

ORIGINS OF SLAVE TRADE; SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE GUNS SLAVE CYCLE AND THE LEGACY OF DISARMAMENT

By
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- “A peculiar development far from the West African Coast took place in Southern Africa. Slave Trade in Southern Africa though it does not receive the same examination in regard to the slave trade as its West African counterpart, had significant importance, especially concerning the guns-slave cycle. The transatlantic slave system and the guns for slave’s cycle shaped Southern Africa's trajectory. Modern arms and their control by Europeans subjected Africans to a European advance that allowed for African disenfranchisement in coexistence with a developing inherent racism in Southern Africa that would create poverty, racism, and inequity for black Africans within Southern Africa.”



DEMANDS FOR LABOR AND ORIGINS OF AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

- There are two essential preconditions mobilizing slavery as a practice under Europeans.
 - The first is that neither most Western Europeans nor any other significantly large group of people in the early modern world saw slavery as objectionable. Lisa Lindsay. *Captive and Commodities*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2008. 23
 - Secondly, European capabilities were critical in the creation of the trade as their aims: they began to deal in African slaves, obviously, only after they could do so. The navigational technology and information used to sail to and chart the ocean and the new world serving as the spark to ignite a flame. The entire system of the Atlantic Slave Trade rested on European seafaring, which allowed for exploration outside of their own domains quickly and through the sea. Lisa Lindsay. *Captive and Commodities*. 23



LABOR NEEDED IN THE AMERICAS

- Atlantic slave system because their enterprises in the Americas were very profitable. Europeans developed colonies in the Caribbean and South and North America and established operations to mine for gold and silver; grow cash crops, like tobacco, cotton, or, most importantly, sugarcane; and service the growing settler populations. Lindsay. 23
- Initially, there was no foregone conclusion that workers in these enterprises would be Africans or that they would be slaves. Colonial projects used Native American, European, and African workers in various arrangements, including wage labor, indentured servitude, labor tribute (labor exacted as a tax), and chattel slavery. Lindsay. 24
- Native populations could be used as labor severely plummeted because of disease. Native American's immune systems had no resistance to the great variety of infectious diseases that had long plagued Africans, Europeans, Asians, and smallpox, for example, devastated the Taino population and Columbus's conquest in the 1540s, the Taino people dropped from several million to several thousand. Lindsay. 24



LABOR NEEDED IN THE AMERICAS CONTD.

- Following Hernan Cortes' conquest of the Aztecs, their population fell from approximately 13-25 million to 700,000. Nearly 75 percent of the Mayan population had died, while in the Inca region, the population fell from approximately 9 million to 600,000. Brazil's native population fell from 2.5 million to just a million a century after the Portuguese arrival. Lindsay. 26.
- European slaves would have been cheaper for the new world. The response to this was that there was a conscious exemption of Europeans for the enslavement of themselves. Slaves from Europe would be more than just convicts, indentured servants, prisoners, and vagrants as they were regarded as humans Joseph E. Harris. *Africans and Their History*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1972.





SAO TOME SETS THE PRECEDENT

- The first groups of slaves were small, mostly used for sugar cultivation on the island of Sao Tome. This would change in the 1550s with the Congo's upheaval, which allowed the Portuguese to acquire a growing number of slaves on the coast. The number while on the increase remained small compared to what it would become. The Portuguese had captured about 2,000 slaves a year to be brought to smaller Atlantic islands and mainland Europe. Two thousand more went to Sao Tome each year as well; it was not until the mid-sixteenth century when other Europeans began trading for slaves when numbers began to increase dramatically. James Walvin. *Atlas Of Slavery*.



SALVE TRADE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Vasco de Gama's first voyage around the tip of southern Africa set into motion a series of events that assured centuries of economic and political unrest as three forces of Africans, Arabs, and Europeans sought dominance.
- This voyage was transformative, and Southern Africa would come under the pressures of globalization. The South-eastern coast came with European introduction after Vasco De Gama, and in the post-encounter experience, they began within a few years the seizing of wealthy yet divided cities. They had established themselves at Mocambique (Mozambique) and Sofala (historic seaport/Mozambique), which soon became critical ports of call for ships to India. Marks. "European and African Interaction from the 15th through the 18th Century," 2020



