


“STINKY AND SMELLY – BUT PROFITABLE”: THE CAPE GUANO

TRADE, c.1843 – 1910

HENDRIK SNYDERS



**DISSERTATION PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HISTORY)
IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**

PROMOTOR: PROFESSOR SANDRA S. SWART

CO-PROMOTOR: PROFESSOR ALBERT. M. GRUNDLINGH

DECEMBER 2011

DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualifications.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

ABSTRACT

Soil infertility and concomitant low levels of food security under conditions of population pressure and land scarcity have been, and still remain, one of society's most daunting challenges. Over time, societies have tried to maximize the yield from the available land through the use of various fertilisers. In the 19th century in the midst of an environment infertility crisis, guano (bird dung) from the Peruvian coastal islands became, through a combination of factors, the international fertilizer of choice for most commercial farmers. As a result, a combination of natural factors, monopoly control and price manipulation contributed to the relative scarcity of the product. Nevertheless, strategic manoeuvring between the major players prevented any significant change in the supply regime.

News of discoveries along the African coasts in the 1840s, some inside the territorial waters of the Cape Colony, introduced a new dimension to the trade. Both established merchant houses and new contenders strategised in an attempt to gain monopoly control. These events created new policy crises for the Cape Colony, the closest legal authority, and led to new policy and other initiatives in the absence of imperial precedents. The trade in guano also impacted on constitutional, political and scientific developments in the colony. Key amongst these was the struggle for monopoly control over both the Cape- and Ichaboe-based supply, which pitted individuals, family members and businesses against each other. The process became intertwined with political developments such as the transfer of political control from the Imperial authorities to the colonies. In addition, a coercive labour system developed under the colonial administration and colonial farmers struggled for fair access to the fertiliser, which added another dimension to the trade.

OPSOMMING

Daar is 'n noue verband tussen bevolkingsgetalle, oesopbrengs, voedselsekureiteite die beskikbaarheid van voldoende bewerkbare landbougrond. Waar samelewings probleme ervaar met die gehalte van hul landbougrond, is daar heel dikwels ook lae vlakke van voedselsekureiteit en word daar gewoonlik ook 'n onsekere van-die-hand-tot-die-mond bestaan gevoer. As 'n teenvoeter vir hongersnood as gevolg van lae oesopbrengs, het uiteenlopende samelewings met verloop van tyd en na gelang van hulle natuurlike omstandighede, bepaalde bemestingstradisies ontwikkel in 'n poging om 'n volhoubare opbrengs te verseker.

Gedurende die 19de eeu, het ghwanobemesting te midde van 'n wêreldwye grondgehalte krisis, ongekende gewildheid onder winsgedrewe landbouers bereik en voorts ook daarin geslaag om ander vorme van bemesting soos beenmeel en kraalmis as voorkeur produkte te vervang. As gevolg van 'n kombinasie van natuurlike faktore, monopoliebeheer oor die eiland-gebaseerde ghwanobron en prysmanipulasie, was die produk wataanklik net vanaf Peru in Suid Amerika ingevoer is, dus nie vrylik beskikbaar nie en moes belangstellende boere hoë pryse daarvoor betaal. Vanselfsprekend het dit tot groot frustrasie en ontsteltenis in die geleedere van diegene wat 'n belegging in kommersiële landbou wou maak, gelei. Die onderlinge politieke intriges, knoeiery en pogings van plaaslike en oorsese sakemanne om mekaar te uitoorlê in die soeke na alleenbeheer oor die beskikbare ghwanobronne, het sake nie juis verbeter nie. Intendeel, die situasie het net vererger toe alternatiewe ghwano bronne langs die wes- en ooskus van Afrika sowel as op 'n reeks ander eilande in die Atlantiese Oseaan ontdek is.

Die ontdekking van ghwano binne die Kaapse gebeidswaters in die 19de eeu, het die owerhede met 'n beleidsdilemma waarvoor daar nie enige presedente in die Britse Ryk bestaan het nie gelaat. Daarbenewens was die kolonie te midde van heelparty konstitusionele en ander kwessies en het die toevoeging van die ghwanohandel die maatskaplike en politieke lewe van die kolonie wesenlik beïnvloed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. To Our Creator – for a blessed life despite our sinful nature.
2. I wish to thank my supervisors, Professors Sandra Swart and Albert Grundlingh for their wise counsel and academic leadership and insistence on rigorous research at all times. Your empathy and morale, as well as physical support through difficult times, restored my faith in humanity.
3. My wife and children for their unwavering support and patience for over two decades and for taking a backseat to birds, islands and guano. Your love and support is immeasurable. My gratitude to you knows no bounds.
4. My heartfelt gratitude to the following:
 - My parents, sister, Faith and brother-in-law, Sydney. Your love, support and contribution is an account for life.
 - Robbie Jansen, who during the early years (and unconditionally) provided me with the necessities of life and who sustained me during the lean and difficult 1980s. A friend for life. I salute you!
 - Francois Davids, President of the Boland Rugby Union, for extending a vital helping hand, employment and friendship to me at a time when it was sorely needed.
 - University of Stellenbosch for critical financial support.
 - Personnel of the Cape Archives, National Library in Cape Town and University of Stellenbosch Library for invaluable assistance.
 - Marius Meiring, Chief Information Officer at Saldanha Bay Municipality.
 - Abé Davids, Randall Modiba and Ivan Pekeur for their friendship, support and for making life away from home bearable.
 - My former teachers at De Plaat Primary and Weston High School

