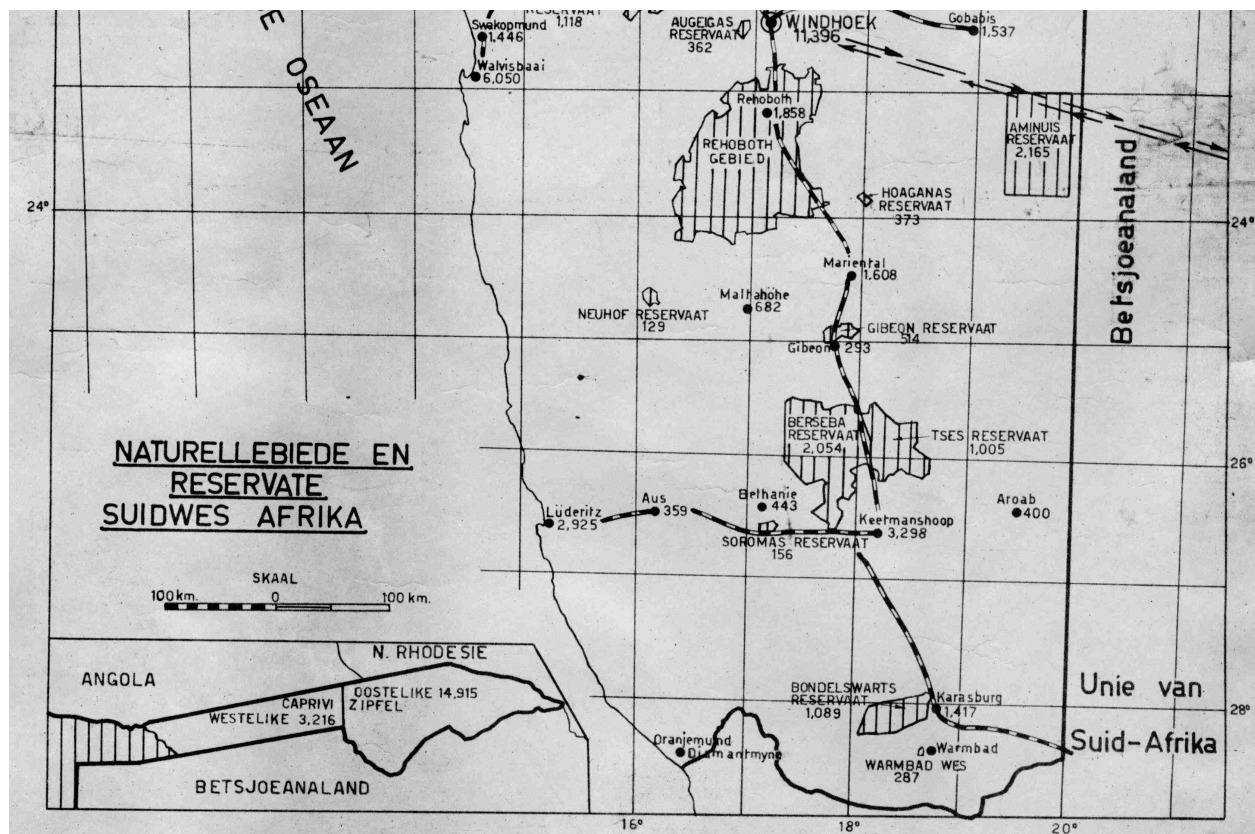


Figure Three: African Reserves and Locations in Southern Namibia

Reinhart Kößler provides an interesting case study into reserve creation though his analysis of Tses reserve in Keetmanshoop district. Of the 575,000 hectares of land allocated to

41 ADM 85 file 2163/2: Treaty at Ukamas, translation from the German. 23 December 1906.

42 Kößler, "From Reserve to Homeland," 14.

the Bersebaners, a little over 200,000 was sold to the administration to repay heavy debts incurred during the previous years.⁴³ Tses was intended as a reserve for “all the indigenous groups of the Southern part of the country they apparently could not accommodate elsewhere.”⁴⁴ In addition, farm labour would be provided to the developing commercial agricultural sector in Keetmanshoop. During one of his tours of the reserve, the superintendent noted that it was “the poorest ground I have ever seen.”⁴⁵ Despite the relatively large hectarage of the reserve, something which impressed the League of Nations, the reserve was useless for successful farming. The ground was too dry, too rocky. It was intended both as a labour reserve and as a panacea to the League, who was presently condemning the South African administration in the aftermath of the Bondelswarts Uprising (see Chapter four).

In the face of land alienation, in a legal and often material sense, during the German colonial period, many potential reserve residents welcomed their creation because they provided a space where stock accumulation could theoretically take place at a larger scale, and perhaps allow them to withdraw from waged labour in part or in whole. While wealth differentiation on the reserves (and “self-peasantisation”) did take place, economic development in these areas proved difficult because of poor soil, grass and water resources, increased grazing fees and borehole and fencing costs, and poor access to quality stud stock for breeding purposes and markets for sale.⁴⁶

Goats and sheep tended to dominate the livestock sector both within black reserves and white commercial farms. Cattle are more vulnerable to drought, and require more water to sustain themselves, therefore one is restricted to pasture within 15km of a reliable waterhole.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 15.

45 SWAA A.158/1 (v1): Superintendent Tses to Magistrate Keetmanshoop – 1 August 1924. Quoted in Kößler, “From Reserve to Homeland,” 15.

46 Silvester, “Black Pastoralists, White Farmers,” 88.

Goats, on the other hand, can travel twice as far without access to water.⁴⁷ Low and inconsistent rainfall necessitates either pastoral mobility or capital intensive water schemes. Small reserves and strict pass laws make successful small-stock farming near impossible. For these reasons, as will be shown in this chapter's next section, many black small-stock farmers opted to take some or all of their stock onto their employer's land receiving part or all of his wages in grazing access.⁴⁸ Alternatively, African small-stock farmers could pay for grazing access on crown lands; however, as Silvester points out, these unsettled lands grew more and more sparse as the South African Administration consolidated its hold on Southern Namibia.⁴⁹

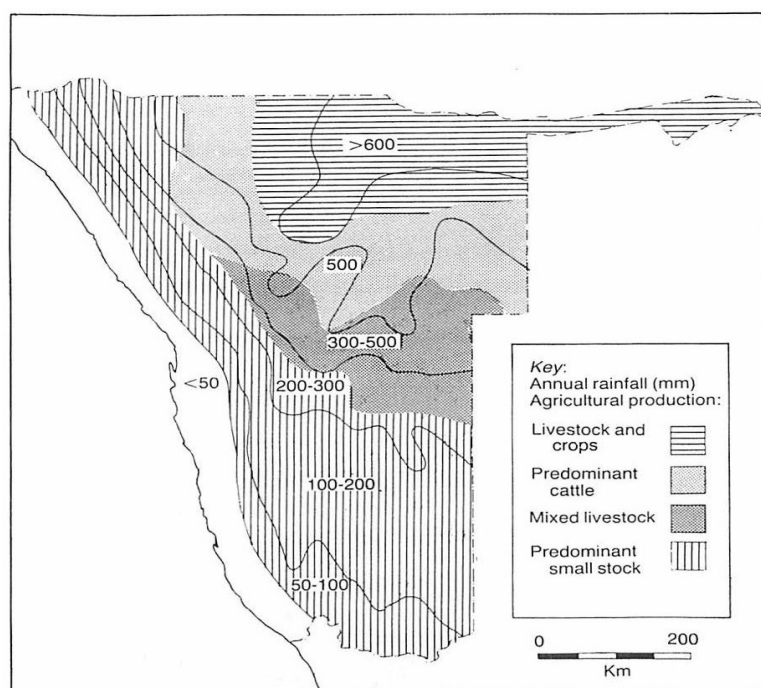


Figure Four: Rainfall Patterns and Agricultural Production in Namibia

For those farmers who wished to graze their stock within the reserve, they were still charged grazing fees for the quantity and type of stock they owned. These monthly fees varied

⁴⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁸ KFI 1 Folder 2: Minutes of Farming Industry Commission, Swakopmund, 14 December 1926. SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Assistant Native Commissioner, Windhoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek - "Farm Labour" - March 30, 1937. SWAA A.521/13 (v2): unsigned (likely Native Commissioner, Windhoek) - "Native Labour in South West Africa" - August 20, 1937.

⁴⁹ Silvester, "Black Pastoralists, White Farmers," 284.

depending on the year. In 1924, for example, large stock up to twenty five in number were charged twopence per head, and threepence for animals in excess of twenty five. Small stock were charged one-quarter pence per head up to one hundred stock, and a half-pence for those in excess of one hundred.⁵⁰ Consider then, the grazing fees for a farmer who has purchased his exemption certificate; let's say he has sixty sheep and five cattle, more than is required for exemption for waged labour. He pays 2/1d per month for his grazing fees, increasing if his stock numbers grow. In order to pay for these grazing fees, he must accumulate the cash in some way. Many with labour exemption certificates did occasionally work on farms doing odd-jobs or seasonal labour, especially during sheep shearing season.⁵¹ Many had family members who occasionally contributed funds from their waged labour activities. One had to often sell stock in order to pay for the fees; and with a roughly five-month gestation period, it is possible for a sheep farmer to still grow his stock numbers with sales of a few additional each year, this indeed cut into his stock accumulation rate. Some, in order to qualify for the lower grazing fee, informally distributed stock among friends and kin, keeping the numbers lower than the twenty-five or one hundred threshold.

Grazing fees were intended to be the main source of revenue for the Reserve Tribal Trust Funds, which were the instrument of “self-development” of the reserves. Tribal Trust Funds would pay for borehole drilling, fencing, irrigation works, combating stock disease, and other reserve “improvements.”⁵² While the trust funds were able to raise money, and occasionally conduct useful improvements to the reserve, they were subject to the contradiction that advances, subsidies, and low-interest loans were being offered to white settlers for the same infrastructural

50 Ibid., 50.

51 ADM 124 file 4672/5: Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Petition of Farmers and Inhabitants of Warmbad.” - 23 December 1917.

52 Kößler, “From Reserve to Homeland,” 18.

“improvements.” The colonial state rarely provided these same advances to the reserves.⁵³

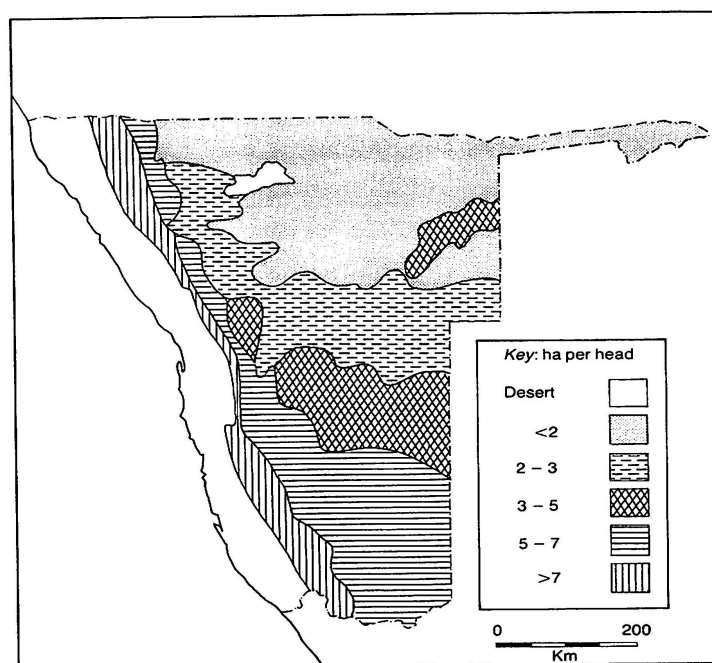


Figure Five: Carrying Capacity per Hectare for Small Stock

In short, the decision to create “self-sufficient” reserves in Southern Namibia derived from a dual desire to appease the League of Nations to prove that South African administration was bringing development to the indigenous population and to provide a labour reservoir to service nearby farms and to store excess livestock. The reserves were placed primarily on poor lands, irrespective of “tribal” concerns; the reserves were an economic creation, not cultural.

White Farmers Confront Labour Shortage

White farmers in Namibia had contradictory and schizophrenic views about so-called “Native Reserves”. Many viewed the reserves as havens for idlers and vagrants; this conception was held territory-wide, not just in the South. For example, in an anonymous editorial in the *Swakopmunder Zeitung* by a farmer in the Grootfontein district, the author noted that labour

⁵³ Ibid., 37-39.

shortages have made it possible for reserve residents to either subsist in the reserve completely on his own, or else they are able to take jobs in towns where the wages are higher. The farmer requested that there should be a law “empowering the magistrate – or better yet, forcing him – to send idle natives or those who have offended against the laws regarding passes to some farm for a definite period of time where they would have the opportunity of getting used to hard work.”⁵⁴ The author draws connections between supposed moral benefits of waged labour and the persistent farm labour shortage throughout the territory (see chapter four for further discussion).

In 1924, the Chief Native Commissioner at Windhoek requested that all district Magistrates report with regard to “idleness” in the Native Reserves. The reports came back showing few if any cases of able-bodied men “loafing”. In Gibeon reserve, for example, there was only one youth reported as unemployed. In the Bondels reserve, the number was not many more.⁵⁵ It was implied in these reports that grazing fees provide the economic necessity for farm labour, and most of the individuals of working age in the reserve are elderly, infirm, or in possession of exemption certificates.⁵⁶

A similar survey was conducted in 1937 by the Assistant Native Commissioner at Windhoek of Native Reserves throughout the territory. He critiques the idea that reserves are “full of idle able-bodied natives”, citing the following data regarding African employment.

Africans working in Urban Areas:	6,794
Africans working on Mines:	3,833
Africans working on Railways:	1,050
Africans working on Farms:	19,254
Africans working in other activities:	3,397
Africans residing in Reserves:	6,163 ⁵⁷

54 SWAA A.521/13 (v1): “Grootfontein” - *Swakopmunder Zeitung* (November 10, 1923).

55 SWAA A.158/2 (v1): Native Commissioner, Windhoek to All Magistrates – 25 October 1924. Quoted in Kößler, “From Reserve to Homeland,” 23.

56 Ibid.

57 SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Assistant Native Commissioner, Windhoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek - “Farm Labour” - March 30, 1937. These statistics only apply to Namibians from police zone districts, not Ovamboland, Caprivi, Kavango, and Angola (the so-called Extra-Territorial and Northern Natives).

Less than 15% of censused Africans were in reserves, and the number of unemployed would be even less, because many of that 15% are exemption holders or elderly. The Assistant Native Commissioner did, however, note that the farms suffer from a great deal of labour shortage, but it isn't because the reserves are a source of idleness. Especially by the 1930s, they functioned far more as a so-called “dual economy”.

Richard Moorsom and William Gervase Clarence-Smith, veteran scholars of Ovamboland (Northern Namibia), took steps to understand the economic dimensions of migrant labour, particularly that there was technically land allocated for potential subsistence use.⁵⁸ Central to their theoretical framework was the Althusserian concept of “articulation” often referred to in Africanist scholarship as a “dual economy.” According to Marxist anthropologist Maurice Bloch:

A mode of production for Althusser is therefore the construction of a system of internally 'articulated' structures working on each other but not all having the same power. By 'articulation' Althusser means a type of connection where what is joined does not consequently form a whole. The articulated elements remain fundamentally unchanged as if ready to detach themselves. The notion of articulation, therefore, stresses the idea of several elements whose different natures will lead to contradiction and therefore revolutionary change.⁵⁹

In other words, those who espoused Althusser's concept of articulation believed that capitalist expansion into non-capitalist areas should not be treated as some all-encompassing process, but rather one that is somewhat disjointed, with pre-capitalist or non-capitalist social formations taking precedence at some points, and giving way at others. Similar concepts have been crucial to understanding slavery in a Marxian context. Various modes of production engage with each other, though not on equal footing.

While Ovamboland and the Police-Zone Native Reserves are functionally different

58 William Gervase Clarence-Smith & Richard Moorsom, “Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Ovamboland,” *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 3 (1975), 365-381. Reprinted in Richard Moorsom, *Underdevelopment and Labour Migration: The Contract Labour System in Namibia* (Bergen: Christian Michelsen Institute, 1997), 1-13.

