

3.2 THE MISSIONARIES INTERFERE IN LOCAL POLITICS 1842-1883

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Image Filename: Chron of Namibia (KlausDierks) annotated TOC 3'2 Missionaries Interfere|1842-1883 (Scrn Shot 2017-02-04 at 227PM)

Early 1840s

Wiping out
wildlife |
through trade,
draining
assets &
productive
resources|
forcing into
physical
dependency

Namaland undergoes a rapid social change in the first half of the 18th century, from a kinship-based, pastoral, self-sufficient society, to military oligarchies supported by European missionaries, which are dependent for production on a destructive trade network of European traders and hunters. These dependencies lead to increased "underdeveloping qualities". Natural resources are irreparably destroyed (between 1760 and 1880 immense populations of seals, elephants, rhinoceroses and even giraffes in southern and central Namibia are wiped out) old, well established skills such as the digging of wells with hard labour (or the manufacturing of household utensils) are lost with resulting dependencies on springs and fountains which again lead to the closure of whole settlements.

The destructive trade network with the Cape Colony drains the country of assets and productive resources and receives nothing comparable in exchange. This is in spite of the fact that the Orlam Afrikaners and their allies do issue certain controls in order to keep in check the trade links with the Cape.

New diseases are introduced from the Cape Colony, i.e. smallpox, venereal diseases and alcoholism.

The social and historical distinctions between original Nama groups and the Orlams as well as the old group structures have all but vanished by the time these polities emerge.

From now on mission stations are planned as military centres, even the churches.

DIScouraging/Curtailing habits innate to
self-sufficiency re: access to WATER!!

The missionary campaign to christianise Africa not only converts "heathens" into Christians, but also tries to convert Africans into Europeans. Many of the African (and Namibian) traditions disappear not so much because of theologically-based criticism, but rather because of the cultural imperialism of the early European missionaries.

Historical and anthropological studies show that the advent of Christian mission change the cultural imagination of Africans fundamentally. The efforts of Christian missionaries are decisive in the imposition of a new mode of being, the reconstruction of religion, aesthetics, knowledge, bodily representation, sexuality, gender relations, social institutions, such as marriage and the family, and indeed most of aspects of people's living. Thus, the cultural implications of Christian missions cause a cardinal reconstruction of identity and the social space.

For instance, most missionary societies in Namibia are most fervently opposed to traditional life styles such as "pagan customs". The two Lutheran missionary societies, the Rhenish and the Finnish Missionary Societies are especially strict..The Anglican and Roman Catholic churches are much more permissive in terms of allowing indigenous customs and cultural expressions such as the *Efundula*, the traditional wedding in Ovamboland. But these two churches also contribute little to the preservation and survival of such customs.

Particularly Carl Hugo Hahn from the Rhenish Missionary Society tries later to establish a politically and economically autonomous mission colony in Otjimbingwe by "Mission through colonisation".

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