CONTENT

CHAPTER 1: FOLLOWING GUANO TRACKS – A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Perspectives and Discourses around the Guano Trade: The Secondary Literature
 - 1.2.1. The International Literature
 - 1.2.2. The Southern African Literature
- 1.3. The Primary Resources
- 1.4. Conclusion

CHAPTER 2: FROM PERU TO ICHABOE AND NAURU – THE DYNAMICS OF A SHIFTING GUANO FRONTIER

- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. From Resource Location to the Emergence of the Guano Frontier, c.1800 - 1840
- 2.3. Concessions, Shifting Meanings and the Emergence of a Peruvian Guano Frontier
- 2.4. The Dynamics of the Ichaboe Guano Frontier, 1843 - 1845
 - 2.4.1. From Naming and Claiming to Anarchy
 - 2.4.2. Frontier Dichotomies: Anarchy, Accommodation and the “Lettered” Frontier
- 2.5. The Commercial and Environmental Effects of the Shifting Guano Frontier
- 2.6. Conclusion

CHAPTER 3: “FORTUNATE ADDITION?” FROM A FREE-FOR-ALL TO A CAPE GUANO POLICY, 1843 – 1845

- 3.1. Introduction
- 3.2. Towards a Guano Policy Agenda
- 3.3. The Dynamics of Guano Policy Making
 - 3.3.1. Guano Claims and Policy Contestation
 - 3.3.2. From a ‘Non-judicial Opinion’ to a Formal Policy Process
 - 3.3.3. The Cape Guano Ordinance and Imperial Law
- 3.4. Policy, Mutiny and Jurisdictional Challenges
- 3.5. Policy and Guano Income, 1844 - 1845

3.6. Conclusion

**CHAPTER 4: “OBNOXIOUS AND PREJUDICIAL MONOPOLIES”: SHIFTING
GUANO RELATIONS AND POLITICS IN THE PERIOD 1854 – 1872**

- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. Extra-territoriality, Guano Policy and Monopoly 1846 – 1853
- 4.3. Contesting the Ichaboe Monopoly, c.1850 - 1861
 - 4.3.1. The American Guano Islands Act (1856) and Cape Colonial Relationships
 - 4.3.2. Attacking the Monopoly: Pirates, Interlopers and Family
- 4.4. Guano, ‘Acts of Sovereignty’ and the Challenges of Policy Transfer,
- 4.5. The Dynamics of Guano Political Relations
- 4.6. Restructuring the Trade: From Special Dispensations to a System of Leases
- 4.7. Guano, Colonial Finance and Governance, 1861 - 1872
- 4.8. Conclusion

**CHAPTER 5: “TURNING (GUANO) TO PROPER ACCOUNT”- FARMERS AND THE
STRUGGLE FOR FAIR GUANO ACCESS; 1872 – 1910**

- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. The Commercialisation of Cape Agriculture, c.1800 -1872: An Overview
- 5.3. Towards a Consolidated Cape Guano Trade, 1872 - 1890
 - 5.3.1. Bird Island – The Search for a ‘Judicious Compromise’
- 5.4. The Establishment of the Guano Agency
- 5.5. Fair Access, Regional Interests and Defeating the Guanopreneur, 1890 - 1898
- 5.6. From Protest and Commissions to the Guano Islands Division
- 5.7. The Obstructionist Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, 1898 – 1904
- 5.8. War, Depots and Guano Quality Standards, 1899 - 1910
- 5.9. Seabird Protection, Economic Bounty and “Preventing a Silent Wilderness”
- 5.10. Conclusion

**CHAPTER 6: “A SALTY AND PRECARIOUS ATMOSPHERE” - GUANO LABOUR
RELATIONS DURING THE CAPE AND ICHABOE TRADE, 1843 -
1910**

- 6.1. Introduction
- 6.2. Cost Structure, Guano Collection and the Nature of the Work Environment
- 6.3. Guano Speculation and the Ad Hoc Labour Regime, 1843 – 1845

- 6.4. “Masters Next to God”
- 6.5. Guano Harvesting and the Seasonal Labour Regime; 1847 – 1890
- 6.6. Costs, Commissions and the Colonial Management System, 1890 – 1910
- 6.7. Worker Resistance and Reaction to the Guano Labour System
- 6.8. Conclusion