59 Maurice Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology: The History of A Relationship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 154.

geographical entities – the Ovambo did not need “exemption” to remain there, though they were taxed to create incentives for migrant labour – we can use this example to understand the reserves in relation to wages. Wolfgang Werner aptly points out the quandary many farmers faced:

White farmers found themselves in a contradictory position. In the first place they demanded the abolition of reserves because the reserves allegedly provided an important alternative to wage labour. Yet the continued ownership of stock by black labourers was essential for capital accumulation to take place in settler agriculture as this enabled white farmers to pay their labour below the cost of its reproduction.⁶⁰

The reserves were only desirable to farmers if residents could be kept poor enough that the entire family could not subsist on the reserve resources alone. Taxes, grazing fees, compulsory anti-scab sheep dipping measures, lack of fencing, poor water resources, overgrazing regulations, insufficient tribal trust funds, etc. – all of these were necessary to keep reserves such that they fulfilled farmers demands for labour without becoming a site of livestock accumulation.

Farmers in Southern Namibia faced constant labour shortages throughout the first few decades of South African rule. Part of the reason for this was demographic, some districts simply did not have a large enough labour pool, whether “free” in the Marxian sense or not. Maltahöhe, for example, was the district which faced the largest shortages. Bordering the Namib desert on its western side, the district is huge, and a good distance from rail lines, making importing workers from elsewhere very difficult. In addition, the farmers were often too poor to pay wages in cash, often resorting to giving poor quality goats and sheep as payment. Furthermore, the Native Reserve “Neuhof” was incredibly small and only held a few dozen families.

Farmers constantly wrote to the Magistrate asking if he could provide labour for them. The Magistrate routinely turned down applicants, and he constantly had over 100 pending applications for native labour.⁶¹ The Maltahöhe district was very early in petitioning for labour to

⁶⁰ Werner, *Economy and Society*, 101.

⁶¹ LMA 3/1/17 file no. 19/1919: Scarcity of Native Labour in Maltahöhe District – March 1919. LMA 3/1/17 file

be imported from Ovamboland to work for some of the wealthier farmers who began to adopt karakul as their main small-stock.⁶² Some farmers even petitioned to bring in Zulu workers from Natal with their families to settle permanently in Maltahöhe district.⁶³ In their letter to the Magistrate requesting import of workers from the Union, the Maltahöhe Farmwirtschaftliche Vereinigung noted that

the shortage of labour in this district is most acute in view of the fact that we are on the edge of the desert and the natives furthermore have no hoofstad here such as is the case with other districts. Farmers have to herd their small stock personally and perform all other manual labour.⁶⁴

The most common reason for farmers being unable to get the labour they require was economic. Farm wages were simply not high enough, and they were oftentimes non-existent. In their complaints to the Magistrate at Warmbad, the Bondelswarts leadership noted that many of the Bondels refused to work for farmers on grounds that they are not paid in cash, but in kind and in “good-fors.”⁶⁵ Farmers settled early on in the Land Settlement Programme of the 1920s often possessed little capital for farm improvements or to pay even subsistence wages. For this reason, they relied heavily on advertising grazing rights as a way to attract workers. Because the land on which the reserves were placed was often bad quality, finding adequate grazing was a difficult task; and if one had a large enough flock, reserve grazing fees could prove inhibitive. Many Namibian stock-owners chose to graze their flocks on their employer's land, as part of, or in addition to a salary of wages and rations.⁶⁶ During the 1926 Farming Industry Commission,

no. 19/1919: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Farmer W. Kurschner - “Application for Native Labour” - 8 March 1919.

62 LMA 3/1/17 file no. 19/1919: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Scarcity of Native Labour in Maltahöhe District” - 21 February 1919.

63 LMA 3/1/17 file no. 19/1919: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Application for Zulu Labour: Mr. C.O. Westphal” - 27 November 1919. LMA 3/1/17 file no. 19/1919: Secretary for S.W.A. to Magistrate Maltahöhe - 8 December 1919.

64 LMA 3/1/17 file no. 19/1919: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Application for Native Labour from the Union” - 30 July 1919. LMA 3/1/17 file no. 19/1919: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Farm Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung Maltahöhe - “Importation of Native Labour from the Union” - 21 August 1919.

65 SWAA A.521/12: Extract from Minute no. 2/2/9 from Magistrate, Warmbad, to Native Commissioner, re: Inspection of Bondels Reserve. October 12, 1928.

66 KFI 1 Folder 2: Minutes of Farming Industry Commission, Swakopmund, 14 December 1926.

many participants felt that the practice of allowing grazing divided the white farming community because with such a labour shortage, Africans could choose employers based on the incentive of grazing access. Those unwilling or unable to provide grazing would find themselves with even fewer labourers.⁶⁷

For those employers who were able to pay cash wages, the amounts were atrociously low. A survey taken by the district magistrates and relayed to the Secretary for the Protectorate gave the following 1934 average monthly wages for adults and “piccanins” – those who were either first year contract workers or children – (F) implies that food rations were in addition to wages.⁶⁸

<u>District</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Piccanins</u>
Aroab	10/- F	5/- F
Bethanie	10/- F	5/- F
Gibeon ⁶⁹	10/- F	7/6d F
Gobabis	(5/- to 10/- F)	
Grootfontein	(3/- to 5/-)	
Karibib	(5/- to 15/-)	
Keetmanshoop	10/- F	5/- F
Lüderitz ⁷⁰	(12/- F)	
Maltahöhe ⁷¹	10/- F	7/6d F
Okahandja	(6/- to 8/-)	
Omaruru	(5/- to 15/-)	
Otjiwarongo	(varies, as low as 5/-)	
Outjo	(5/- to 15/-)	
Rehoboth	10/- to 20/-	4/- to 10/-
Swakopmund ⁷²	(15/- to 20/- F)	
Warmbad	(5/- to 10/- F)	
Windhoek	(8/- to 12/-)	

The Secretary noted that these wages fell in real purchasing power terms since the previous decade. He also noted that the “failure to pay reasonable wages by farmers encourages stock

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Secretary for S.W.A to Administrator, Windhoek - “Native Labour” - October 25, 1934). No data is provided for Tsumeb district.

⁶⁹ These numbers for Gibeon imply “higher class” farmers. Lower class farmers often just pay with a goat and some food.

⁷⁰ Wages were occasionally reported as high as £1-2 plus food. This is likely in the urban industries, not on the farms in Lüderitz district.

⁷¹ These numbers for Maltahöhe imply “higher class” farmers. Lower class farmers often just pay with a goat and some food.

⁷² Also estimated as 1/3d to 1/6d per day, likely for urban industry, not farms.

theft and removes any incentive to progress in the native.”⁷³ In addition, the Assistant Native Commissioner noted that when grazing fees, food, and taxes are factored in, very little wage remains at the end of the year. Many native labourers fall into debt with their employers. Furthermore, many farmers held the shepherds financially responsible for stock lost during herding. Many Africans resented the corporal punishment that regularly occurred on the farms.⁷⁴

Black Namibians were willing to take up work on white-owned farms at specific times for specific reasons. Being able to use the farmer's land as a location for surplus stock was indeed an incentive to counter to poor carrying capacity of the Native Reserves in Southern Namibia. With increasing grazing fees and stagnating wages due to drought from the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s, Africans found farm labour less effective towards a “self-peasantisation” strategy. In addition, farmers in Southern Namibia took to the Karakul sheep industry in the 1930s en masse, which changed the whole dynamics of labour in the region.

Karakul Sheep and Labour Implications

Karakul sheep were first imported from Central Asia in 1907 by farmer Theodor Thorer, to conduct experiments on the flocks viability in the SWA climate.⁷⁵ Until the mid-1920s, the number of sheep remained low, though farmers were beginning to realise that the Karakul were able to thrive in the drier climates of Southern Namibia. This proved crucial to settler agriculture in Southern Namibia for a few reasons. First, reflecting its heritage in Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, the Karakul is a heartier breed of sheep able to more easily withstand drought and lack of water access. Indeed, after the drought of the late 1920s, many white farmers saw that

73 SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Secretary for S.W.A to Administrator, Windhoek - “Native Labour” - October 25, 1934).

74 SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Assistant Native Commissioner, Windhoek to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek - “Farm Labour” - March 30, 1937.

75 Karl Walter Spitzner & Heinrich Schäfer, *Die Karakulzucht in Südwestafrika und das Haus Thorer* (Cape Town & Giessen: ABC Druckerei, 1962).

Karakul were among the sheep least affected, and they chose to invest.

Second, Karakul are bred for their pelts, not for meat or wool. This is crucial because the main profits come from slaughtering lambs within 24 hours of birth (or even within the ewe's womb) because the skin is softest.⁷⁶ Because the profit is derived less from access to grazing and more through innovations in breeding techniques, jackal predation is less of a threat. Furthermore, stud rams for breeding purposes are nearly unaffordable without state subsidies or loans; the average cost for breeding stock in 1934 was £15 per ram.⁷⁷ For these reasons, to this day, the pelt industry is a predominately white-owned industry.

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Sheep</i>
1907	12
1913	22 698
1926	106 155
1929	230 700
1936	1 471 132
1938	2 146 400
1943	3 183 000
1950	3 526 723
1960	3 213 810
1970	4 572 794
1976	3 450 050
1980	3 730 100
1983	1 200 000
1987	1 400 000

Table One: Growth of Karakul Sheep in Namibia

White settlers were able to tap into state subsidies and advances to grow their flocks. Mr. Van der Merwe of Warmbad district was able to get loans from the SWA Land Bank to purchase 250 Karakul Ewes for breeding.⁷⁸ These loans were easily paid back because lamb pelts brought in between 18/6d and 19/6d each during the 1930s, and each ewe could have more than one

76 See A.D. Thompson (Senior Karakul Inspector), *Karakul Sheep: Government Flock and the Industry in South West Africa* (Windhoek: South West Africa Agricultural Branch, 1938).

77 Silvester, "Black Pastoralists, White Farmers," 277.

78 LAN 11 file 15 (v4): Land Inspector to Magistrate Warmbad - 25 May 1937. Cited in Silvester, "Black Pastoralists, White Farmers," 277.

lambling per season, because she was not rearing the now-slaughtered young. Farmers also can profit from shearing of the Karakul ewes and rams kept for breeding purposes. While grown sheep have more coarse and short fibres, these can still be used to make carpets, rugs, and blankets.⁷⁹ It should be reiterated, however, that the bulk of a karakul farmer's profits come from the sale of lambskins.



Figure Six: Karakul Sheep, with Lamb and Farm Worker

Karakul thrived in the Southern Districts of Keetmanshoop and Karasburg (the centres of Karakul distribution), as well as Bethanie, Maltahöhe and Gibeon/Mariental, with some success also in Aroab, Windhoek and Outjo. These farmers were able to tap into the fur industry in Copenhagen and Leipzig, advertising Namibian Karakul by the trademark “Swakara.”⁸⁰ By 1946,

⁷⁹ Thompson, *Karakul Sheep*, 15.

⁸⁰ See the many advertisements featuring international fashion models in the *South West Africa Annual*, published

according to Werner, Karakul pelts reached over 54% of total agricultural production in South West Africa.⁸¹ Observe the growth of Karakul above in Figure Six.



Figure Seven: Karakul Pelt Stretched on a Drying Frame, c. 1949

With uncertain rainfall, Karakul became the mainstay of the Southern agricultural industry, and it was largely a white-only business. Increased profits from Karakul production also enabled the industry to take part in the contract labour industry, bringing workers from Ovamboland, Kavangoland, and Angola, gradually displacing the need for local labour. Over the course of the 1930s, the Karakul industry began to take larger and larger shares of the Ovambo migrant labour workforce. Throughout the mid-1930s, between 60-80% of all migrant workers recruited by the Northern Labour Organisation were directed to farms.⁸² Mr. Friedrich of the

each year featuring articles and statistics on various industries in SWA.

81 Werner, *Economy and Society*, 175.

82 SWAA A.521/13 (v2): unsigned (likely Native Commissioner, Windhoek) - "Native Labour in South West Africa" - August 20, 1937.

Persianer-Verkaufsgesellschaft offered £1000 to buy a share in the NLO recruiting firm; his offer, though it was refused, would have made the Karakul industry the only non-mining sector involved in the recruitment of migrant workers.⁸³

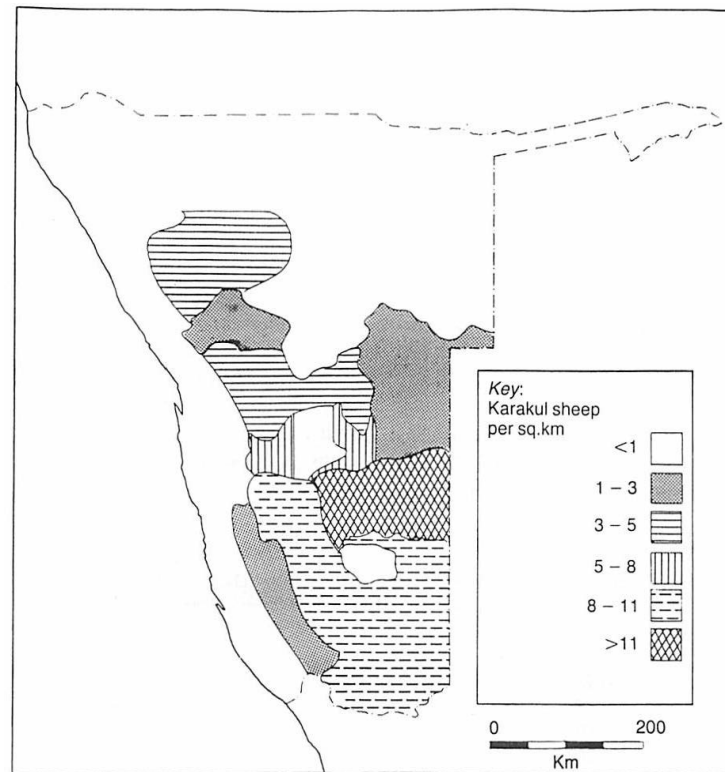


Figure Eight: Distribution of Karakul Sheep in Namibia

Conclusion

By the mid 1930s, while labour issues were still occasionally prevalent, white farmers had effectively proletarianised the local population in the South *and* tapped into the migrant labour from the North. The reason for the success of the white commercial farming industry has to do largely with subsidies and low interest loans: towards fencing, dwellings, borehole drilling, purchasing of breeding stock, veterinary care and access to land. The most important subsidies, however, came in the form of removing competition with black Namibian farmers and shepherds

83 SWAAA.521/13 (v2): Minutes from Naturelle Arbeidskonferensie. Windhoek - August 24 1937.

– who had recently reclaimed a large degree of self-sufficiency – by creating “Native Reserves,” enforcing grazing fees and other taxes, necessitating obtaining labour exemption certificates; all of these contributed to pulling black Namibians into waged labour relations. The next section will explore environmental trajectories in the region to contextualise these labour developments and lead us to a discussion of the hated dog tax.

This chapter serves to provide a parallel, yet intersecting narrative to the previous chapter on land settlement and labour shortages. In order to fully understand the severity of the dog tax and the ways in which it functioned as primitive accumulation – drawing black Namibians into waged labour relations – we must not only consider political and economic considerations. Transformations in the relationship Namibians (black and white) had with the environment – in this case, fauna – played a significant role in compounding these political developments. This chapter puts forth the argument that the importance of dogs in the labour process can be traced to increasing jackal and vermin numbers during the late pre-colonial and early colonial periods.

Changes in hunting practices, compounded by white colonial settlement (as illustrated in the previous chapter) radically changed the nature of “meat” on the veld, transposing springbok for fenced sheep. If farmers were to succeed in controlling the rapidly increasing jackal numbers – which severely cut into livestock numbers – they must either obtain state subsidies toward jackal-proof fencing and poisons, or else they must utilise dogs to hunt vermin. Selective enforcement of taxes and subsidies severely constrained the ability of black Namibians to protect their livestock from vermin attacks. The Dog Tax (the subject of the subsequent chapter) further compounded these difficulties. Ecological and environmental concerns such as rainfall, carrying capacity, and fencing strategies are considered, as well as methods by which dogs are trained to hunt jackals and other vermin.