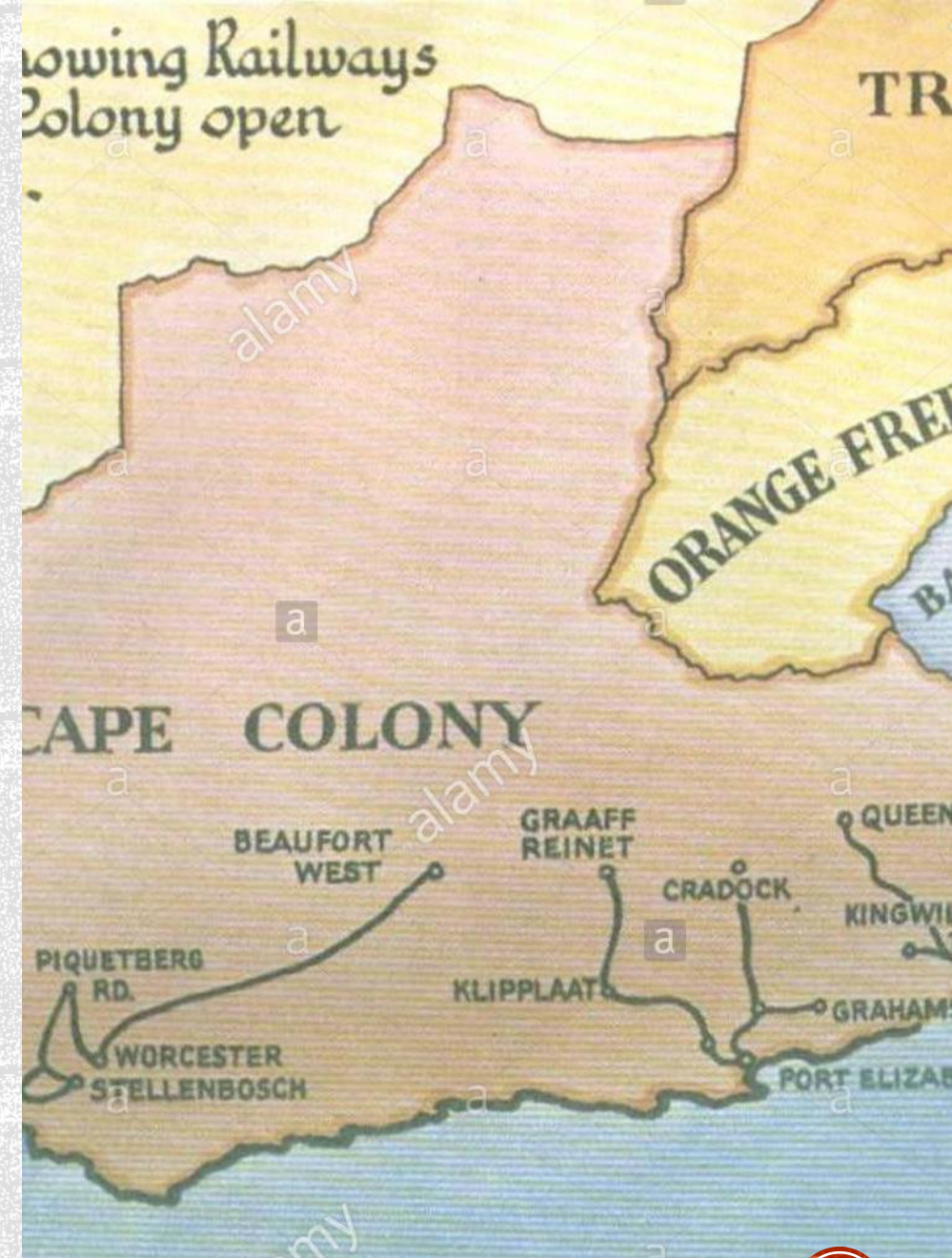


SLAVE TRADE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA CONTD.

- Portuguese dominated the trade exits from the coast and had established fortresses and trade fairs along the Zambezi and on the plateau, where Africans came to exchange ivory and gold for beads and cloth. After 1541 Portuguese residents at these outposts elected representatives, who were delegated certain powers by the Mwene Mutapa.
- The Portuguese interest in gold, ivory, and other mineral resources of the eastern African interior, particularly after 1700, became a focal point in their endeavors when the gold appeared exhausted. A search for silver mines had led them first into Malawi in the 17th century, and from that point, there is direct, though fragmentary, evidence of developments in the region. South African History Online. "History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa."