CHAPTER 7: THE CAPE GUANO TRADE - CONCLUSION

FIGURES:

- Figure 1: The Process of Upwelling
Figure 2: Ichaboe Coat of Arms

MAPS

- Map 1: The 19th Century Guano Frontier
Map 2: The Shifting Geographical and Production Frontier – From Peru to Ichaboe
Map 3: Ichaboe and Neighbouring Islands

TABLES

- Table 1: Guano Income, 1844 – 1845
Table 2: Comparative Income: Guano Agent Commission versus Island Workforce Wages

DIAGRAMS

- Diagram 1: Guano Agency Hierarchy

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER 1

FOLLOWING GUANO TRACKS – A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

1.1 Introduction

The study of the historical uses of guano or the excrement of certain seabirds is a fascinating topic. Research by a variety of scholars has unearthed a surprising array of uses that range from the whimsical periphery to the economically key in both the distant past and the present. Guanine crystal, guano's most potent and active chemical component, is used in the manufacturing of mascara and other cosmetic products.¹ In addition, in contemporary cultural references, guano provided both the backdrop and the weapon for killing the fictional guano entrepreneur and main character, Dr. Julius No, in the 1962 James Bond movie, *Dr No*.² Similarly, the 1964 Stanley Kubrick movie, *Dr. Strangelove*, dramatised an evil character, Colonel "Bat" Guano. Beyond the whimsical, guano played a historically significant role in the social, political and economic lives of a range of societies in the 19th century world. These included Peru, the United States of America, Australia and South Africa. Indeed, the history of guano's political impact resonates today. For example, Gregory T. Cushman, a leading scholar of the Peruvian guano trade, recently detected efforts to use precedents from the guano past to justify the controversial American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Oil in the 21st century, like guano in the 19th century, is a strategic commodity. Unilateral occupation based on the principle of *right of use* is therefore self-serving and an important example of inconsistent policy application that may have unintended consequences.³ The historical record also revealed the use of guano in the manufacturing of gunpowder and murexide,⁴ its application as a possible cure for malaria⁵ and as a source of ignition in the aerial

¹E. Cram, "Re.: How is bat guano used in the production of cosmetics, particularly eye make-up," MadSci Network Home Page, August 9, 2000,

<<http://www.madsci.org/posts/archives/aug2000/965793989.Gb.r.html>>;(December 1, 2007).

²Archipelago Bat Guano, "Homepage"< <http://archipelagobatguano.com/6.shtml>> (December 1, 2007).

³ G.T. Cushman, "Webster, Guano & Empire in Iraq," *History News Network*, 9 (October, 2002), < <http://hnn.us/readcomment.php>> (September 25, 2007).

⁴ C. Cooksey, "*The history and chemistry of the murexide dye, 1840 – 1865.*"

<<http://www.chriscooksey.demon.co.uk/murexide/page3.html>> 2007;(September 25, 2007).

⁵ F.D. Schwarz, "Does guano drive history?" *American Heritage.com*,

communication systems of the Mercury and Gemini space programme in the 1960s.⁶ Indeed, when all guano's various applications are considered, one revisits Schwarz's question about guano as a possible driver of history and the accuracy of the old Peruvian saying that "huano, though no saint, makes miracles happen."⁷

The availability of guano in a particular location depends on the presence of certain guano-producing seabirds such as gannets, cormorants and penguins. Their geographical location is inextricably linked with a natural and very complex phenomenon called upwelling. Upwelling is caused by the interaction of coastal winds, marine erosion of the ocean floor and the topography of the coastline. During this process, dead plant and animal matter sink to the bottom of the sea where they start decaying to form a very rich layer of compost. This rich compost on the seabed can only be utilized once it has reached the water's surface. The south-easterly wind blowing over the surface of the water causes a current to move away from the land and makes a deep depression in the water's surface, which is then filled up with deeper-lying water. In this way the nutritious compost, which is piled up on the seabed, is forced up and can be utilized.⁸ This dynamic process is illustrated in Diagram 1 below. When this compost reaches the surface, it serves as essential food for certain pelagic fish species such as anchovy, pilchard, round herring and horse mackerel, which in turn serve as essential food for other fish, mammals such as whales, and seabirds like gannets, penguins and cormorants. During the breeding season in summer, vast numbers of birds congregate to lay their eggs and to roost their chickens on the offshore islands of locations as diverse as Lobos, Guanape and Chincha on the west coast of Peru, Banaba or Christmas Island, Nauru in the Pacific, and Malgas and Ichaboe Island in the Atlantic Ocean, within easy reach of Cape Town and Namibia. Upon the birds' departure, vast deposits of guano are left behind. These deposits and their chemical components are a vital source of nutrients for the enrichment of the waters surrounding the islands, estuaries and the marine environment in general. The effluent from the islands resulting from the rains serves as a stimulant for the growth of

< http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/2004/2/2004_2_4.shtml > 2004; (December 1, 2007

⁶ J.H. Bickford, "Dung in the space race: A surprising fuel for Projects Mercury and Gemini," *American Heritage.com*, 2004 < http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/2004/2/2004_2_4.shtml >; (December 1, 2007).