Pre-Colonial Hunting in Southern Namibia: Travellers' Accounts

When the elephants had returned to the forest the Hottentots [sic] tried to get them out again by means of fire, but they let the fire get right up to them and even came to the edge of the forest, but go out of it, into the open, that they would not; and now the Hottentots realised that there was no further hope of hunting with assegais. Then the

Hottentot, Claas Barend, taking the small gun, at 21 yards range shot an elephant cow behind the shoulder. The cow gave a bellow and immediately one heard the crash of breaking trees; for, as the cow bellowed, the bull with a mighty trumpeting charged the Hottentot, who would without doubt have been caught if the dogs had not come in between them.

The dogs of the Bushmen are small in build and have not enough voice to bark properly, but they are the source of profit by which their masters live. The masters have only to find the spoor of a young gemsbuck or a young hartebeest calf, etc., and with the help of these dogs – for they are trained to it – they are able to catch the calves.

The 'naäs' or aardwolf is the animal most commonly caught with the help of these dogs, which, in my opinion, are almost equal to the greyhound in quickness and speed.¹

Hendrik Jacob Wikar was a Swedish soldier, employed by the Dutch East India company between 1773-1775, when he deserted his employers in Cape Town because some less-than-reputable individuals were harassing him to pay back his debts. He fled north, eventually arriving at the Orange River, then known simply as the Groote River, and his journal provides one of the oldest examples of flora, fauna, and culture in what is today the ||Karas Region of Namibia and Namaqualand, South Africa.

First and foremost, game is shown to be much more prevalent in Namaqualand during Wikar's time than today. Drought, changing rainfall patterns, and colonial hunting wreaked havoc on both large and small fauna in the region. Indeed, Christo Botha has noted that during the German occupation of Namibia, game in Southern Namibia was nearly hunted to extinction.² Rhinoceros, Elephant, Hippopotamus, Buffalo, Kudu, Giraffe, Hartebeest and other fauna and mega-fauna eventually classified by the South West Africa government as “Royal Game”³ are common antagonists in his narrative.

1 *The Journal of Hendrik Jacob Wikar (1779)*, edited by E.E. Mossop (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1935), 45-7.

2 Christo Botha, “The Emergence of Commercial Ranching under State Control and the Encapsulation of Pastoralism in African Reserves,” in *Pastoralism in Africa: Past, Present and Future*, edited by Michael Bollig, Michael Schnegg & Hans-Peter Wotzka (Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), 230-56.

3 SWAA A.205-3: Game Preservation Proclamation 1921.

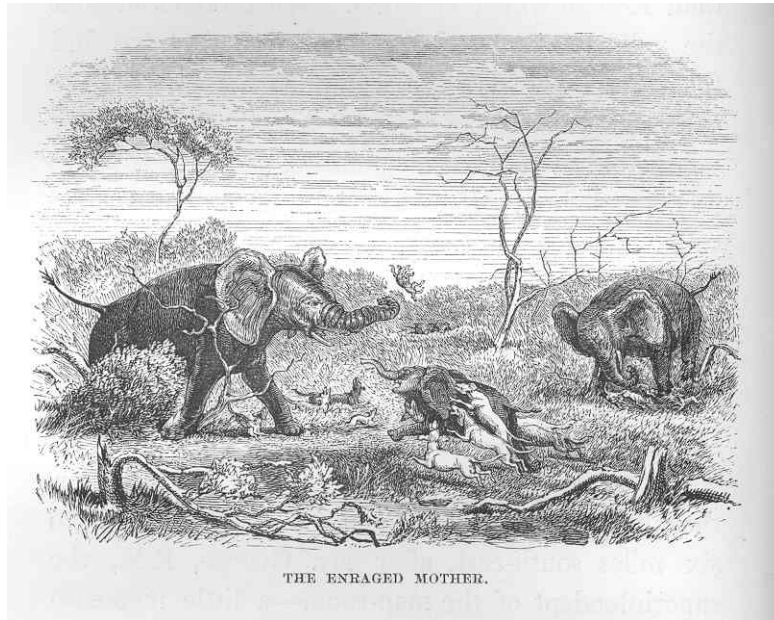


Figure Nine: Thomas Baines, “The Enraged Mother” - Lithograph

Second, Wikar shows that hunting plays a major role in Nama life during this time period. The division between pastoral activities and hunting activities are much more flexible than traditional *volkekunde* studies would lead us to believe. While it is clear that dogs were primarily used for protection of sheep, cattle, and goats, dogs were also regularly used for catching small game, such as springbok and the young of other game like kudu, hartebeest, and even elephant (as the above passage illustrates). Wikar shows us that Nama hunting practices were very organic. For example, many game are killed with poisoned arrows, dipped ordinarily in Euphorbia sap (or even in honey made from bees sucking from the Euphorbia flowers).⁴ Others are killed by poisoning specific designated waterholes. Others are attacked with assegais [spears], or they are trapped in pits. Dogs are part and parcel of this process, rounding up game and keeping it within range of spears and arrows, and if the game is small enough, the dogs themselves will make the kill.

⁴ Hendrik Jacob Wikar, 181-3.

In addition, it is clear that a degree of reciprocity and collaboration exists between the Nama and the so-called Bushmen. Wikar's journal gives many instances of hunting collaboration, sharing of food, what he terms a "symbiotic partnership."⁵ In addition, pastoral shepherding activities were taken up by both groups.⁶

In a slightly earlier, but less exciting account, the German cartographer Carel Frederik Brink described similar observations during his trip to Warmbad in 1761-2. He wrote of vast quantities of game, particularly giraffe in the vicinity of Warmbad, then known as Nisbett's Bath.⁷ He also notes the existence of wild horses, and quaggas – eventually deemed extinct in 1883.⁸

In his account of his 1839-55 missionary accounts in Southern Namibia, Joseph Tindall provides a slightly more long-term account of the Nama's engagement with flora and fauna.⁹ Vermin feature prominently in his narrative and he notes that lions, jackals, and hyena constantly preyed on sheep in the settlements.¹⁰ Furthermore, Tindall spends a great deal of time admiring the varied ways by which the Nama and Damara would hunt, particularly the use of pits and traps.¹¹

One of the more interesting pre-colonial accounts of Southern Namibia is that of the Swedish naturalist Gustaf De Vylder, who travelled in Southern Africa from 1873 to 1875 collecting plant and animal specimens.¹² He spends a great deal of time describing how useful dogs were to protect against jackals, hyenas, lions and other vermin. He describes one instance,

5 Ibid., 221.

6 Ibid., 39.

7 *The Journals of Brink & Rhenius*, edited by E.E. Mossop (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1947), 33.

8 Ibid., 49.

9 *The Journal of Joseph Tindall: Missionary in South West Africa*, edited by B.A. Tindall (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1959).

10 Ibid., 30.

11 Ibid., 59.

12 *The Journal of Gustaf De Vylder: Naturalist in South-Western Africa*, edited by Ione Rudner & Jalmar Rudner (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1997).

near Hierachabis, in detail:

. . . two black jackals jumped out from some bushes quite close to the wagon. . . I at once grabbed my gun and pursued them, followed by the dogs of Mr. Peter and Mr. Fritz; in less than two minutes the male was caught while the female that was being chased by Mr. Fritz's dog got away. The jackal that was bitten first by Mr. Peter's dog should according to the custom of the country, belong to him, but he was kind enough to give it to me as I had been hunting it. . . The people here eat it as a delicacy and of course I gave it to the Hottentots [sic] after I had removed and preserved the skin. In the evening when our men had prepared the jackal, they brought me a piece of it and asked whether I wished to taste it as they knew that I liked to try everything used by the people. I found the jackal flesh to be excellent eating; next to porcupine it was the best game that I had eaten in Africa.¹³

Furthermore, De Vylder notes that the dogs were kept near the wagons and the small-stock at night, to protect against Hyenas.¹⁴ Dogs were also useful in hunting “tigers” (in actuality, likely Rooikats); I will quote again at length:

I caught sight of two 'tigers' (felines), as large as calves, among the bushes and twenty paces from where I was lying, and then crossing the river. I called some Hottentots [sic] who were camped next to us to accompany me with guns and dogs and, in less time than it takes to tell this, we marched out of the camp, eleven men and six big dogs that had more than once measured their strength against a leopard. . . . I suggested that the people form a long line with enough distance between each man so that they could see each other and an animal could not pass between them without coming within range. . . The dogs here are very brave and fight with, and often kill, the animal before the hunter can shoot it, but they do not follow spoor. The hunter must himself flush out the animal as the dogs do not attack until they see the beast.¹⁵

De Vylder also noted that dogs were especially useful in catching smaller game, such as springbok.¹⁶

In addition, many more recent accounts by social anthropologists and *volkekundiges*,¹⁷ observed during the German and early South African colonial period noted the importance of dogs in Nama life. The missionary and amateur ethnographer Heinrich Vedder noted, in a style containing both insight and racism common of the period, that “The dog, however useful as

13 Ibid., 60-1.

14 Ibid., 63.

15 Ibid., 50.

16 Ibid., 71.

17 For more on the distinction between social anthropology and the German/Afrikaans *volkekunde* ethnographic tradition, see Robert J. Gordon, “Apartheid's Anthropologists: The Genealogy of Afrikaner Anthropology,” *American Ethnologist* 15, no. 3 (1988), 535-553. See also, John S. Sharp, “The Roots and Development of Volkekunde in South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (1981), 16-36.

watching over the house and assistant in the hunt, is never cared for properly.”¹⁸

In the 1930s, Epstein published a similar *volkekunde* piece on Nama culture and history, and, comparable to Vedder, was able to present some crucial insights about the Nama while still falling back on racialised preconceptions.¹⁹ It is worthwhile to quote at length:

In the protection of the herds and flocks from wild animals, especially jackals, the Hottentots [sic] were assisted by their dogs which were extremely watchful and gave immediate warning of the approach of strangers or beasts of prey by loud barking. By means of milk, the Hottentots familiarised the shy animals with the herds; and with their own persons by carrying a piece of raw meat for a few days in their veldshoes, afterwards giving it to the dog or by applying sweat from their armpits to the dog's nostrils . . . In general, however, dogs were never cared for properly and much less valued by the Hottentots than among Bantu peoples who are extremely fond of dogs.²⁰

The passages which we have read throughout this section allow us to draw a few conclusions about game, dogs, and hunting in pre-colonial Namibia. First, game numbers were still very high in Southern Namibia. While we must be wary to take as complete truth the often exaggerated accounts of travellers to the region, the similarities between accounts in the late eighteenth century lead us to believe that fauna and mega-fauna were more widespread than even a few decades later (see next section). Second, dogs were present among both travellers and residents, and their usefulness for protecting livestock was widely acknowledged. It was also shown that dogs played a role in hunting practices. Dogs were capable both of taking down small game and the young, but they also were useful in corralling and directing game to fall into traps or to get close enough to allow for men to use spears or guns. As the following section will show, changing mercantile capitalist relations linked Southern and Central Namibia to Cape Town and beyond, radically changing hunting from a largely subsistence-based activity to a heavily capitalised one deriving its profit from killing for specific markets, not for use. We must first

18 Heinrich Vedder, “The Nama”, in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (Cape Town: Cape Times Ltd., 1923), 127.

19 H. Epstein, “Animal Husbandry of the Hottentots,” *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry* 9, no. 2 (1937), 631-666.

20 *Ibid.*, 654.

begin with the Oorlam and their role in this transformation.

The Evolution of Hunting in Pre-Colonial Namibia: The Oorlam

Much of the archival documentation on hunting in Namibia exhibits a declensionist narrative: irresponsible hunting practices on the part of black Namibians in reserves and white hunting parties were deemed responsible for declining game numbers in the territory.²¹ It is worthwhile to note, however, that a large number of these sources do reference changing rain patterns as part of the problem as well, resulting in shifting game laws and numbers of licences to be issued each year, depending on how the rains fell. Warmbad district, for example, restricted hunting within each borders to some degree each year; either few licences were to be issued, or certain species were off-limits.²²

What many historians and observers have failed to recognise, according to Brigitte Lau, is that game destruction was tied to emerging mercantile capitalist networks connecting Southern Namibia to Cape Town and beyond. The migration of Oorlam kommando groups into Namibia from South Africa in the first half of the Nineteenth Century transformed the regional economy drastically. According to Brigitte Lau:

By the late eighteenth century, the expansion of trade and agriculture in the Cape had caused the break-up of many Khoi communities, who lost their stock to whites and were forced to work for them. It was in this violent frontier environment that 'commando' bands for hunting, trading and raiding were formed by people known as Oorlams: Khoi who had adopted elements of Boer culture and technology. Most Oorlams had been baptized, spoke Dutch, were monogamous, wore European-style clothing, were skilled in the use and maintenance of guns and ox-wagons, and held property privately. The men had worked for Dutch farmers in various capacities, and several who had been scouts or guides had been given guns and ammunition. Some families managed to accumulate arms and livestock,

21 SWAA A.205-6: Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Shooting Springbok" - June 27, 1922. SWAA A.205/12/1: Secretary for S.W.A to Additional Native Commissioner, Windhoek - "Poaching in Tses and Berseba Native Reserves" - April 5, 1939. SWAA A.205/12/1: Magistrate Warmbad to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek - "Poaching in Bondels Reserve" - April 19, 1939.

22 SWAA A.205/15 (v1): Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Game Licences" - April 13, 1929. The Magistrate was actually threatened to be sacked for refusing to issue hunting licences without writing to the Secretary of the Protectorate beforehand.

including horses, to the point at which they were able to break away from their masters and gather their own followings.²³



Figure Ten: Thomas Baines, “Rhenish Mission Church at Gobabis, 1861”

These highly mobile, decentralised, armed kommandos of 10-50 men on horseback, raided cattle and other livestock to solidify their position of power, also revealing the necessity of the expanding and dynamic Cape trading network for maintenance of Oorlam hegemony.²⁴

While cattle raiding solidified Oorlam dominance in central Namibia, particularly for those affiliated with the Afrikaners,²⁵ hunting was equally transformed. Lau notes that pre-Oorlam hunting in Southern Namibia was largely for use-value, for consumption or for protection of livestock. This was radically transformed as the local hunting economies became gradually integrated into Cape mercantile networks. For example, Lau notes an elephant hunting

23 Brigitte Lau, “Conflict and Power in Nineteenth Century Namibia,” *Journal of African History* 27 (1986), 29.

24 Brigitte Lau, *Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time* (Windhoek: National Archives, 1987), 41.

25 This should not be confused with those also known as Boers. The Afrikaners were one sub-group of Oorlam, led by Jager, Jonker, and Jan Jonker Afrikaner. They eventually founded what is today Windhoek. See, for example, Wolfram Hartmann, “Windhoek: The Colonial Urban Space,” in *Hues Between Black and White: Historical Photography from Colonial Namibia, 1860-1915*, edited by Wolfram Hartmann (Windhoek: Out of Africa, 2004), 27-31.

expedition by Amraal's Oorlam kommando in the Gobabis district in 1863:

The commando went into the field with 50 riders on horseback and spare horses, more than 20 ox wagons (i.e. at least 240-320 oxen to be fed, watered and herded!), and was accompanied by 'a large number of Damaras' (as servants, guides, drivers or messengers). Two weeks before they returned, a trader arrived in order to 'sell his power and case in the people's debts'. He left Gobabis with 6,000 lbs of ivory altogether.²⁶

Large-scale hunting expeditions like these and others required a great deal of capitalisation. Traders and financiers invested heavily in these Oorlam endeavours, providing advances in kind, such as weapons, gunpowder, livestock, porters, etc.²⁷ The ivory, skins, feathers, etc., would eventually make their way to the Cape Province and beyond.