THE CAPE

- It was in 1652 when the Dutch East India Company dispatched Commander Jan van Riebeeck and 125 men to set up a provisioning station at the Cape. This outpost at the Cape inevitably became a colony and settlement, and in 1657 many servants of the Dutch became citizens and were referred to as free burghers cultivated the land and herd cattle on its behalf.
- Although the company prohibited the enslavement of the local inhabitants from protecting the cattle trade, the loosely organized Khoikhoi were undermined by Dutch demands for their cattle and encroachment on their grazing lands waterholes.
- As one group became impoverished and reluctant to trade, another would take its place. South African History Online. "History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa."



THE CAPE CONTD

Thus, the cape and South Africa became heavily engaged in the slave trade. The year of 1652 meant slavery and the forced labor model within South Africa, and it was, in fact, the original model of colonialism practiced by the Dutch, and much of the labor force came from the Western Cape into the Afrikaner Republics of the Orange Free State and the Zuis-Afrikaansche Republike. Many South Africans are descendants of slaves brought to the Cape Colony from 1652 to 1822. South African History Online. "History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa."

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THE CAPE CONTD.

- . A slaving station was established in Delagoa Bay in 1721 but was abandoned in 1731. From 1731 and 1765, more and more slaves were bought from Madagascar, and in 1795, the Cape Colony became a British colony, before it was returned to the Dutch in 1802.
- During this first period of British rule, South-East Africa became the primary source of slaves. This trend continued with the Dutch's return, who continued to buy slaves from slave traders operating in present-day Mozambique. When in control of the Cape, The Dutch East India company sent slavers to Mozambique and Madagascar.
- The primary purpose of these expeditions was to trade slaves, and between 1720 and 1790, slave numbers increased from 2500 to 14,500. South African History Online. "History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa."





THE CAPE CONTD.

- At the time of the final ending of slavery in 1838, the slave population stood at around 38,000. However, unlike the European population, which doubled in number with each generation through natural increase, the Cape's slave populations harsh living conditions meant that their numbers could only be sustained through continued importation. Between 1652 and the ending of the slave trade in 1807, about 60,000 slaves were imported into the colony.
- Thus, the Cape became not just a society where some people were slaves, but a fully-fledged slave society. In slave societies, the institution of slavery touched all aspects of life, as slavery was central to the social, economic, and legal institutions. As the Cape Colony boundaries expanded beyond the immediate vicinity of Table Bay, slaves were put to work on the wine and wheat farms of the southwestern Cape. Quite simply, the colonial economy could not function without slave labor, and therefore slave-ownership was widespread.

- Along the Limpopo and Vaal river networks, Delagoa Bay slavers created a competition in which crops, famine, and violence became commonplace in the region..
- And such became a crucial aspect in the South African expanse from very early on, the destabilizing of the region in this colonial manner became the narrative of Southern Africa. South African History Online. “History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa.”



GUNS SLAVE CYCLE

- . The firearm was perhaps the second most crucial trade item after that of the slave.
- John Thornton writes that Europeans did nevertheless promote the slave trade through indirect military pressure created by European control of important military technology, such as horses and guns. In this scenario – the "gun-slave cycle" or "horse-slave cycle" – African were compelled to trade in slaves, because without this commerce, they could not obtain the necessary military technology (guns or horses) to defend themselves from any enemy.
- Furthermore, possession of the technology made them more capable of obtaining slaves, because successful war guaranteed large supplies of slaves. Hence the operation of their control over "the means of destruction" ... Europeans were able to influence Africans indirection. They could direct commerce to help them compel Africans to wage wars that might otherwise not have been waged. This would cause Africans to seek more slaves than needed for their own political and economic ends and depopulate the country against their wishes.
- David Northrup. *Africa's Discovery Of Europe*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014. 49



GUNS SLAVE CYCLE CONT

- Between 1796 and 1805, there was a total of 1,615,309 guns imported to West Africa from England. In the second half of the eighteenth century, there was an annual of between 333,000-444,000 more imports annually for guns. David Northrup. *Africa's Discovery Of Europe*. 51
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- It was estimated that Gold Coast and slave coast Africans began to purchase 180,000 guns a year with large quantities of powder and shot, amassing to 20 million guns from 1750-1807 in the region. Northrup. 53