⁷ E.F. Hatfield, *St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope or Incidents in the missionary life of the Reverend James McGregor Bertram of St. Helena*, (New York: E.H. Fletcher, 1852), 76

⁸ P. Joubert, "Opwelling is Weskus se 'enjin'." *Custos* 11, no. 11 (1990):42.

phytoplankton, which serves as food for “intertidal community structures” such as mussels, crabs and other similar organisms.⁹

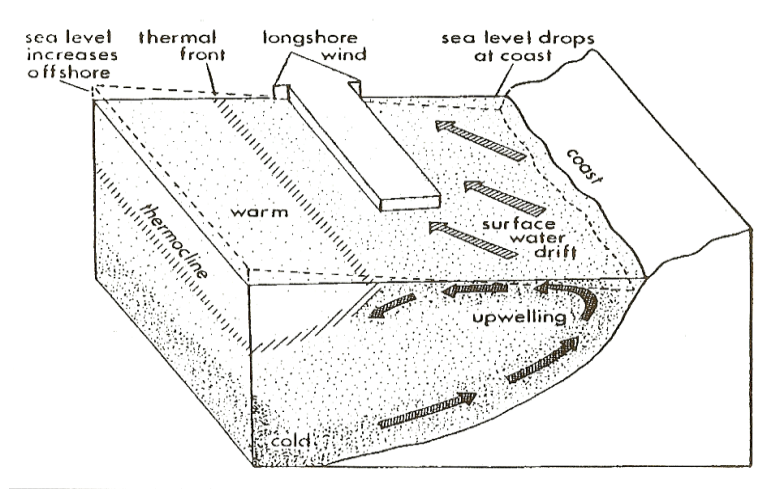


Figure 1: The Process of Upwelling¹⁰

Although the history of guano in human society has been discussed internationally by various historians, Southern African historians are strangely silent on the topic. This absence from the historical record delays integration of the various branches of the trade and frustrates attempts to make significant comparisons between the different contexts.¹¹ It is therefore important to reconstruct the guano past and contextualise its impact. Whilst guano is both a commodity and a resource, the study of the guano trade in the 19th century provides historians with a political, economic and a socio-environmental lens into the past. Given the prominent role of islands in the narrative, the study also has the potential to enrich the discourse on islands and to contribute to shifting the prevailing view of islands as isolated locations - devoid of anything significant - to one where these locations are acknowledged as age-old spaces, each with a distinctive heritage that is closely connected to the lives of a diversity of people living in the present.¹²

⁹ A.L. Bosman & P.A.R. Hockey, “Seabird guano as a determinant of rocky intertidal community structure,” *Marine Ecology* 32 (September, 1986): 248.

¹⁰ Joubert, “Opwelling is Weskus se ‘enjin””: 42.

¹¹ C. Newbury, “Mammon in Paradise: Economic Enterprise in Pacific Historiography,” *Pacific Studies* 19, no. 2 (June, 1996): 47.

¹² M.K. Matsuda, “The Pacific.” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006)
<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/111.3/matsuda.html>> (October 24, 2007)

Investigating the guano past in African waters is contextualised and informed by a strong body of international research on the worldwide trade. Its links with local and regional events aid the historian's understanding of the interplay between the trade and its different contexts. In addition, a very small body of secondary research is available on various aspects of the Southern African trade. This thesis therefore relies on the available archival primary resources as a basis for the completion of a proper study. Although both categories of resources suffer from their own inherent defects, there is much that is useful to enable the construction of a reliable picture of the guano past. The relative strengths and weaknesses as well as merits of the different secondary and primary sources form the basis of the next discussion.

1.2. Perspectives and Discourses around the Guano Trade: The Secondary Literature

The Cape guano trade and its associated environmental impact on seabirds, agriculture and the ecology of the coastal islands locates elements of the topic in the richly textured field of environmental history – a field with a prominent institutional presence¹³ which Flores broadly defined as “the study of different human groups and our evolving relationships with ‘nature’ through time.”¹⁴ It also forms an integral part of the revisionist tradition of historiography.¹⁵ Where environmental history initially had a narrow focus on environmental issues (e.g. the influence of ecological factors on historical events), it has evolved to a point where a diversity of topics such as nature conservation, erosion, medicine and history are covered.¹⁶ Worster identified the central tasks of environmental history as the reconstruction of the structure, functioning and historical redistribution of the natural environment and its

¹³ S. Sörlin & P. Warde, “The problem of the problem of Environmental History – a Re-reading of the Field and its purpose,” (Unpublished Conference Paper, September 2005), 3.