The Swede Gustaf De Vylder was travelling through Central Namibia during this crucial period of Oorlam hegemony. He notes regarding hunting near Okakarara:

The supply of game is really surprising when you consider how it has been mismanaged. You can hardly call this hunting, it is a war of extermination. Here ostriches and elephants are killed in their thousands every year, their carcasses are food for the carnivores, only the tusks and feathers are used.²⁸

De Vylder moves on to describe the process by which Ostriches are systematically hunted on horseback, taking feathers, wings, and eggs. In addition, elephant calves are regularly slaughtered for their small tusks as well. This sort of hunting has little to do with consumptive motives. This is mercantile capitalism making its way into Southern and Central Namibia, changing hunting practices to meet Cape market demands, bringing about environmental change with it.

It is undoubtedly true that colonial hunting laws, game preservation regulations, settler hunting practices, and other aspects contributed heavily towards destruction of game in Southern Namibia. However, we must understand that the structural forces bringing this about were active

26 Lau, *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time*, 45.

27 Brigitte Lau, "The Emergence of Kommando Politics in Southern Namibia, 1800-1870," Unpublished M.A. Thesis (University of Cape Town, 1982), 103

28 *Gustaf De Vylder*, 138. It should be noted that he calls the area "Kockarra". Based on the geographical and ethnographic context, he is likely referring to modern-day Okakarara in Otjozondjupa Region, but it's vague.

before formal colonisation and large scale white settlement. One could argue that Oorlam raiding and hunting practices paved the way for establishment of colonial concessionary companies and associations in the region;²⁹ indeed, Brigitte Lau noted that these traders gradually moved from being suppliers for the Oorlam to “extractors and exploiters” of the resources themselves.³⁰

Similar arguments have been made in reference to colonial Kenya during the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Steinhart notes that by the end of the 19th Century, Kamba hunting expeditions became more and more centralised and focused on extraction of ivory, rather than for food or consumptive activities. These caravans would link to merchants in Mombasa, and the ivory would be sold for cattle, firearms, and other commodities.³¹ In addition, as hunting expeditions grew in size and scale, more sophisticated organisation of labour was required, from porters to hunters to middlemen; wage labour was gradually integrated into “traditional” hunting practices. Similar processes occurred throughout Southern and Central Namibia, as some of the passages above imply; the decrease in game numbers, and subsequent increase in white settlement, led to a more complicated symbiotic relationship between dogs and jackals in African agro-pastoral life.

Jackals & Colonial Fencing

As was shown in the previous chapter, while German rule in Southern Namibia took a severe toll on the lives and livelihoods of the Nama and others, white settlement in the region was rather sparse at the time. Dispossession of the Nama from their lands did take place at large scales, but a great deal of it was turned into crown lands, which could still be grazed by those

29 See Brian T. Mokopakgosi, “Conflict and Collaboration in South-Eastern Namibia: Missionaries, Concessionaires and the Nama’s War Against German Imperialism, 188-1908,” in *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder*, edited by J.F. Ade Ajayi (London: Longman, 1992), 185-196.

30 Lau, *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner’s Time*, 143.

31 Edward I. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 54-5.

willing and able to pay grazing fees. Efforts to attract German settlement in the region ended with the First World War and the beginning of South African rule.³² The limited settlement, which was eventually expanded through the Land Settlement Programme by bringing in capital-poor white settlers from South Africa – those who were eventually the subject of the 1932 Carnegie Commission on the “poor white” problem³³ – changed the ecological conditions significantly in several ways.

Despite the widespread destruction of game in the late pre-colonial and early colonial periods, the number of animals (in the abstract, quantitative sense) in Southern Namibian districts increased rapidly during this period. The Land Settlement Programme of the 1920s provided massive subsidies and low-interest loans to white settlers coming from the poorer districts in the Northern Cape such as Gordonia district. Much of these subsidies went towards purchase of stud stock for breeding purposes, as well as just for general small-stock increases. For example, the lessee of “Plattfontein” farm in the Maltahöhe district arrived in 1923 with only thirteen sheep; with financial advances from the South West Africa Land Bank, he quickly acquired another four-hundred.³⁴ Countless other poor white settlers from South Africa followed suit.

32 For more on German settlers and less-than-successful state measures to bring in “proper” Germans to DSWA, see Robbie Aitken, “The Enemy Within: Gradations of Whiteness In German South West Africa,” Basler Afrika Bibliographien: Working Paper no. 4 (2005). Robbie Aitken, *Exclusion and Inclusion: Gradations of Whiteness and Socio-Economic Engineering in German South West Africa, 1884-1914* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007). Also see, Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham: Duke, 2001). And Daniel J. Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Namibia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002).

33 See Jeremy Silvester, “Black Pastoralists, White Farmers: The Dynamics of Land Dispossession and Labour Recruitment in Southern Namibia,” Unpublished Dissertation (University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1993), 228.

34 Jeremy Silvester, “Beasts, Boundaries & Buildings: The Survival & Creation of Pastoral Economies in Southern Namibia, 1915-1935,” in *Namibia Under South African Rule: Mobility & Containment, 1915-46*, edited by Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace & Wolfram Hartmann (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 109.



Figure Eleven: Black-Backed Jackal

In addition, the Land Bank provided advances to build homes, sheep dipping tanks, and most importantly, fencing.³⁵ Part of the heavy emphasis on fencing dealt with competition for grazing between game and livestock.³⁶ Farmers constantly petitioned for discounted or free hunting licences for the purpose of killing game which were tramping the veld, making it more difficult to graze livestock. For example, Mr. H. Paulsmeier of Hauchabfontein farm, Maltahöhe district, wrote to the secretary requesting permission to hunt Royal Game gratis because of the estimated five-hundred zebra which tramp out his grasses and drink from his water sources.³⁷ He

35 KFI 1 Folder 2: Minutes of Farming Industry Commission, Swakopmund, 18 December 1926.

36 SWAA A.205/12 (v1): Post Commander SWA Police, Karibib to Magistrate Karibib - "Destruction of Kudus: Omasema Reserve" - October 24, 1927. SWAA A.205-1: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Game Licences" - March 27, 1920. SWAA A.205/1 (Part IV): Magistrate Aroab to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Game Season 1924" - April 16, 1924. SWAA A.205/15 (v1): Magistrate Outjo to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Game - Restrictions Season 1928" - February 1, 1928. SWAA A.205-3: Hans Kisker, Farmwirtschaftsgesellschaft für S.W.A to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Damage done by Enormous herds of Game." - February 5 1921. SWAA A.205-3: Albert Rosenthal, Chairman of the Game Preservation Society SWA to Secretary for S.W.A. - October 22 1921.

37 SWAA A.205-1: H. Paulsmeier, Hauchabfontein farm, Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Re: Damage Done

was turned down for the licence, which, although not explicitly mentioned, was likely because his farm was not fenced, allowing it to be “serrated by game paths, coming from every direction towards the water.”

Early fencing strategies in Namibia were simple; the goal was to keep small-stock in, and keep game out. According to the Game Preservation Ordinance of 1927, which elaborated on the terms by which someone may shoot game on their own fenced farm, fences are meant to have four strands of well-galvanised wire, with posts not more than five hundred yards apart.³⁸ According to the legal definitions of fencing at this time, there was no necessity for barbed wire or jackal-proof fencing. Janie Swanepoel notes that it wasn't until the 1952 Ordinance of Soil Conservation that the 1921 Fencing Proclamation was amended to replace “fencing” with “jackalproof fencing” making the latter mandatory.³⁹ Because square hectarage in many parts of Southern Namibia is of comparatively low carrying capacity, commercial farms must be very large, and therefore require an enormous amount of fencing.⁴⁰ Hence, loans from the Land Bank were necessary if white settlers were to survive the constant threats of drought.

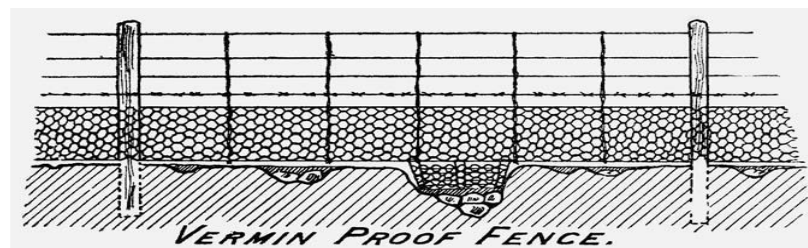


Figure Twelve: Vermin Proof Fencing

In a way, with ordinary galvanised-wire fencing and a subsidised, rapidly growing white

by Zebras” - April 4 1920. SWAA A.205-1: Secretary for S.W.A. to Magistrate Maltahöhe - “Complaint by H. Paulsmeier of Damage Done by Zebras” - April 23 1920.

38 SWAA A.205/1 (Part VII): The Game Preservation Ordinance, 1927.

39 Janie Swanepoel, “Habits of the Hunters: The Biopolitics of Combatting Predation amongst Small Stock Farmers in Southern Namibia,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (forthcoming, 2016), 7.

40 See L. Neubert, *The Karakul Industry: Policy Options for Independent Namibia* (Lusaka: United Nations Institute for Namibia, 1989), 20.

commercial agriculture sector centred on small-stock production (primarily sheep), jackals and other vermin found themselves in a very favourable position. To quote William Beinart, writing in the context of South Africa, “Opportunities were created [for the jackal] in that antelopes were displaced by livestock, and the quantity of meat on the colony's pastures increased.”⁴¹ We should add to Beinart's analysis that this “meat” was gathered conveniently within fencing or kraaling that jackals could often enter.⁴² While jackal-proof fencing did contribute to eradication of jackals on fenced farms, in some districts this took decades and huge capital investments to put into place. Based on the 1976 survey work on farms throughout the police zone by J.E. Lensing and Eugène Joubert of the Nature Conservation and Tourism Division of the South West Africa Administration, black-backed jackals were designated a “problem animal” in nearly all of the small-stock producing districts throughout Namibia: Mariental, Maltahöhe, Bethanie, Rehoboth, Lüderitz, Keetmanshoop, Karasburg (named Warmbad until 1940),⁴³ and Outjo (in North-Western Namibia).⁴⁴ In most of these districts, the percentage of affirmative survey responses regarding jackal predation, was over 75%. The few farming communities that responded below 25% were those which invested heavily in jackal-proof fencing, but they still faced issues with jackals, even in 1976.⁴⁵

41 William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment, 1770-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197.

42 This analysis of changing jackal populations in relation to prey access is consistent with other research on vermin demographics, especially Coyotes in the North American west. See Arlen W. Todd & Lloyd B. Keith, “Coyote Demography During a Snowshoe Hare Decline in Alberta,” *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 47, no.2 (1983), 394-404. And see Eric M. Gese, Orrin T. Rongstad & William R. Mytton, “Population Dynamics of Coyotes in South-Eastern Colorado,” *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 53, no. 1(1989), 174-181.

43 See SWAA A.19/30: *Magisterial Districts Amendment Proclamation, 1940*.

44 J.E. Lensing & Eugène Joubert, “Intensity Distribution Patterns for Five Species of Problem Animals in South West Africa,” *Madoqua* 10, no. 2 (1976), 131-141.

45 Ibid., 134.

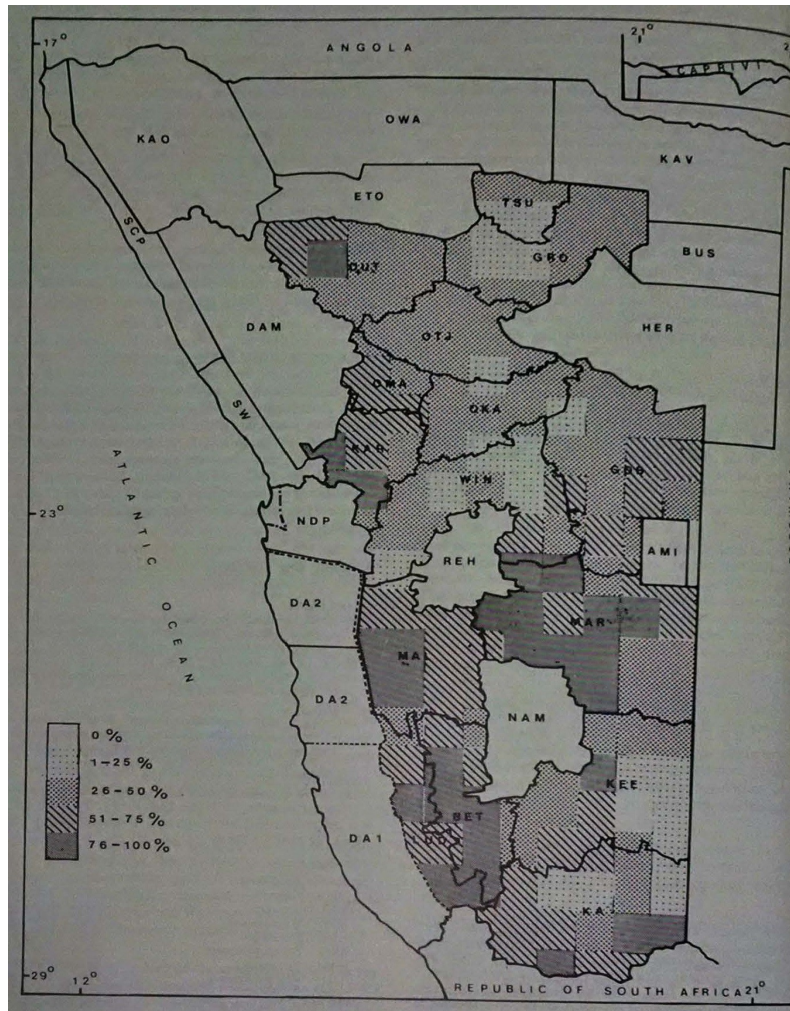


Figure Thirteen: Percentage Problem Intensity Pattern for Black-Backed Jackal

We can get a picture of jackal-proofing motives and process based on Fredrik Lilja's depiction of Sidney Rubridge's merino sheep farm in the Union's Graaff-Reinet district during the first two decades of the 20th Century.⁴⁶ According to the 1922 South African Drought Commission, the estimated number of jackals in the Union increased more than tenfold over the previous decade, from 5,091 to 57,492.⁴⁷ During this time, rewards of up to 10/- were given for jackal skins brought into the magistrate's office, and many in South Africa, like in Namibia made

46 Fredrik Lilja, *The Golden Fleece of the Cape: Capitalist Expansion and Labour Relations in the Periphery of Transnational Wool Production, c. 1860-1950* (Uppsala: Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 2013).

47 Ibid., 154.

a living as vermin destroyers.

Rubridge was losing about one sheep every three days to jackals, and it was severely cutting into his profits, so he chose to jackal-proof a large section of the farm. Furthermore, letting sheep run wild instead of kraaling increased wool and meat yields, as well as decreased the likelihood of transfer of diseases, such as sheep scab.⁴⁸ Rubridge purchased 3,000 yards of wire netting, 43 rolls of barbed wire, 70 standards and 20 poles at an estimated cost of between £105-£130.⁴⁹ He employed a few workers to put up the fence at between 5/- and 7/6d per 100 yards; the fenced circumference in total was 5,600 yards.⁵⁰ The estimated cost, in total, of purchasing the materials and paying for the labour power was at minimum £141 2/6d. This is a tremendous capital investment, even for a very successful merino wool producer in South Africa. When compared to some of the “poor whites” who were resettled into Namibia during this same time period, and the fact that transport costs of the fencing materials was likely higher in Namibia, it's unsurprising that few farmers, white or black were able to jackal-proof their farms or reserves during the early period of South African rule.

Dogs and Jackal Predation

So what was the main way, then, that poorer Namibian farmers could offset the costs of jackal predation? The answer is dogs. Throughout the first few decades of South African rule in Southern Namibia, nearly every magistrate remarked that dogs proved useful in hunting down jackals. For example, in dialogue between the Windhoek Senior Veterinary Officer and the Secretary for the Protectorate, it was revealed that:

Jackals are plentiful all over S.W.A., but are more so in the south and south eastern

48 See Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, 138-9. Also see P. Bates, “Sheep Scab (*Psoroptes Ovis*),” in *Diseases of Sheep*, edited by I.D. Aitken (London: Blackwell, 2007), 321-325.