**IMPORTANCE OF
GUNS IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA**

- In colonial Southern Africa, gun amassing had become commonplace, and with-it skilled shooters were present, especially in South Africa's gun society. The early 19th century saw many Boers distributing guns through trade with Africans despite the Dutch East India's company forbidding them to do so. William K, Storey. "Guns, Race, and Skill in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa." *Technology and Culture* 45, no. 4 (2004): 687
- In the late 19th century, Africans had become deeply enmeshed in southern Africa's emerging capitalist economy, frequently using their wages to buy guns, and this gun ownership became a concern for British and Boer settlers. William K, Storey. "Guns, Race, and Skill in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa." 701

IMPORTANCE OF GUNS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The gun was seen as a political instrument of power as it issued the means for resistance, assault, and the confrontation to retain African legitimacy. Europeans knew that this could pose a threat to their colonial aims, and they looked for means in which they looked to further their control over African territory.

. By 1870 – The Scramble for Africa, "The British and Boer officials incorporated disarmament in their plans to despoil Africans of their land. While developing plans to disarm, disposes, and disenfranchise Africans, British settler-politicians argued that white should take care to maintain their skills with arms – not to denude the environment of animals but to defend against attacks by dangerous Africans." Storey. 701



DISARMAMENT

- It was said that depriving Africans of full citizenship would make the Boers and the Natal settlers comfortable with confederation, thus insinuating a vicious cycle of expropriation that came with the slave trade and system racism that was bread during the Atlantic trade and the capes slave society.
- The Europeans were now dictating as they had done for countless years the rights of Africans in which the land belonged to. It was daunting to see the disenfranchisement of Africans in Southern Africa. The Europeans' additional aims were to simplify labor relations in an emerging capitalist economy in which European settlers hoped to turn Africans into miners and farmhands. Storey. 703



ANTILIBERAL AND LIBERAL THOUGHTS ON GUNS IN THE HANDS OF AFRICANS

- The antiliberals sought to keep Africans at arm's length, to strip them of their land and turn them into compliant laborers. In general, they scorned African capabilities. But antiliberal settlers and officials portrayed Africans as so skilled with firearms as to threaten the new political order. In southern Africa, antiliberals used descriptions of skill to help build a new kind of racially exclusive state.
- According to the report of the Colonial Defence Commission, skill did not indicate civilization as much as it signaled danger." In the settlers testifying before the commission, they stated that they feared an attack from the Xhosa who were skilled marksmen and when the commission asked whether the Xhosa were more to be dreaded with a gun or with an assegai," individuals responded: "A gun, decidedly, and they will become more accustomed to the gun every day.
- In those times [the wars of 1835 and 1846], they were very indifferent shots, and the guns were very inferior." Now, he implied, the Xhosa were becoming more skilled and were using better weapons.
- Other settlers tended to agree, as did some of the soldiers who were stationed in the Eastern Cape; in addition to Martin, fourteen settlers testified to that effect before the commission, while three disagreed. For some, it was not easy to admit that the Xhosa might be skilled. The commission asked one magistrate, John Hemming, if he thought the Xhosa were more dangerous with guns. He answered: "Of course they are more formidable with guns; but they are bad shots."
- Storey. 705



BASOTHO DISARMAMENT

- Such examples are recognized by the Sotho people, where Basotho chiefs were preparing for their fight against the Cape Colony in what became known as the Gun War of 1880–81.
- The Basotho were indicative and dually justified in the fight for the Basotho to bear arms, and the coming Gun War would be an issue over land, sovereignty, and the establishment of colonial rule by the Cape Colony.
- In April 1880, the Cape government extended the Peace Preservation Act, which had already been imposed in the Cape Colony, to Basutoland and ordered the surrender of all guns to local magistrates in exchange for monetary compensation. About half of the adult male population of Basutoland owned a gun, and the majority had paid ten pounds for their guns, with many guns valued at twenty-five pounds and guns had determined the outcomes of battles over land, cattle, and people in southern Africa for fifty years. Elizabeth Eldredge. *Power in Colonial Africa: Conflict and Discourse in Lesotho, 1870–1960*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007. 71
- Elizabeth Eldredge. *Power in Colonial Africa: Conflict and Discourse in Lesotho, 1870–1960*. 71



BASOTHO CONTD.