¹⁴ D. Flores, “Environmental History: An Art of People and Place,” *Organization of American Historians (OAH) Magazine of History* (Spring, 1996), 4 .

¹⁵ P. Steyn, “The greening of our past?: An assessment of South African Environmental Historiography,” Lecture presented at the Meeting of the American Society for Environmental History, Tacoma, Washington. *H-Environment Historiography Series*, (2000), <<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~environ/historiography>>(May 14, 2007).

¹⁶ P. Sutter, “Reflections: What can U.S. Environmental Historians Learn from Non-U.S. Environmental Historiography?” *Environmental History* (January, 2003), 2, < www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/8.1./sutter.html > (July 15, 2007)

interaction with humans and technology - the so-called “agro-ecological perspective”.¹⁷ This approach focussed on understanding the trophic natural process, i.e. the processes that determine the flow, channelling and organisation of food and energy within the economy of a small group of living species. In addition, it is aimed at achieving a better understanding of the role of myths, technology and ideology in the dialogue between individuals, groups and nature. The task of the historian, in this regard, is to uncover all the different areas of interaction to the advantage of a specific group of people, especially the rational and systematic reorganisation of the natural world of plants and animals through processes such as fertilisation and related activities.

Powers and Dovers argue that the practice of environmental history is by its nature an interdisciplinary activity. As such, its practitioners actively search for “complementary ways of thinking about questions that span shared interests.”¹⁸ This view is supported by Mosley, who believes that environmental and social history is naturally and logically compatible and complementary.¹⁹ The meeting of guano scrapers and seabirds within the context of a coercive and exploitative labour regime marked by labour resistance, the emergence of new economic and racial identities such as guanopreneurs and coolies, as well as the interaction of imperial and colonial politics as outlined in the unfolding drama of the current study, also place this study within the framework of social and political history. Hobsbawn contends the impossibility of confining the subject matter of social history to a specific area.²⁰ This meeting of environmental history (with its ecological focus) and social history (with its concern for class, gender, race and ethnicity focussing on events over a widely dispersed area involving humans and animals) assists the historian in developing a transnational and global perspective and balancing the “agency of nature” with that of humans, whilst simultaneously explaining change over time.²¹

¹⁷D. Worster, “Transformation of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in history,” *Journal of American History* 76 (1990): 1090

¹⁸E. Pawson & S. Dovers, “Environmental History and the Challenge of Interdisciplinarity: An Antipodean Perspective,” *Environment & History* 9 (2003): 8

¹⁹S. Mosley, “Common Ground: Integrating Social and Environmental history,” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3, (Spring, 2006), < <http://www.historycooperative.org/journal/jsh/39.3/mosley.html> > (May 14, 2007)

²⁰E.J. Hobsbawn, “From Social History to the History of Society,” *Daedalus* 100, no. 1, (Winter, 1971): 24

²¹ Mosley, “Common Ground”

1.2.1. The International Literature

International researchers on the guano trade produced studies on a variety of issues ranging from guano wage labour,²² its impact on urbanisation and cultural change²³ and its evolution as a technological system,²⁴ to the scientific management of Peru's marine environment.²⁵ This has been extended by recent work, especially historical studies on the El Nino phenomenon²⁶ and the links between the Pacific and Peruvian trade and global ecology, as well as on-going work around the Caribbean area of the 19th century guano world.²⁷ New insights, methodologies and approaches were developed regarding topics such as the history of 'guano imperialism' as a particular form of imperialism, the problematic of writing biographical and business history and the establishment of a coercive labour system with the features of a new form of slavery.

There is a tendency in the international historiography to present the Peruvian guano trade, its accompanying chronology (1845–1880) and its effects on the local and international political economy, as the centre and high point of the so-called “guano era.”²⁸ It is also implied that guano extraction was of short duration and ran its course within a certain period of time and impacted on the political life of one particular nation only. As this thesis argues, although the Peruvian trade was crucial for the translocation of the trade, it represents but one episode in a complex narrative which also touched the lives of diverse island communities such as those on Banaba and Nauru, as well as the animal life on Ichaboe and other offshore South African and Namibian islands. The idea of a single “guano age” from this perspective is therefore ahistorical since the guano era did not stop with the consolidation of the Peruvian trade under full state control. The case of stripping the resource on Easter Island (or Banaba as it is now

²² A.J. Meagher, “The introduction of Chinese laborers to Latin America: The Coolie Trade, 1847-1874” (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, 1975).

²³ W.J. Alexander, “Wage labor, Urbanization and Culture Change in the Marshall Islands,” (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1978).

²⁴ R.A. Wines, “From recycled Wastes to Commercial Fertilizers,” (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Brown University, 1981).

²⁵ G.T. Cushman, “The Lords of Guano: Science and Management of Peru's Marine Environment,” 1800-1973. (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Texas, May 2003).