49 Lilja, *The Golden Fleece of the Cape*, 132.

50 Ibid., 155.

areas . . . As this country is so thinly populated, there is no organized system of destruction and each farmer kills off the vermin troubling him as best he can by poisoning, trapping, and shooting. The S.W.A. Administration supplies poison through the magistrates of the various districts at a reduced price. Great numbers of Jackals are being killed by the natives with their dogs for purposes of obtaining the skins for making karosses for which they are being paid good prices of late.⁵¹

Furthermore, the Magistrate at Gibeon notes that his district is infested with leopard, rooikat, and jackal, and the dogs are useful for vermin destruction. According to the Magistrate, “The ordinary kaffir dog will not easily run down a Steenbok or Duiker, but will catch a 'schaap vanger' [sheep catcher] jackhal [sic] or rooikat with ease. These dogs do an enormous amount of good in the destruction of vermin in the district.”⁵² Well-trained hunting dogs also saved costs that would go towards ammunition or strychnine poison, the other main forms of jackal eradication.⁵³

Accounts abound regarding the intricacies of training dogs to fend off jackals and protect small-stock. Epstein's previously mentioned account of using sweat and meat to familiarise the dog with the flock and the shepherd is only one example.⁵⁴ Accounts of modern-day jackal hunting in the ǀGamaseb Conservancy, formerly known as the Bondelswarts Reserve, in Karasburg/Warmbad District, reveal some of these consideration. Mr. Josef Rooi, a former farmer and vice-kaptein of the Bondelswarts Nama revealed to me the following:

If you have two dogs, one must be male and one must be female. Because when you come into the veld, and the dogs find a female Jackal that's in heat, the male dog will not bite it. In that case, the female dog will bite the Jackal . . . So in that case I always propose that two dogs is enough, one or two . . . Because if you don't have enough food to give them, that would lead to the dog stealing sheep in the veld.⁵⁵

51 AGV 152 File V14: Secretary for S.W.A. to Senior Veterinary Officer, Windhoek – “Vermin Extermination Commission” – October 12, 1923.

52 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Gibeon to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax” - 16 June 1926.

53 Swanepoel, “Habits of the Hunters,” 11. SWAA A.510/1 (v1): Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Poison for Destruction of Vermin” - 14 January 1918. SWAA A.510/1 (v1): R.J. Badenhorst to Defence Department [sic], Windhoek - 1 April 1919. SWAA A.510/1 (v1): Secretary for S.W.A. to R.J. Badenhorst – n.d [likely April 1919]. SWAA A.510/1 (v1): Magistrate Keetmanshoop to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Destruction of Stock by Vermin: Berseba Location” - 3 June 1918.

54 Epstein, “Animal Husbandry,” 654.

55 Interview with Mr. Josef Rooi, 19 June 2015, ǀGâbes.

Abraham Christiaan noted that dogs were often used as “doctors” and “scientists” in the veld and during the wars against the Germans and the South Africans. If a shepherd or one of his sheep was wounded or bitten, the dog would be instructed to lick the wounds and clean them of contaminants.⁵⁶ This is consistent with scientific research on dog saliva.⁵⁷ Dogs were also used to check if water was clean – this was particularly useful during the 1903 war against the Germans and in the 1922 Bondelswart Uprising – when the colonial forces poisoned water sources. If the dogs didn't drink or wouldn't wash, the water wasn't potable.⁵⁸ Indeed, as the Bondelswart Nama migrated to Warmbad from the Orange River, they came with their dogs. The Warmbad hot springs were discovered when the Kaptein saw the dogs were soaking wet – which was a sign that there must be a permanent, potable water source. Thus the Bondelswart settled in the region.

Rooi and Christiaan are revealing a degree of ecology control and ecological knowledge which adapted in response to outside pressures. While dogs have always been a part of Nama society and their agro-pastoral mode of production – as shown in the passages from De Vylder and Wikar at the beginning of this chapter – their importance both continued and *transformed* with changes in socio-environmental structures. Dog numbers increased rapidly during the German period and the first few decades of South African rule as a way to respond to increasing carnivora numbers and general precarity of black agro-pastoral economies.

Conclusion

This chapter has taken an environmental and ecological perspective on late-precolonial and early-colonial Southern Namibia. Early travellers to the region noted the importance of dogs

56 Interview with Mr. Abraham Christiaan, 18 January 2015, Omaruru.

57 Benjamin L. Hart & Karen L. Powell, “Antibacterial Properties of Saliva: Role in Maternal Periparturient Grooming and in Licking Wounds,” *Physiology & Behavior* 48 (1990), 383-386. And Nigel Benjamin, et. al. “Wound Licking and Nitric Oxide,” *The Lancet* 349 (14 June 1997), 1776.

58 Interview with Mr. Abraham Christiaan, 18 January 2015, Omaruru.

in hunting and protecting livestock from vermin and carnivores, as well as general stock theft. With the migration of the Oorlam kommandos into the region, cattle raiding increased, and Southern Namibia became linked with Cape markets for ivory, ostrich feathers, and other hunting products. Increased capitalisation of hunts resulted in massive depopulation of game numbers in the region, coinciding with German colonial expansion and the South African Land Settlement Programme of the 1920s, bringing in more and more capital-poor white settlers. With more “meat” in the region – now sheep, instead of springbok – jackal numbers increased exponentially, rendering ordinary galvanised-wire fencing useless for protecting small-stock against carnivora. While white settlers were able to tap into state subsidies to procure advances and low-interest loans to lay jackal-proof fencing on their farms, most black farmers were unable to raise the necessary funds to do so. Dogs became the main solution to defending African-owned small-stock from jackals and other vermin. The subject of the subsequent chapter is the colonial state endeavours to decrease the number of African-owned dogs in the territory, most notably, the compulsory dog tax.

The 1917 Collections

In April 1917, the new South African Martial Law administration in Namibia held the first territory-wide Dog Tax collections. Each police officer and Magistrate was responsible for making known the tax, and facilitating each payment in urban and rural areas, by both black Namibians and white settlers. Importantly, this was the first time the dog tax was ever collected in rural areas in any large-scale capacity. During the German colonial period the tax was only applicable in so-called “inhabited places”: urban areas and locations including Aus, Bethanie, Gibeon, Gobabis, Grootfontein, Groot Kuibus, Karibib, Keetmanshoop, Lüderitz, Maltahöhe, Okahandja, Omaruru, Otavi, Otjimbingwe, Otjiwarongo, Rehoboth, Swakopmund, Tsumeb, Ukamas, Usakos, Warmbad, and Windhoek.¹ The tax would no longer be paid in German Marks, but in the newly adopted South African Pound currency. For one dog during the German period, the tax was 30Mk flat rate; under the new regime, there was differentiation between Urban and Rural dogs. Urban dogs were taxed at £1, while Rural dogs were taxed at 5/-; each additional dog per owner was taxed at a 10/- increase.²

Because it was the first large-scale attempt at dog taxation, the 1917 Collections are well-documented in the National Archives of Namibia. Each district Magistrate was required to submit to the Secretary for the Protectorate a chart documenting numbers of dogs licensed vs. those killed by the police, divided into Europeans and Africans, Rural and Urban settings.³ The numbers are startling and reveal a great deal. Observe Table One below. This was the first dog tax applied to non-urban areas, and for that reason, the number of dogs destroyed by police was

1 LWI 3/1/1 file M62/15: Translation of 23 February 1907 German Hundesteuer Verordnung. For the German original, see *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, vol. 18, no. 9. (1 May 1907), 385-6.

2 Robert Gordon, “Fido: Dog Tales of Colonialism in Namibia,” in *Canis Africanis: A Dog History of Southern Africa*, edited by Lance van Sittert & Sandra Swart (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 177.

3 ADM 84 2078/2 - “Dog Tax” - Various Correspondence, 1917.

<i>District</i>	<i>Licensed Euro Town</i>	<i>Licensed Euro Rural</i>	<i>Licensed African Town</i>	<i>Licensed African Rural</i>	<i>Destroyed Euro Town</i>	<i>Destroyed Euro Rural</i>	<i>Destroyed African Town</i>	<i>Destroyed African Rural</i>	<i>Destroyed Ownerless Rural</i>	<i>Tax Collected</i>
Aroab	4	90	14	166	0	0	0	0	0	0 £76 10/
Bethanie	9	85	2	120	1	0	2	44		£62 15/
Gibeon/Mariental	12	95	2	258	0	50	6	612		15 £101 5/
Gobabis	12	144	6	361	0	8	11	230		0 £144 5/
Grootfontein	20	150	4	208	0	0	30	14		4 £111 10/
Karibib	60	88	2	291	0	17	0	314		0 £150 15/
Keetmanshoop	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data
Luderitzbucht	73	56	14	10	0	0	35	0		0 £106
Maltahöhe	4	81	13	158	0	0	0	0		28 £76 10/
Okahandja	23	111	5	492	0	0	0	582		0 £180 15/
Omaruru	28	77	1	459	0	12	53	96		14 £142 15/
Otiwarongo	24	83	1	95	9	10	26	205		6 £67
Outjo	11	75	0	70	0	0	0	0		0 £43 12/
Rehoboth	7	30	0	97	0	11	0	85		0 £37 5/
Swakopmund	138	28	0	24	0	0	0	0		19 £154
Tsumeb	60	5	6	9	0	0	35	10		0 £69 15/
Warmbad	5	192	3	325	0	0	0	0		0 £136 10/
Windhoek	369	119	34	729	2	15	300	140		152 £621
TOTALS	959	1509	107	3872	12	123	498	2332	238	£2282 2/

Table Two: Dog Taxation, 1917

quite high. There are some limitations to this data set, however, as the Magistrate at Omaruru was the only one to distinguish between dogs shot by the police and dogs destroyed by the owner because he could not pay the tax. This seems like merely a difference of terminology, but it has importance. Dogs destroyed by the *police*, referring to the data provided by the Omaruru Magistrate, implies that there was a conviction or fine placed upon the presumed owner of the dog as well; dogs destroyed by the *owner* at the behest of police implied that no fine was levied, but the dog was still killed.⁴ Because the Magistrate at Omaruru was the only to document this difference, the number of dogs destroyed in total is likely higher than reported. Some other magistrates did mention that their numbers did *not* include the killing of dogs by the owners, but they did not estimate how many were killed this way.



Figure Fourteen: Dog Licence, 1920-21

Of importance as well is the sheer number of dogs killed in the process of levying the Dog Tax. In Gibeon district, more than two dogs were killed for each one licensed in the rural areas. A similar ratio applies to Otjiwarongo district, and many districts reported more killed than

4 For more on this, see SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Okahandja to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax Collection” - 30 December 1921.

licensed. In addition, some of the data is suspect. For example, the Magistrate at Aroab reports killing zero dogs, European- or African-owned, in the process of enforcing the new tax. This cannot be true, as there are several court cases in the archives for convictions of black Namibians who violated the 1917 dog tax laws; in nearly all of these cases the dog was destroyed in the process, and fines were levied.⁵ This is also the case with the Magistrate at Warmbad as well.⁶

I suspect that the reports from the Magistrates at Lüderitz, Maltahöhe, Grootfontein, Outjo, and Swakopmund follow this trend as well: grossly underestimating the amount of dogs destroyed. It is possible that these magistrates did not report dogs killed by their owners in order to avoid the tax, but little explanation is provided in the correspondence accompanying the data. It is difficult to ascertain this because most of the court records for dog tax violations were destroyed in these districts to make room for more important files. Only Aroab kept all of their records; most, like Warmbad, have incomplete files. Although the Keetmanshoop data is missing, I do not believe that this grossly affects our analysis of the data, as that district likely would have followed in similar fashion to nearby districts of Gibeon, Warmbad, Rehoboth, and Aroab.

So what can we draw from this 1917 data? We see that this was a tax that was avidly enforced, despite the fact that it routinely did not bring in much revenue. For example, in 1924, the Dog Tax brought in only £1,016 7/- in contrast to grazing fees, which brought in £3,358 9/- in revenue.⁷ In addition, the dog tax revenue seems paltry in the face of licence (trading, liquor, game) revenues of £12,984 and mining revenue of £383,328.⁸ Though the 1917 records indicate higher collection rates (£2,282 2/-), this is still a small amount of the revenue of South West

5 See LAR 1 Rex (via Magistrate Aroab) v. April Bauggos: Case no. 21 of 1917. v. Gert Engelbrecht: Case no. 20 of 1917. v. Isaak Block: Case No. 24 of 1917. v. Jan Fritz: Case No. 22 of 1917. And others.

6 LKW 5/1/4: Index to Criminal Records Book. Rex (via Magistrate Warmbad) v. Jan Afrikaner: Case no. 48 of 1917. v. Adam Kaffir & 7 Others: Case no. 40 of 1917.

7 Union of South Africa, *Report of the Administrator of South West Africa to the League of Nations for the Year 1924* (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1925), 21.

8 Ibid., 17.

Africa throughout the martial law and early mandate period. On a more local level, in the Outjo District, the revenue ratio of dog tax to trading licence was routinely more extreme than 1:60.⁹ The small amount of revenue brought in from the dog tax had little bearing on the large-scale canicide taking place in the districts. Just for the year 1917, at least 2,830 African-owned dogs were reported killed in the taxation process; the European number was only reported at 135.¹⁰ We will examine the purported reasons behind this canicide in due course.

A few years later, the Dog Tax was modified by the South African Mandate government. The 1921 Dog Tax Proclamation put forth by Gijs Hofmeyr put the tax rates at the following:

1 Dog : £1
2 Dogs: £2 10/-
3 Dogs: £4 10/-
4 Dogs: £7
5 Dogs: £10¹¹

These rates were theoretically applied equally to Africans and Europeans, and they released a significant uproar over the high rates (more on that below). In addition, any dog found without a badge issued by the magistrate was liable to be destroyed if the fee was not paid in two weeks (this time period was eventually decreased in the 1950s to three days, due to the large number of convictions for dog tax violation).¹²

What Was a “Native Hunting Dog”?

After significant verbal protest by Africans and Europeans over the high taxes on dogs, the rates were halved after the promulgation of the Dog Tax Reduction Proclamation of 1922. After the Bondelswarts Rebellion of 1922 and additional protest over the Dog Tax throughout the

9 LOU 3/1/3 file no. 3/4/4: Secretary for S.W.A. to Magistrate Outjo. “Trading Licences and Dog Tax: Outjo Village Management Board” - 1 April 1939.

10 ADM 84 2078/2: “Dog Tax” - Various Correspondence, 1917.

11 NAW 27 File 31: *Officiële Koerant van Zuidwest Afrika*, No. 58 (11 May 1921).

12 SWAA A.510/1: Secretary for S.W.A. to Administrator Windhoek - “Lisensiëring en Beheer van Honde: Munisipaliteit van Windhoek” - 23 May 1958.

mandated territory, the taxes were reduced further (Dog Tax Further Reduction and Amendment Proclamation of 1924) to the following:

- 1 Dog : 5/-
- 2 Dogs: 12/6d
- 3 Dogs: £1 2/6d
- 4 Dogs: £1 15/-
- 5 Dogs: £2 10/-¹³

More importantly, however, the new proclamation created an increased tax of £5 per hunting dog.¹⁴ This is a particularly controversial bit of the Dog Laws in SWA at this time. The increased tax was levied on owners of Greyhound dogs and “kaffir hunting dogs” or “native hunting dogs” (those two phrases were used interchangeably). This posed problems for enforcement reasons; according to the Karibib Magistrate:

The expression 'Kaffir Hunting Dogs' is also unsatisfactory as it will, in very many cases, be impossible to determine whether a particular dog falls within the definition and in any case it seems to me undesirable that the classification should be left to Police patrols as, of course, it would have to be.¹⁵

The Magistrate at Bethanie posed similar questions regarding the wording of the 1924 Dog Tax Further Reduction and Amendment Proclamation. He noted that there would be difficulty ascertaining what was “a dog of the kind known as the kaffir hunting dog or a dog of a similar kind” because “the kaffir hunting dog is not to be judged by its size or its colour,”¹⁶ as no instructions were ever given as to how to determine the breed of a dog. The “kaffir/native hunting dog,” presumably, could be determined only through *mētis*, the Greek concept explored by James C. Scott as “a means of comparing the forms of knowledge embedded in local experience with the more general, abstract knowledge deployed by the state and its technical agencies.”¹⁷ Scott uses *mētis* to illustrate a kind of practical knowledge that could only be earned

13 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): *Dog Tax Further Reduction and Amendment Proclamation of 1924*.