- The Basotho were insistent on retaining their arms derived not from the hours of labor and the capital they had invested in obtaining them but from the desire to protect their land, property, and freedom.
 - Cape Colony subsequently planned to double the hut tax, appropriate £12,500 from Basutoland to pay for the expenses of the colony, and, most important, confiscate the fertile Quthing District so that the land could be sold to white farmers. While disarmament was an important grievance and precipitated the rebellion, the planned confiscation of the Quthing District for white settlement was perceived by the Basotho as having much more serious ramifications because of the precedent it would set for future land expropriation. This was the intention of the Cape government, which explicitly stated that it did not accept that Basutoland would be maintained as a “reserve” for the use of Basotho only. Eldredge. 72



BASOTHO CONTD.

- The Cape government, which was driven by colonial politics and politicians, refused to acknowledge that its disarmament and land dispossession policies were incessant of disastrous results. Diverse factors drove the colonial enterprise, and colonial discourse encompassed dramatic disagreements over land expropriation's wisdom for white settlers' benefit. Eldredge writes that “any land expropriation from the Basotho would have possible ramifications ... “They will naturally conclude that this is only the thin end of the wedge and that, upon one pretext or another, they will eventually be deprived of all their country.”
Eldredge. 73



CONTEMPORARY ISSUES DERIVED IN SLAVE TRADE AND GUNS CYCLE

- South Africa in its current state despite often-large investments and concerted policy efforts to improve housing, public services, infrastructure, and state technical capacities, delivery of public goods and services remains still possesses and reflects the inadequate and unequally distributed resource. Nicolas Cook. “South Africa: Current Issues, Economy, and U.S. Relations.” *Congressional Research Service*, no. 9, (2020).
- Black South Africans live in poverty, and their average per capita incomes are roughly one-fifth those of the historically privileged white minority. Nicolas Cook. “South Africa: Current Issues, Economy, and U.S. Relations.”



SOUTH AFRICA'S STATISTICS IN RELATION TO SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUITY

- “Income and consumption distribution are notably unequal. South Africa's GINI coefficient—a measure of income inequality—is consistently highest or among the highest globally. There are also significant regional, rural-urban, and racial socioeconomic and infrastructure disparities. Large segments of the poor majority lack access to decent housing and adequate infrastructure services (e.g., electricity and water), especially in rural areas and in the vast, high-density settlements surrounding most cities. Known as townships, they are mostly populated by poor black and mixed-race “coloured” inhabitants.
- Many residents in these areas live in informal housing and often lack legal property ownership, and local governments periodically evict recently settled squatters and destroy their homes. There also are extreme racial disparities in access to land,
- Cook. “South Africa: Current Issues, Economy, and U.S. Relations.”



SOUTH AFRICA'S STATISTICS IN RELATION TO SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUITY

- Despite the continuous implementation of land redistribution and restitution initiatives since 1994. Under such programs, the state has purchased large amounts of land intended to be transferred to populations that had limited or no ability to own land under the apartheid system—primarily those of black, “coloured” or Indian descent. While black ownership and other access to land has risen markedly in some provinces since 1994, redistribution and restitution processes have been slow and have resulted in less extensive transfers than initially projected.
- As a result, the small minority white population continues to own over 70% of land nationally.



AFRICA'S

- When recalling gun ownership issues related to land in Southern Africa, the historical precedent from the transatlantic slave trade and colonial slave society is relatively present in modern-day Africa. Such disproportionate access to land was a vital factor in the disparities of land ownership, income, and the racially charged overall disenfranchisement of blacks.
- It was in instances where the Cape Colony conspired and manufactured disarmament for the expropriation of African lands.



SOLUTIONS TO MODERN DAY ISSUES

- The nature of such has been difficult to reverse. Perhaps in the best interest of black Africans, the policies that would induce land ownership, develop education, healthcare, and ultimately push the means to reduce government corruption.
- While the lasting effects of slavery and the slave trade have affected the black psyche due to poverty, systemic racism, and the exploitation of resources, such cannot continue for those Africans nor their descendants across the globe.
- Reparations



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