²⁶ G.T. Cushman, “Enclave Vision: Foreign networks in Peru and the Internationalization of El Niño research during the 1920s,” *Proceedings of the International Commission on History of Meteorology* (January 1, 2004).

²⁷ G.T. Cushman (University of Kansas), Personal Communication with H. Snyders (April 11, 2008).

²⁸ P. Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano: Commercial Policy and the State in Post Independence Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

known), followed by the dispossession and relocation of its original inhabitants to an abandoned island further in the Pacific by the British Phosphate Commission and Christmas Island Phosphate Commission, as well as the struggle by the dispossessed during the late 20th century to obtain redress through the International Court of Justice, clearly indicates continuity beyond the one guano era. This is also further demonstrated by the on-going attempts by various indigenous Pacific historians to explain the real influence of the extraction of guano on their history and existence as part of a larger indigenous history project.²⁹ Newbury is therefore correct in his assessment that studies which integrate the various branches of the trade into a coherent and comprehensive record to allow for significant comparisons are crucial to gain a full understanding of the importance of events of the past.³⁰ An authoritative history of the Cape guano trade is therefore not only an academic necessity of value to South Africans, but also for the historiographical world at large.

John Phillips,³¹ Jimmy Skaggs³² and Dan O'Donnell³³ have argued that the guano trade was an integral part of the unfolding of 19th century colonialism and imperialism. This contention has been advanced by a previous generation of scholars such as A.J.P. Taylor³⁴ and R.W. Bixler.³⁵ Skaggs, however, specifically concentrated on the manner in which guano and the activities of guano entrepreneurs shaped the policy-making process of the United States to give rise to what he called a foreign policy of paternalistic intervention and governance. The latter is symbolised by active military and political support to local businessmen intent on monopolising all available guano resources, whether on rocks, keys or islands. O'Donnell agreed with the basic tenets of Skaggs' argument and proposed that America's acquisition of the offshore island and others overseas was the result of systematic rather than wayward policy action. Benton's view of islands as geographical enclaves and zones of exception

²⁹ H. Waters, "Historiography of the Pacific: the case of The Cambridge History," *Race & Class* 41, no.4 (2000).

³⁰ Newbury. "Mammon in Paradise": 47.

³¹ J.A.S. Phillips, *Deutsch-englische Komödie der Irrungen um Südwestafrika: eine Studie zu Bismarcks Kolonialpolitik und deren Folgen*, (Pfaffenhofen: Afrika Verlag, 1986)

³² J. Skaggs, *The Great Guano Rush: Entrepreneurs and American Overseas Expansion*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1994)

³³ D. O'Donnell, "The Pacific guano islands: The stirring of American empire in the Pacific Ocean," *Pacific Studies* 16, no 1, 1993

³⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, *Germany's first bid for colonies, 1884- 1885* (London: Macmillan, 1938).

³⁵ R. W. Bixler, *Anglo- German Imperialism in South Africa, 1880 – 1900* (Baltimore: Warwick & York Inc., 1932).

relates closely to these debates. In the 19th century scramble for distant colonies, individuals and groups of European origin employed various legal practices, ‘seemingly unrelated to conquest’, to motivate their actions.³⁶ In order to safeguard their personal interests in the face of challenges by their own brethren and the communities’ residing in the occupied territories, they used their access to certain strategic decision-makers to secure legal and political exceptions to legitimise their presence. This trend has been observed in the international guano trade where exceptions to the rule have been used to establish yet another new frontier, namely the ‘guano frontier.’³⁷

Over the last three decades, research into the social history of the guano trade has focussed on the exploitation of the Peruvian and Pacific guano labour force, including the Chinese, African Americans and Polynesians.³⁸ As a result, guano as an animal by-product became the arena for displaying the interplay between human emotions (e.g. greed or ambition) and action (e.g. entrepreneurship and monopoly control).³⁹ Jerolmack’s observation, within the context of the actions of certain businessmen involved in the trade, also gave credence to Swart’s argument that in the meeting between humans (both individuals and groups) and animals (guano-producing seabirds in this case), a process of redefinition, and even new identity based on certain power relations, is bound to take place, which is directly related to the original encounter.⁴⁰ During the 19th century trade, certain entrepreneurs in the United States of America, the Cape Colony, Peru and Australia (Firth’s so-called ‘men of energy and persistence’⁴¹) became a distinctive group in business circles which Skaggs termed ‘guanopreneurs’ to distinguish them from other entrepreneurs.⁴² Ironically, as the ‘ontological presence’, vitality and materiality’ of seabirds in human affairs was

³⁶ L. Benton, “Empires of Exception: Law and Geography in the European Colonial World, 1400 – 1900.” (Paper presented to the New York University Legal History Colloquium, February 28, 2007), 4

³⁷ S. Firth, “The Pacific Islands and the Globalization Agenda.” *The Contemporary Pacific* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 2000):18.