14 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Secretary for S.W.A. to All Magistrates (Circular Minute, Revenue 5) - “Dog Tax 1924” - 13 March 1924.

15 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate at Karibib to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Tax on Greyhounds and Hunting Dogs” - 27 June 1925.

16 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Bethanie to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax” - 16 June 1926.

17 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New

through years of experience, like the adage “practice makes perfect.” According to Hofmeyr and the SWA Administration at this time, the “native hunting dog” didn't need guidelines or explanation, because everyone presumably knew what one was.

The dilemma with this sort of mentality is that it was clear that the District Magistrates and the Police *did not* actually know what a “native hunting dog” was. Part of the confusion deals with the fact that hunting dogs can be *trained*; no dog is truly a born-hunter. The Magistrate at Grootfontein elaborates on this: “Most dogs will hunt. I have found a fox terrier doing so. On the other hand one comes across a dog which you would consider useful for hunting and is quite useless in that respect.”¹⁸ The Magistrate at Outjo is blunt with his contribution to the debate:

Here, any dog of any breed or mixed breeds after special treatment (a proper course of starvation and training) becomes a hunting dog, or a dog used for hunting. Here it is by starving rather than by breeding that you produce the kaffir hunting dog. . . . The nondescript collection of canines that gather about a Native kraal are all in fact hunting dogs. They are trained in packs, and it is marvellous how this sorry assortment of insignificant looking creatures can take down the noblest of game. With the native then, every dog is virtually a hunting dog, and to attain its purpose, the law would have to regard to that fact.¹⁹

This emphasis on feeding and starvation is key, and it largely continues to this day. Mr. Joseph Rooi informed me that before he and his father would go hunting or jackal killing, his father would not feed the dogs for a day or so, to make them more effective in the hunt.²⁰ In short, a hungry dog with minimal training has the *capacity* to be a hunting dog. We must, however, keep in mind that just because a dog *can* be a hunting dog, it does not mean that it is responsible for the destruction of game at the level that these farmers associations and hunting associations claim.

I have yet to find any satisfactory response to these queries regarding “Kaffir Hunting Dogs.” There were efforts by government officials to attempt to facilitate “trades” of

Haven: Yale, 1998), 311.

18 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Grootfontein to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax” - 7 May 1926.

19 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Outjo to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax” - 7 June 1926.

20 Interview with Mr. Josef Rooi, Karasburg, 6 July 2015.

greyhound/hunting dogs for “heavier breeds” if the owners cannot afford the tax, but these efforts seem limited.²¹ Reasons for governmental focus on “hunting dogs” will be expounded upon below.

Exemptions to the general dog tax and the increased “hunting dog” tax were granted to Africans and Europeans on a few grounds. Black Namibians in reserves were given exemption on one dog if they could prove that the dog was solely used for protection of livestock against vermin and not for hunting game.²² The dog would still have to wear a metal badge with licence number, but it was issued free of charge in these cases. In addition, the wording of the proclamation implies that one must be in possession of a Labour Exemption Certificate in order to qualify for exemption from the dog tax in order of one dog. This means that black Namibians who were residing on the land of white farmers, receiving part or all of their pay in grazing access – a common occurrence elaborated upon in chapter two – would still have to pay the dog tax. Europeans were not exempt from the tax for protection of stock, but they had the opportunity to form and join Vermin Hunting Clubs.

Avoiding Taxation? The Politics of Vermin Clubs

Vermin Hunting Clubs (or Associations) were based on the models put forth in the Orange Free State and the Cape Colony,²³ by which groups of men could train dogs to kill jackals, leopards, hyena, wild dogs, lynx, baboons, and other animals that could potentially interfere with the raising of livestock.²⁴ According to the Ordinances and correspondence preceding them, Vermin Hunting Clubs must be formed *bona fide* for the purpose of destruction

21 SWAA A.491/2 (v2): Superintendent Waterberg East Native Reserve to Magistrate Otjiwarongo – “Complaint: Destruction of Dogs in Waterberg East Native Reserve” - 15 June 1928.

22 SWAA A.491/2 (v2): *Dog Tax (Application to Natives) Proclamation of 1928*.

23 SWAA A.510/1 (v1): *Officiële Koerant van die Oranje Vrijstaat* (20 May 1921). Also SWAA A.510/1 (v1): *Official Gazette of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope* - Ordinance no. 10 of 1918.

24 SWAA A.491/2 (v2): Government Notice 1927 re: Vermin Associations.

of vermin. The administrator will presumably only recognise these clubs if he is satisfied that they are for the *sole* purpose of destroying vermin. Each association appoints a secretary, who must document and present to the government (each January 1) a list of the members of the association, and the amount and type of vermin killed. If the club fails to kill fifty vermin per year, it would be disbanded.²⁵ At its inception, all dogs registered as being involved in Vermin Hunting Clubs were exempted from dog tax; however, only Europeans could register these associations, and there must be at least twelve European males involved.²⁶

When the legislation was passed in 1927, dozens of Vermin Hunting Clubs were rapidly formed.²⁷ These clubs were often immediately recognised by the district magistrates, and by extension, the Secretary of the Protectorate. It became clear, however, that the amount of vermin being destroyed through these clubs was far lower than what the Vermin Hunting Associations were supposed to be bringing in for reward. In the Warmbad district, for example, the Magistrate wrote to the Secretary of the Protectorate regarding this dilemma:

I beg to report for your information that since their inception, no vermin clubs have met for the purpose of destroying vermin, and that in my opinion farmers join for the sole object of avoiding payment of dog tax. It is true that the clubs have destroyed their annual quota of vermin, but skins have a value to destroyers, and they would kill in any case for self preservation. I would suggest that all vermin clubs in this district be abolished.²⁸

When the Magistrate implied that the club members would “kill in any case for self-preservation,” he is referring to two separate phenomena. The first was explored in depth in the previous chapter. Farmers (white or black) in Southern Namibia operated within a precarious

25 SWAA A.510/1 (v2): Government Notice no. 121. “Regulations for the Recognition of Vermin Associations and Clubs” - 13 July 1927.

26 SWAA A.491/2 (v2): Secretary for S.W.A. to Magistrates and Sub-Receiver of Revenue (Revenue Circular No. 43 of 1928) - “Dog Tax Ordinance 1927” - 28 April 1928.

27 SWAA A.510/1/6: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Vermin Clubs: Maltahöhe District” - 24 January 1929. SWAA A.510/1/10: Sekretaris, Ongedierteclub Warmbad to Magistrate Warmbad. 26 February, 1929 [likely 8]. SWAA A.510/1/10: Secretary for S.W.A. to Administrator, Windhoek - “Ongedierteverenigings” - 29 March 1932. SWAA A.510/1/10: Secretary for S.W.A. to Administrator, Windhoek - “Ongedierteverenigings” - n.d 1935 (likely April or May).

28 SWAA A.510/1/10: Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Vermin Clubs” - 22 June 1931.

environment; the irregular and insignificant rains meant that small-stock were a necessity if one were to thrive as a farmer. The low carrying capacity of much of the land meant that changes in rainfall could doom a capital-poor farmer, black or white, who was unable to install improvements onto his farm and undertake a sufficient amount of borehole drilling. The additional toll on his profits which jackals and other vermin took, in this situation, needed to be countered as best as possible. Vermin Hunting Associations provided a solution towards destroying jackals and getting tax-free dogs for this purpose.

Secondly, prior to the 1927 Proclamation to allow the formation of Vermin Hunting Associations, there was existing legislation providing for monetary reward for vermin destruction. In 1926, the Provincial Secretary in Cape Town complained to the Secretary for S.W.A., noting that jackal proofs – skins with tail in – are brought from South West Africa to Uppington to claim the reward on the books in South Africa, which was 10/- per jackal proof.²⁹ A 2/6d reward for proofs was quickly put into place in Namibia, increasing in time.³⁰ Furthermore, rewards for other declared vermin were put into place throughout the Mandate period; Wild Dogs were compensated with 10/- rewards for proofs,³¹ Hyenas were eventually rewarded at £1,³² and there was discussion regarding a £5 reward for lions, but this never materialised.³³ Some Namibians, both white and black, were able to make a living through vermin destruction, either through collecting rewards for proofs presented to the magistrate, or through informal payments from local farmers.³⁴

29 SWAA A.510/1 (v1): Provincial Secretary Cape Town to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Rewards for Destruction of Jackals” - 25 September 1926.

30 KFI 1 Folder 2: Minutes of Farming Industry Commission, Swakopmund, 4 December 1926.

31 SWAA A.491/10: *Extermination of Wild Dogs Ordinance 1936*. This was increased to £1, see SWAA A.510/1 (v3): *Extermination of Wild Dogs Amendment Ordinance of 1949*. Lynx and Rooikat (Caracal) were included with a 5/- reward as well

32 SWAA A.491/10: *Extermination of Hyenas Ordinance of 1947*.

33 SWAA A.491/10: Grootfontein Farmers' Association: Application for Legislation to Provide Compensation for Destruction of Lions and Hyena. Submitted to S.W.A. Legislative Council, Executive Committee – Submitted 21 September 1937, discussed 6 December 1937.

34 See SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Farmer Hubert Janson, Franzfontein to Magistrate Outjo. 18 April 1921.

The Secretary for the Protectorate's complaints regarding the Warmbad Ongedierteclub was not an uncommon occurrence. Many of the magistrates and administrators suspected that farmers were forming Vermin Hunting Clubs with the intention not of destroying jackals, hyena, etc., but to merely avoid the high dog taxes. The Magistrate at Maltahöhe noted that the Nordwestecke Raubzeugklub rarely met in person to hunt, and that each member just occasionally gave the secretary of the association the number of destroyed vermin for his farm.³⁵ The Magistrate at Okahandja noted that the wording of the law was poor, that once the minimum amount of landowners were met, further non-owners or lessees of land could join to get free dogs.³⁶ This eventually led to an amendment to the vermin and dog tax laws in 1936 to tighten some of these loopholes:

Every owner or lessee of land *situated outside of municipal or village management board area* or lessee of grazing rights over such land, shall in respect of two dogs owned by him on such land be exempt from payment of the tax.³⁷

Owners of land who did not reside on it, but in towns, could not get tax-free dogs. Furthermore, the number of dogs per member affiliated with vermin hunting clubs could now no longer exceed two. Later modifications to the Vermin Hunting Clubs regulations required that proofs be brought to the magistrate's office, inspected by him, punched with a large hole, and set alight with paraffin oil.³⁸ This would prevent people from obtaining proofs for which reward was already paid, or for which tax exemption was given.

We should not look at the exemption to the dog tax law as written in the *Dog Tax (Application to Natives) Proclamation of 1928* as equivalent to the Vermin Hunting Association laws. Exemption to the Dog Tax in African reserves was tied to having in one's possession a

35 SWAA A.510/1/6: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Nordwestecke Raubzeugklub: Maltahöhe" - 13 May 1929.

36 SWAA A.510/1 (v2): Magistrate Okahandja to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Vermin Clubs" - 8 May 1930.

37 SWAA A.510/1 (v2): *Dog Tax Amendment Ordinance of 1936*. Emphasis mine

38 SWAA A.510/1 (v3): Magistrate Windhoek to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Destruction of Vermin" - 11 February 1950.

labour exemption certificate. Only a certain class of African farmer was able to afford this, both literally paying the fee, but also in possessing the stock requirements: ten head cattle or fifty head goats or sheep. Dogs registered within the associations were tax free for *both* white landowners *and* lessees. Furthermore, the Vermin Clubs were granted two dogs per member tax free (often more before 1936). When we consider some of the narratives of jackal hunting with dogs presented in the previous chapter, one easily sees that while a single dog might be useful in hunting jackals and other vermin, two dogs (especially in a larger group) are inherently better. Many white-owned dogs were effectively tax-free so long as they hunt vermin, the very activity that many blacks had to pay the dog tax to engage in. Combine this with the massive financial advances given to white farmers to build jackal proof fencing and we are able to see gradual control of jackal numbers on white farms. As Janie Swanepoel has noted, vermin clubs became more effective with fencing; it became possible to corner jackals and stamp them out with horses, or leave them to the dogs.³⁹

Beatrice Conradie, in her study of Vermin Hunting Clubs in Ceres, Western Cape, South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, noted that once some control over jackals and other vermin was attained, hunting clubs became a very effective means of maintaining this ecological control.⁴⁰ She notes that methods such as trapping and poisoning vermin, an often favoured method in South Africa, resulted in 2.25 innocent animals (stray sheep, for example) getting caught in traps and consuming poison per single lynx or other designated vermin perishing.⁴¹ Despite the controversial nature of hunting clubs from a “conservationist” perspective, they are relatively successful at their job: destroying vermin. Nicola A. Rust et. al. have also noted the

39 See Janie Swanepoel, “Habits of the Hunters: The Biopolitics of Combatting Predation amongst Small Stock Farmers in Southern Namibia,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* (forthcoming, 2016).

40 Beatrice Conradie, “Are Hunting Clubs the Solution to Small Stock Depredation? The Case of Ceres, 1979-1980,” *Agrekon* 51, no. 1 (2012), 96-113.

41 Ibid., 107.

effectiveness of trained livestock watchdogs in protecting against carnivora on farms in South Africa.⁴² One of the difficulties with vermin associations in Southern Namibia during this period was that they were selectively applied; black Namibians were able to fight jackal predation, but only through paying a dog tax or obtaining labour exemption.

How Much Did the Dog Tax Cost? The Case of the Bondelswarts

In Southern Namibia in the pre-Karakul era, wages were notoriously low. According to the Magistrate at Mariental, even in the mid 1930s, some farm workers employed by capital-poor white settlers were still not paid sufficient wages to meet the tax demands. At this time in the Mariental district, wealthier farmers were able to pay upwards of 15/- per month for an experienced adult worker and for piccanins (young boys, or first time contract workers) at half that rate (7/6d).⁴³ Some of the poorer white farmers were only regularly paying their workers with extra goats for slaughter. The goat would occasionally be worth up to 8/- or 10/-, but it was more than likely old and near death. Furthermore, according to the Magistrate, “Taxes and petty fines of farm labourers are usually paid by the employers in order to keep the natives out of prison, but in the majority of cases these amounts are deducted from wages.”⁴⁴ If the taxes, such as dog tax, are close to or higher than monthly wages, the farm worker becomes gradually indebted to his employer for the foreseeable future.

Comparing these 1934 wages in Mariental with 1921 wage estimates in the Bondels Reserve, Warmbad district, can give us some comparison. The Bondelswart Nama's inability (or refusal) to pay the dog tax is perhaps the most well known mention of the tax in the

42 Nicola A. Rust, Katherine M. Whitehouse-Tedd, and Douglas C. MacMillan, “Perceived Efficacy of Livestock-Guarding Dogs in South Africa: Implications for Cheetah Conservation,” *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 37, no. 4 (2013), 690-697.

43 SWAA A.521/13 (v2): Magistrate Mariental to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek - “Native Labour” - August 24, 1934.