³⁸ L. Carter, “Guano sifters on Gunnison Island,” *History Blazer* (June, 1996); L.A. Clayton, “Chinese indentured labour in Peru,” *History Today* 30 (June, 1980); J. P. Olinger, “The guano age in Peru,” *History Today* 30 (June 1980); B. Willmott, “Chinese contract labour in the Pacific Islands during the nineteenth century,” *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, 27 no. 2 (2004).

³⁹ C. Jerolmack, “Animal archaeology: Domestic pigeons and the nature-culture dialect,” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 111, no.1 (April, 2007): 88

⁴⁰ S. Swart, “Riding High - horses, power and settler society, c. 1654 – 1840.” *Kronos* 29 (Nov, 2003): 48.

⁴¹ S. Firth, “The Pacific Islands and the Globalization Agenda”: 18.

⁴² J. A. Fry, “Constructing an Empire? Guano, Bananas and American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 20 (1) , (Summer, 1996): 484.

acknowledged,⁴³ the repressive relationship between guanopreneurs and their labour force, each with a unique labour identity albeit Chinese “coolies,”⁴⁴ Hawaiian “kanakas”⁴⁵ or Polynesian “Hebredsians,”⁴⁶ was revealed. These racial groups were not only responsible for the physical extraction and collection of the commodity, but suffered abuse and annihilation whilst the new riches were accumulated at their expense. Due to its repressive and exploitative nature, Phillips correctly described this system as representing a new form of slavery.⁴⁷

The guano trade has had a destructive influence on the animal life of the various islands and guano exploitation has impacted particular island communities such as the people of Banaba (Ocean Island)⁴⁸ and Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean.⁴⁹ The historical record indicates that animal-human relationships have long been a significant subject of study approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives. These included studying animals as a source of labour, as human companions, as well as from a symbolic-interactionist perspective.⁵⁰ Anderson argues that human-animal studies (like the present one) challenge the dominant

⁴³ K. Anderson, “White natures: Sydney’s Royal Agricultural Show in post-humanist perspective,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28 (2003): 425.

⁴⁴ Labour identities such as ‘coolies’, and ‘kanakas’ are both designative and pejorative terms that firstly describe a low status class of worker and secondly a racial term referring to certain groups of workers, either non-white or from Asian origins. The term ‘coolie’ in particular, over time also acquired a transnational character. This has prompted the Indian historian G. Balachandran to describe the term as essentially indicative of “a social relationship rather than merely a figure, person or term, even perhaps as the characteristic relationship between labour and capital outside a relatively small part of the west”. See G. Balachandran, (undated), “Producing Coolies, (Un)making Workers: A (post) Colonial Parable for the Contemporary Present.” <http://hei.unige.ch/sections/hp/Documents/Balachandran_producing%20Coolies.pdf>; (November 2, 2009); S. Watt, *Chinese bondage in Peru: A History of the Chinese Coolie in Peru, 1849 – 1874*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1951); “The African guano trade- being an account of the trade in guano from Ichabo, and other places on the African coast, more particularly the proceedings of the Committee of Management,” *Nautical Magazine* XIV (1845)

⁴⁵ Skaggs, *The Great Guano Rush*: 24.

⁴⁶ B. Willmott, “Chinese contract labour in the Pacific Islands during the nineteenth century,” *The Journal of Pacific Studies* 27, no. 2 (2004); D. Shineberg, “The New Hebridean is everywhere”: The Oceanian Labour Trade to New Caledonia, 1865 – 1930,” *Pacific Studies*, 18, no. 2 (1995).

⁴⁷ L. Phillips, “British slavery after abolition: the Pacific trade,” *Race and Class* 41, no. 3 (Jan - March, 2000).

⁴⁸ S. King & K.R. Sigrah, “Legacy of a miner’s daughter and assessment of the social changes of the Banabans after phosphate mining on Banaba,” *Conference Paper presented on occasion of the “Changing Islands – Changing Worlds”: Islands of the World VIII International Conference*, Kinmen Island (Quemoy), Taiwan, (November 1–7, 2004).

⁴⁹ M. Williams & B.K. MacDonald, *The Phosphateers: A History of the British Phosphate Commissioners and the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985).

⁵⁰ A. Arluke, “Bringing animals into social scientific research,” *Society & Animals*, 1, no.1 (1993). <<http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa1.1/shapiro.html>>; (May 15, 2007).

intellectual tradition, which insists that only humans determine history.⁵¹ As a result, animals achieved new moral and cultural meaning and became important participants in human affairs. It is quite obvious, therefore, that any serious study of the trade needs to take cognisance of the interaction between the guano bird, guanopreneur, politicians and the colonial society.