44 Ibid.

historiography on Southern Namibia. This is for a number of reasons. In May 1922, citing issues with the dog tax ordinance, branding irons laws, and land restitution claims, the Bondelswart Nama began to prepare for guerrilla conflict with the South West Africa police and military. They raided horses, ammunition, and food from nearby white-owned farms, resisted arrest, and engaged in shooting with the SWA forces in !Haib, !Guruchas, and Dreihoeck (all within the Reserve).⁴⁵ The South African occupation forces responded with ground attacks, and most importantly, air power. The !Guruchas highlands were bombed and machine gunned, killing over 100 Bondelswarts and countless livestock.⁴⁶

Why was the dog tax mentioned so prominently in the literature on the uprising, as well as in popular memory of the Bondelswart people?⁴⁷ Based on the terms of the “Treaty of Submission” after the 1903-1906 war with the Germans, the land designated for the Bondels reserve was not subject to grazing fees or most other taxes; the terms of the treaty read “The Bondelzwarts [sic] will live in those places as free men.”⁴⁸ The terms of the treaty said nothing about the dog tax, however, and this became the preferred means by which to tax the Bondelswarts. Those who failed to pay the tax for the April 1921 collection were prosecuted harshly, and over 100 Bondelswarts living outside the reserve faced court cases, and over 60 who

45 For more on the rebellion, see Gavin Llewellyn MacKenzie Lewis, “The Bondelswart Rebellion of 1922,” Unpublished M.A. Thesis (Rhodes University, 1977), 84-95; and Tony Emmett, *Popular Resistance and the Roots of Nationalism in Namibia, 1915–1966* (Basel, P. Schlettwein Publishing, 1999). Also, for less sympathetic accounts, see A.M. Davey, *The Bondelzwarts Affair: A Study of the Repercussions, 1922–1959* (Pretoria, Communications of the University of South Africa, 1961); Union of South Africa, *Report of the Administrator on the Bondelzwarts Rising, 1922* (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1923).

46 Tilman Dederling’s work on the South African side of this war is well known and worth reading. See his “Air Power in South Africa 1914-1939,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2015), 451-465; “Petitioning Geneva: Transnational Aspects of Protest and Resistance in South West Africa/Namibia after the First World War,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (2009), 785-801; and his “War and Mobility in the Borderlands of South Western Africa in the Early Twentieth Century,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 39, no. 2 (2006), 275-294.

47 Interview with Mr. Timotheus Morris, Warmbad, 8 July 2015 and 11 January 2016. Interview with Mr. Josef Rooi, #Gabes, 19 June, 2015. Interview with Mr. Abraham Christiaan, Omaruru, 18 January 2016. and others, in passing.

48 ADM 85 file 2163/2: Treaty of Submission, 23 December 1906. Translated from the German.

were living in the reserve had to appear before the court.⁴⁹

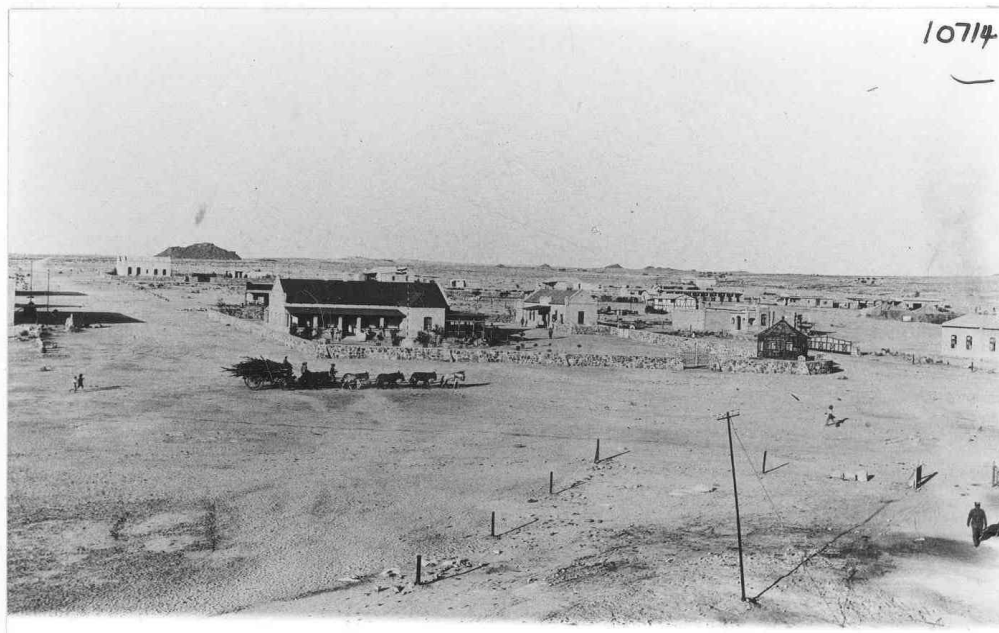


Figure Fifteen: Warmbad: View of Magistrate's House, early Mandate Period

The Roman Catholic priest at the †Gâbes mission station wrote to the Magistrate at Warmbad, explaining the “impossibility for nearly all Bondels to pay more than 5/- for one dog, for which there is an absolute necessity to defend their little cattle against jackals.”⁵⁰ Fr. J.J. Isenring noted that in his discussions with Bondelswart Kaptein Jacobus Christian, the residents of the reserve did not mind having to pay a £1 tax for a second dog, but the first should be tax free. As was shown above, this policy was eventually put into place, but only *after* the Bondelswarts Uprising of 1922.

The Superintendent of the Bondels Reserve noted that many of the Bondelswarts were actively trying to pay the tax through any means necessary, but were being hindered for a number of reasons. Many would gather lime from a nearby quarry to sell to construction firms

49 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Payment of Dog Tax in Bondels Reserve” - 21 November 1921.

50 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Fr. J.J. Isenring OSFS of R.C. Mission †Gâbes to Magistrate Warmbad – 23 April 1921.

and for the building of the new police station in Warmbad.⁵¹ For those who had exemption from labour, this was a way of earning some cash. Many found that trying to sell small-stock at the abattoir in Kalkfontein (now called Karasburg) was not a good means of getting cash in hand. Average sale prices were only 3/- per sheep at the time. They would skin jackals and sell the proofs as well, but this didn't add up to any substantial amount. Furthermore, for those working for wages on white-owned farms nearby, the average wage was only 15/- to maximum £1 10/- per month.⁵² By November 1921, the Magistrate had sent to the Secretary for the Protectorate £423 10/- for dog tax revenue for the year. Some of this amount came through fines for default of payment, or through prison labour revenue.⁵³

It should also be noted that many Bondelswarts complained that the Compulsory Anti-Scab sheep dipping ordinances were promulgated suspiciously close to when taxes were due.⁵⁴ In order to prevent the spread of sheep scab (*Psoroptes Ovis*) in the Southern Districts of Namibia, the South West Africa Veterinary Administration would periodically make compulsory simultaneous dipping in specific districts deemed “infected.” Dipping involved walking one's sheep (or cattle, but mostly sheep) for two minutes through a large metal or concrete tank embedded into the ground. This tank was filled with a arsenic-sulphur solution which had to be kneaded into the wool in order to poison any scab worms or eggs in the fibres.⁵⁵ The head of the sheep must be dunked full in the water at least twice. When simultaneous dipping is required, the sheep must be dipped twice, the second being between 8-10 days later.⁵⁶ This presumably would

51 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Reserve Superintendent Dreihoeck to Magistrate Warmbad - “Report about the Payment of Dog Tax by Natives Residing in the Bondelswarts Reservaat.” - 21 November 1921. SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax Collections” - 11 November 1921.

52 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Re: Dog Licence Fees – Natives” - 29 April 1921.

53 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Warmbad to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax Collections” - 11 November 1921.

54 Union of South Africa, *Report of the Administrator on the Bondelzwarts Rising, 1922* (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1923), Annexure A, p. 8.

55 See SWAA A.474/2 (v1): Principal Sheep Inspector, S.W.A. to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Simultaneous Dipping: Southern Districts” - 4 September 1923.

56 SWAA A.474/2 (v2): *Diseases of Stock Proclamation of 1920*.

ensure that more of the scab worms and eggs have a chance to be killed by the solution.

Constructing Dipping Tanks was a very expensive process, and for that reason, there were not very many in the Southern Districts and reserves, and one had to travel a great distance when compulsory dipping was announced. Stone and/or metal dipping tanks cost at least £11 to £12 pounds to construct, and this price was prohibitive for many black Namibians.⁵⁷ Complaints were often heard that white farmers who were able to build dipping tanks with their Land Bank settler advances were charging high fees to other farmers, black and white, who wished to use his tank.⁵⁸ Furthermore, dipping tanks required large amounts of already scarce fresh water, first for mixing the dipping solution, and second for cleaning the sheep afterwards.⁵⁹



Figure Sixteen : Sheep Dipping, Cauas farm, 1920

Fr. J.J. Isenring, referred to above, noted that many Bondelswarts in the reserve grew suspicious of the Magistrate and the colonial government because the compulsory scab dips were

57 SWAA A.69/1: Union of South Africa: Department of Agriculture, "A Circular Dipping Tank for Sheep," in *Farming in South Africa* (October 1928). SWAA A.69/1: Advertisement: Cooper's Patent Swim Bath.

58 SWAA A.69/1: Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Cattle Dip" - 6 June 1941.

59 SWAA A.69/3: Principal Sheep Inspector, Windhoek to Secretary for S.W.A. - "Dipping Tanks: Bondelswarts Reserve" - 11 March 1921.

often called near when taxes (for dogs, or otherwise) were due. Sheep, goats, and cattle were often in quarantine inbetween simultaneous dips, and they could not be sold to pay the taxes until they had undergone the full dipping regimen.⁶⁰ In addition, the poisonous arsenic-sulfur solution (sometimes with lime instead), would kill some of the sheep undergoing a dip, or it would damage the wool.⁶¹ While it was possible to get compensation for deaths of animals, this was not a common occurrence.

The Dog Tax alone did not cause the Bondelswart Uprising of 1922. Important concerns such as formal and informal arrangements regarding land restitution were crucial as well. When the Bondelswarts under the military leadership of Abraham Morris chose to fight alongside the South Africans in the First World War, the arrangement was that the Bondels reserve would be expanded, and most of the nearby German farms would be added to the reserve. During the War, many Bondels civilians were brought North by force to Tsumeb alongside the retreating German military; their small-stock fed the German troops during this time, leading to massive stock losses on the part of the Bondels.⁶² With the transfer of power to the South Africans in 1915, very little of the loot stock was given back to the Bondelswarts when they returned by train to Kalkfontein, making obtaining labour exemption far more difficult. More and more Bondelswarts had to take up poorly paid wage labour on nearby farms, or else in road and rail construction gangs. Furthermore, the Bondelswarts had to turn over their guns and their branding irons to the Magistrate; the latter resulted in accusations that black Namibians who were being paid in grazing access had their cattle branded as owned by their employers, effectively a legalised stock theft.⁶³

60 Union of South Africa, *Report of the Administrator on the Bondelzwarts Rising, 1922* (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1923), Annexure A, p. 8.

61 SWAA A.474/2 (v1): *Swakopmunder Zeitung* (9 March, 1929).

62 See, for example, the telegram series in ADM 46 file 599 (v1): "Bondelswarts – Resettlement of" - 1915.

63 Interview with Mr. Timotheus Morris, Warmbad, 11 January 2016.

It was not singularly the dog tax which caused the Bondelswarts Rebellion, but rather the specific ways in which taxing dogs interacted with a myriad of other regulations, taxes, fees, and historical events. Poor rains in Southern Namibia make it such that small-stock agriculture, which having the potential for growth and prosperity, becomes more fragile. Increasing settlement of poor whites in the region puts pressure on the borders of the Bondels reserve, cutting into gains which were made during the era of “self-peasantisation” or “re-pastoralisation.” This also led to increased police presence in the area, seeking to enforce the only large tax applicable to the Bondels Reserve, leading to over 160 court cases for dog tax violation. Discrimination towards black stock owners, as well as increased competition with white stock owners leads to poor market prices for sale of livestock. Paying the tax would require either working for low wages on white-owned farms, or selling a large number of small-stock, inhibiting livestock accumulation strategies. Combining the dog tax with this myriad of other fees, regulations, and state interventions, it is not surprising why the Bondelswarts rebelled.

Hunting and “Honest Labour”

All of this discussion of dogs and hunting is laced with a talk of “honest labour” and laziness. For example, in a letter from the SAP Namutoni to the Ovamboland Native Commissioner regarding Etosha Hailom San/Bushmen ownership of dogs, it was remarked that game is being hunted and frightened away from the Etosha reserve. The SAP Commander stated that

Hunting with dogs is the lazy way of hunting. The Heikum [sic] bushmen are skilled hunters with bows and arrows, and I am positively sure that the reduction of dogs in the reserve will have no effect whatsoever on the food problems of the bushmen.⁶⁴

Indeed, even the Secretary of the Protectorate, Gijs Hofmeyr, in his Parliamentary report

64 SWAA A. 491/2 (v2): South African Police, Namutoni to Native Commissioner Ondongwa - “Dogs: Etosha Pan Game Reserve” - 20 March 1948.

regarding the 1922 Bondelswarts Uprising, stated the following:

Pastoral and Agricultural pursuits are practically unknown to them [Bondelswart Nama], and to this day they are averse to manual labour . . . The necessity for this heavy [dog] tax was clearly demonstrated during my southern tour early in 1921, when I found vast numbers of dogs in possession of natives and a certain class of European squatter, who profited by the employment of these animals to hunt down game and obtained a livelihood thereby instead of by honest labour.⁶⁵

The racist undertones in this report aside, it is factually inaccurate as well. My research in the former Bondelswarts reserve in Southern Namibia revealed deep connections between the people of the Warmbad/Karasburg/ǀGabes area and those near the Orange River, forged through similar pastoral modes of production and kin relations. According to most of my informants, nearly all Bondels men prior to the 1922 war supported their families through pastoral herding activities (mostly sheep shepherding).⁶⁶ This did change somewhat over time, however; during the genocide years and the first World War, a lot of Bondelswarts men lost significant percentages of their herds, resulting in movement into wage labour on White-owned farms.

According to my informants, hunting with dogs, or so-called “coursing,” was not often a planned process. Rarely did Bondelswart men go out into the veld with the explicit purpose of hunting game. The more often occurrence was hunting-by-chance. Each Bondels shepherd would bring with him one or two dogs into the veld when his sheep were grazing. This would protect his stock, especially from jackals. If a springbok or other smaller game happened to show up, the shepherd would likely send his dog or dogs out to make the kill. My informants emphasised that it would be far more likely that their fathers would bring home smaller ground animals, rather than larger game. It just wasn't very common for large game to be taken out by the dogs. The shepherds lived off of their livestock; hunting was a supplement,⁶⁷ and dogs were largely kept to

65 Union of South Africa, *Report of the Administrator on the Bondelzwarts Rising, 1922* (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1923), 1-3.

66 For example, Interview with Mr. Josef Rooi, ǀGabes (19 June, 2015). Mrs. Monika Basson, Warmbad (7 July 2015). Mrs. Mina Swartbooi, Dreihuk (8 July, 2015). Mr. Timoteus Morris, Warmbad (8 July, 2015). Mr. Jakob Swartbooi, !Haib (7 July, 2015).

67 Interview with Mr. Josef Rooi, Karasburg (6 July, 2015). Mrs. Suzanna Sneeuwe, !Haib (7 July, 2015). Mrs.

protect from jackals and other vermin.



Figure Seventeen: Farm Workers with a Karakul Stud Ram, 1939

The magistrates and farmers associations, however, were of the mind that hunting with dogs was the reason both for game destruction and labour shortages in the SWA Mandated Territory. In Karibib district, the *Farmer Verein Karibib* wrote a harshly worded 1925 letter to the Magistrate to be passed on to the Secretary of the Protectorate. They argued that the reason for decreasing game in South-West Africa, and the Karibib district especially, in the unchecked growth in the number of “native-owned hunting dogs.”⁶⁸ The farmers hold that dogs owned by Africans in the district are rarely if ever used for the protection of stock or property, and are much more likely to be seen hunting in packs in the veld. Interestingly, the Association noted that dogs in Karibib district are often shared communally for hunting purposes. This makes it

Teresia Bock, Dreihuk (8 July, 2015).

68 SWAA A.491/2 (v1): Mr. Bohnstedt, Karibib Farmers' Association to Magistrate Karibib. - “Native Owned Hunting Dogs” - 13 June 1925.

particularly difficult to ascertain ownership for tax purposes (of which they support the £5 “native hunting dog” tax), or for prosecuting re: violation of game laws.

There was some dissent within the ranks, however. Intriguingly, the Magistrate at Okahandja during this period doubted the whole purpose of the escalated dog tax and the claim that dogs were the reason behind decreasing numbers of game in the region. He argues that game licenses are far more likely to be the culprit (and interestingly, hunters and “sportsmen” tend to complain about the “native hunting dog” the loudest). In his words:

“It may be of interest to note that during 1924 and 1925 the following Game Licences were issued in this district:

£3 : Season Small Game	47
15/-: Monthly Small Game	76
£5: Special Game	54

Now if each holder shot five head of small game during a month, and this I think is a somewhat low figure, than no less that 1790 head of small game has been killed by the gun in this district alone during the last two seasons, while if each holder of the £5 licence shot his quota then 245 head of large game were shot during the same period and there is not taken into account those shot by Licence Holders from other districts.”⁶⁹

The magistrate continued to condemn those who argued that the “kaffir hunting dog” was responsible for destruction of game. He noted that hunters in Windhoek estimated that these dogs killed ten head of small game for each one shot by license holders; he finds this ridiculous, as it would mean nearly 18,000 head of game would have been killed by dogs in the previous two years.

Interestingly, when consulting the archival records on dog taxation, there is a great deal of correspondence between the magistrates, farmers, and hunters regarding the destruction of game by coursing, yet rarely with any statistics at all. It is merely taken with faith that “native hunting dogs” hunt game regularly. Now let me be clear that this did indeed happen from time to time; my interviewees in the former Bondels Reserve confirm this. They remind me, however, that this was a rare occurrence and was seen as more opportune than planned. It would be wrong for me

69 SWAAA.491/2 (v1): Magistrate Okahandja to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Dog Tax” - 26 April 1926.

to apply the information I received from my interviews across the whole territory, but I am sure that there is some consistency. However, when one leaves behind the archival boxes explicitly dedicated to “dog taxation” and move to the records on game laws, poaching, destruction of game and illegal hunting, the entire discussion of hunting with dogs completely disappears.

Indeed, most of the talk regarding game destruction in the reserves centres around poaching by white farmers or drought/climate changes.⁷⁰ The same applies to crown lands and within districts in general. Observing decreasing game in their districts, many magistrates began to question some of the revenue earned by issuing hunting licenses, choosing to limit that number for conservation reasons. Almost uniformly across the board, destruction of game was blamed on excessive issuing of hunting licenses and climate changes. It should also be emphasised that it was not until 1925-6 that SWA organisations began to promote international tourism to the Mandate for game hunting purposes. The Secretary of the Protectorate at the time, Courtney-Clark, wrote to the Administrators of Tanganyika, Somaliland, and Kenya colonies asking for advice for marketing purposes.⁷¹ Most of the hunting at this time was local, or occasionally by South African visitors.

A large amount of hunting at this time was allowed and condoned because of purported damage to crops by the game. Ostriches and springbok were especially condemned for this reason;⁷² Ostriches, in fact, were removed from protection in 1922, making it legal to kill them without license.⁷³ There were many references to damages to crops done by zebra and even kudu

70 SWAA A.205/12/1: Welfare Officer, Native Reserves Omaruru to Additional Native Commissioner, Windhoek - “Poaching in Reserves” - June 10, 1938.

71 SWAA A.205/1 (Part VI): Secretary for S.W.A. to Colonial Secretary, Nairobi – October 23, 1925. SWAA A.205/1 (Part VI): Secretary for S.W.A. to Chief Secretary to the Government, Dar es Salaam – October 23, 1925. SWAA A.205/1 (Part VI): Secretary for S.W.A. to Secretary to the Administration, Somaliland Protectorate – October 23, 1925.

72 SWAA A.205-5: Magistrate Windhoek to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Application for Mr. D.G. Dennler for Permit under Section 7 Proc. 13 of 1921” - December 30, 1921.

73 SWAA A.205: *Game Preservation Amendment (Ostrich) Proclamation of 1922.*

bulls as well. In 1927, zebra were removed from the “royal game” list, allowing them to be hunted as other big game, partially because of continued anger at their tramping of grasses in the various Southern Districts.⁷⁴ It is important to remember that these game were among the ones black Namibians were “guilty” of hunting with their dogs. Game quantities grew and shrunk depending on climate changes, drought, and hunting practices; what was considered “vermin” changed as well, hence the addition of lions to the list from time to time. What did not change, however, was the nearly unanimous condemnation of Africans' purported hunting with dogs. The Magistrate at Warmbad condemned coursing while simultaneously remarked regarding game in his district:

Owing to drought and extermination by hunting parties in motor-cars, there is practically no game in the district. During the year, I came across one Gemsbok, and no springbok at all.⁷⁵

The government's condemnation of hunting with dogs was perplexingly consistent throughout its legislation and rhetoric, on both sides of the racial divide. Examples of small game hunting licenses from the 1920s reveal that use of dogs in hunting small game (ostrich, springbok, pig, guinea fowl, partridge, antelope) would “render the licence liable to cancellation.”⁷⁶ These £1-3 licenses were mostly issued to whites, and dog law was apparently enforced.⁷⁷ It may very well be that because the hunting licenses required use of guns and ammunition to make the kill, this was a way to ensure that only Europeans took out the licenses, as Africans could rarely acquire arms. In fact, some tense discussions surrounded Bondelswart Kaptein Jacobus Christian's application for a game license, because as a headman, he had access to a rifle and a small amount of ammunition.⁷⁸

74 SWAA A.205/1 (Part VII): *The Game Preservation Ordinance of 1927*.

75 LKW 3/1/3 File 3/5: Magistrate Warmbad: Annual Report 1929

76 LMA 3/1/21 file no. 34/20 – Small Game Licence issued to Mr. George Daly, Maltahöhe District – 30 April 1920.

77 There were very few small-game licences ever issued to black Namibians. This was because of gun and ammunition regulations, largely.

78 SWAA A.205/12 (v1): Magistrate Warmbad to Native Commissioner Windhoek - “Shooting of Game: Jacobus Christian, Headman” - June 8, 1928.

Punishing Violators

For those caught hunting without a game license, the sentence was a £1-4 fine with a payment default sentence of fourteen days to one month hard labour.⁷⁹ For those caught in violation of dog tax, the fine was much higher than the original tax. In 1917, an unpaid tax of twenty shillings (£1) resulted in a fine of £2 10/-; in addition, the dog would be destroyed by the police in the process.⁸⁰ The fines gradually got steeper as well; in the same district (Aroab) in 1918, the fine increased to £5 or hard labour (with destruction of the dog).⁸¹ It appears that the dog tax was enforced more rigorously in the southern districts of Warmbad/Karasburg and Aroab.⁸²

For example, in Mariental district, the fine was only 20/- (£1), though based on the court records, it is unclear whether the dog was destroyed or not.⁸³ Presumably, it was killed within a designated time period. Like in Warmbad & Aroab, Maltahöhe district had a strict policy regarding dog taxation; the Magistrate instructed the police constable in 1919 to “destroy all dogs above one in number in the possession of each native and to prosecute all persons who have not paid their dog tax.”⁸⁴

Accusations of Dog Tax violation were often used in conjunction with the Masters and Servants legislation and the Vagrancy proclamations.⁸⁵ For an African to be considered a vagrant, he must fail to possess one or more of the following: (1) Pass for unemployed person to seek

79 LKW 1/1/1: Rex (via Magistrate Warmbad) v. Lucas April. Case no. 68 of 1917. LKW 1/1/1: Rex (via Magistrate Warmbad) v. Stephanus David. Case no. 67 of 1917.

80 LAR 1: Rex (via Magistrate Aroab) v. April Bauggos. Case no. 21 of 1917. LAR 1: Rex (via Magistrate Aroab) v. Gert Engelbrecht. Case no. 20 of 1917.

81 LAR 1: Rex (via Magistrate Aroab) v. Jan Brandt. Case no. 46 of 1918.

82 This analysis is in line with the only published work on dogs in Namibia: Robert J. Gordon, “Fido: Dog Tales of Colonialism in Namibia,” in *Canis Africanis: A Dog History of Southern Africa*, edited by Lance van Sittert & Sandra Swart (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 173-192.

83 LMG 1/2/1/1 Rex (via Magistrate Mariental/Gibeon) v. Sinau: Case no. 36 of 1924.

84 LMA 3/1/17 file no. 16/1919: Magistrate Maltahöhe to Military Constable Maltahöhe - “Collection of Dog Tax for 1919-1920” - 11 September 1919.

85 LAR 1 Rex (via Magistrate Aroab) v. Willem Kooper: Case no. 55 of 1920.

work (2) Certificate for exemption from labour (3) Pass for employment.⁸⁶ In order to apply for a certificate for exemption from labour, one must provide “visible means of support,” which equated with 10 large stock or 50 small stock (or a combination thereof). Naturally, this exemption applied only to Africans living in reserves as well. Those who could not provide any of the above documentation were deemed vagrants, and were either arrested or “induced” to find employment. The latter was the preferred option for Native Commissioners, Reserve Superintendents and District Magistrates, because it then placed less of a financial burden on the government.⁸⁷ Those who were imprisoned still had to have their rations paid by the government, even if their labour on the railroads, roads authority, etc. led to government profit. Some, such as the Magistrate at Karibib, seemed to care little about the financial burden (which was likely small); rather, he argued in line with Gijs Hofmeyr's moralizing effects of “honest labour.” According to the Magistrate, “It hardly appears suitable to punish natives for not obtaining work with imprisonment without labour.”⁸⁸

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the conception, implementation, and consequences of the Dog Tax, particularly as it relates to Southern Namibia up through the end of the 1930s. It is argued that because of the ecological, economic, and settlement transformations described in the previous two chapters, Namibia's dog tax should be viewed through the Marxian lens of Primitive Accumulation. As pointed out in Chapter One regarding Matthew Forstater's article on

86 SWAA A.50/27: Officer in Charge of Native Affairs, Windhoek to Magistrate Windhoek - “What Constitutes Vagrancy?” - February 15, 1918. SWAA A.50/27: Magistrate Windhoek to Officer in Charge of Native Affairs, Windhoek - “Vagrancy” - February 20, 1918.

87 SWAA A.50/27: Acting Military Magistrate Windhoek to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Re: Pass Laws: Vagrancy” - June 26, 1917.

88 SWAA A.50/27: Asst Military Magistrate Karibib to Secretary for S.W.A. - “Notes on Native Administration” - December 16, 1915.

Colonial Taxation and Primitive Accumulation, while it is important that direct taxation is taking place, insofar as it is monetising the colonial economy and necessitating cash possession and exchange, this sort of analysis is incomplete. We must deeply consider *what* is being taxed. There were many other colonial taxes taking place during this time period which did not elicit the hatred which the dog tax had (especially in the Bondels Reserve).

Because of the ecological transformations contributing to the growth in jackal and vermin numbers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the political implications of subsidies to white farmers at the expense of black pastoral self-sufficiency, dogs became even more important to the Nama agro-pastoral mode of production. With specific training, dogs became a cheap and effective way to manage predator numbers. The dog tax was enforced heavily, especially in the well-documented 1917 collection, routinely leading to more dogs killed by the police than registered by the owners. Furthermore, very little revenue was raised by the tax, further implying its non-monetary basis.

This chapter has also explored the contingency of primitive accumulation. We must take seriously intent and ideology in understanding these political, economic, and ecological transformations. Discourse on “honest labour” and an assumption that dogs were responsible for decreased game numbers sincerely affected the passage of dog tax ordinances. Similar to what Michael Perelman has pointed out regarding the game laws in England, Namibia's dog tax represented a convergence point where feudal conceptions about hunting, paternalist conceptions about labour, racist conceptions about dog breeding and care, and capitalist interests collided. As much of the correspondence cited above implies, we must understand that primitive accumulation is not necessarily a uni-linear transformation from peasant to proletarian; these policies are contested in many different moments. The Dog Tax was most glamorously contested

via the Bondelswarts Uprising of 1922.

To conclude, why was the dog tax such a big deal in Southern Namibia during the first two decades of South African rule? According to most of my interviewees, the dog tax was about restricting Nama self-sufficiency, nothing else. In the words of Abraham Christiaan:

The dog tax was a way of enforcing the indigenous African people to lose what he has. Dogs are our defender, for black men who didn't have guns. If any stranger comes, the dog will protect his owner. The dog was the doctor for the black person, because if you have a wound, the dog will lick the wound. It was the only doctor. In those days, [the colonisers] were poisoning the water, the dogs won't drink poisoned water. If you go to drink it, the dog will chase you away. . . Those people [the colonizers] realized this and put in the dog tax laws to ensure that this useful resource could not be used.¹

Surprisingly, this is a distinctly materialist understanding of dogs. In today's climate of African studies, these sorts of analyses are out style, or “old school.” While there is indeed a great deal of collective memory of trauma of witnessing dogs being killed by the police, the significance of the dog tax to the Nama, especially the Bondelswarts, is less one of raw violence, embodied in the dead dog, and more one of loss of economic self-sufficiency.² The historical dog is remembered for its role in pastoral activities, not as a pet or “man's best friend.”

It is my contention that in looking at the role of animals in the labour process, we should understand the dog tax as part of a wider process of primitive accumulation in Southern Namibia. The dog tax, like the game laws of England and Scotland (as described in-depth by Michael Perelman), represents a unique instance where ideologies of “honest labour” and the sportsmanship of the “noble” hunt align, perhaps unintentionally, with capitalist interests. Regarding the English game laws, Perelman notes that “The gentry could enjoy the prestige of hunting, while the capitalists could enjoy the labor of many of the people who were forbidden to

1 Interview with Mr. Abraham Christiaan, 18 January 2015, Omaruru.

2 For other examples of destruction of animals in Southern African contexts, see Nancy J. Jacobs, “The Great Bophuthatswana Donkey Massacre: Discourse on the Ass and the Politics of Class and Grass,” *American Historical Review* 106, no. 2 (2001), 485-507. And see Jacob Tropp, “Dogs, Poison, and the Meaning of Colonial Intervention in the Transkei, South Africa,” in *Canis Africanis*, 145-172.

hunt as a means of subsistence.”³ Similar conclusions can be drawn regarding both the use of dogs in the hunt and as protection against jackals.

In the face of increasing pastoral self-sufficiency during the early years of South African rule in Southern Namibia, state measures were taken not just to subsidise white settlement and agricultural production in the region, but also to constrict black agriculture and create a pool of poorly paid farm labourers. Based on the specific ecological conditions of the region, one of the most efficient ways of doing this was through interventions into how farmers controlled vermin populations. Without state subsidies or loans to build jackal-proof fencing, black shepherds relied more heavily on dogs to protect sheep. The dog tax and subsequent killing of dogs should be viewed less as corporeal realities of colonialism, and more as a, perhaps unintentional, state subsidy of white agriculture in the region. Studying Namibian taxation in this way allows us to both complicate what we understand subsidies to be, but also to show that while primitive accumulation is useful framework to understand these phenomena, it is anything but a straightforward procession from self-sufficient peasant producer to wage labourer; these processes were messy, uneven, and fraught with ideological and material considerations and contestations. Furthermore, we must not just understand taxation as “monetisation” in the most abstract sense, but understand the significant of *what* is taxed.⁴

These “subsidies” have long term effects, the largest being that black Namibians found it very difficult to tap into the Karakul pelt market. While not making up nearly as large a share as during the 1940s-1960s, Karakul sheep are a very profitable industry and form the backbone of the livestock economy of the South to this day. Because of ecological constraints within

3 Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* (Durham: Duke, 2000), 45.

4 For taxation as monetisation, see Matthew Forstater, “Taxation and Primitive Accumulation: The Case of Colonial Africa” *Research in Political Economy* 22 (2005), 51-65. See also Rune Skarstein, “Primitive Accumulation: Concept, Similarities and Varieties,” in *Framing African Development: Challenging Concepts*, edited by Kjell Havnevik, Terje Oestigaard, Eva Tobisson, and Tea Virtanen (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 135-168.

communal areas, a lack of post-independence Nama resettlement, and fewer market connections, black Namibians find it difficult, though not impossible, to tap into this industry.⁵ Understanding the history of capitalism in Southern Namibia, while not providing all of the answers we need, can take us in the right direction to grasping contemporary inequalities in the agricultural sector, and perhaps future directions towards restitution.

5 Interview with Mrs. Angela Bezuidenhout, Daunoëb 1, 12 January 2016.

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