1.2.2. The Southern African Literature

A comprehensive search of the available databases revealed that a smaller but no less important local body of secondary sources exists on the exploitation of the guano islands. The local sources consist mainly of dated, non-specialised and fragmentary literary works, including various contemporary accounts, bio-economical and regional studies, as well as some mention in the romantic-historical recreational literature. The greater majority, however, are academic articles published in a variety of academic journals. Constructing an authoritative account of the local and regional trade in the absence of other benchmark studies therefore poses its own particular challenges.

The earliest published contemporary account of the existence of a substantial source of guano on the African guano coast dates back to 1832, namely Benjamin Morrell's book *A narrative of four voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, Chinese Sea, Ethiopic and Southern Atlantic Ocean, Indian and Antarctic Ocean from the year 1822 to 1831*.⁵² The publication owes its status to the fact that it motivated a small group of British citizens to investigate the veracity of claims of the existence of a substantial source of alternative guano on the southwestern coast of Africa. This was followed by the published accounts of Liverpool Master Mariner, Andrew Livingstone, in the nautical magazine, *The Mariner's Mirror*⁵³ and that of an anonymous former member of the first management committee in

⁵¹ Anderson, "White natures": 425.

⁵² B. Morrell, *A narrative of four voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, Chinese Sea, Ethiopic and Southern Atlantic Ocean, Indian and Antarctic Ocean from the year 1822 to 1831*. (New York: Harper, 1832)

⁵³ A. Livingstone, "The west coast of Africa and islands adjacent, where guano may probably be found with remarks for mercantile adventures in these parts." *Nautical Magazine* X111 (1844)

charge of the exploitation of Ichaboe Island (1845).⁵⁴ These were followed by publications by British geologist Thomas Eden⁵⁵ and W.S. Fletcher, former scribe of the first investigative commission into the workings of the guano islands under the control of the Cape Guano Agency (1897).⁵⁶ These contemporary eyewitness accounts provide the historian with a wealth of information about the living and working conditions, interaction and worldview of the guano labour force. Given their status as both observers and participants, some of these accounts are not objective. This prompted historian Robert Craig to attempt to track down an independent record of events based on the Admiralty Archives in Britain, especially the narrative of the Ex Member of the Committee of Management on the exploitation of Ichaboe during the first “Guano Rush.” Most of the records in question were, however, destroyed by a fire.⁵⁷ Much documentary evidence (both published and unpublished) in the form of the proceedings and testimonies delivered in the course of various investigative commissions during the 19th century are available to compensate for this loss.

In a century of low output on the topic, J.A.S. Phillips distinguished himself during the 1980s as the most productive researcher on the guano trade in Southern Africa.⁵⁸ Prior to this the only notable works during the first seventy years were the accounts of A.C. Watson,⁵⁹ Robert Craig and Deborah Webb (née Clark)⁶⁰ on the early years and sequential exploitation of the islands along the Namibian coast. The only subsequent works were the largely non-analytical and non-scientific articles by Lisa Kondor⁶¹ and A. J. Nathan on the events surrounding the

⁵⁴ “The African guano trade- being an account of the trade in guano from Ichabo, and other places on the African coast, more particularly the proceedings of the Committee of Management.” *Nautical Magazine*, XIV (1845).

⁵⁵ T.E. Eden, *The search for nitre and the true nature of guano: being an account of a voyage to the south west coast of Africa; also a description of the minerals found there and of the guano islands in that part of the world*. (London: Groombridge, 1846).

⁵⁶ W.S. Fletcher, “The Guano Islands,” *Cape Illustrated Magazine* 6, no. 1 (1897).

⁵⁷ R. Craig, “The African guano trade,” *The Mariners Mirror* 50, no. 1 (1964).

⁵⁸ J.A.S Phillips, “The avarice bidders for immense wealth,” *Windhoek Observer*, September 26, 1981; J.A.S Phillips, “The forgotten discoverer of guano Benjamin Morrell,” *Rössing* (April, 1987), J.A.S Phillips. “The de Pass Claim at Lüderitzbucht- a Tragicomedy par Excellence!” *Journal XXXIX - SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft*, (1984/ 1985), J.A.S Phillips. “The Pomona Story based on the Dr. George Wunderlich Collection.” *Journal of the SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* (1981/2 – 1982/3).

⁵⁹ A.C. Watson, “The guano islands of southwestern Africa,” *Geographical Review* 20, no. 4 (1930).

⁶⁰ D. Clarke (née Webb). *The Sequential Exploitation of the guano islands off the South West African Coast*. (Unpublished B.A.Hons Essay, University of Stellenbosch, 1975). Unfortunately neither the University nor the student have a copy of this research. D. Clarke & H. Snyders, Personal Communication, January 17, 1997.

⁶¹ L. Kondor, “The great guano rush of 1844,” *Skyhost* 1, no 1 (1993). The publication in question is the in-flight magazine of Air Zimbabwe and can therefore not be regarded as a serious attempt at scientific history-writing.

guano rush.⁶² The much more substantive academic article by Lance Van Sittert and Rob Crawford, which attempted to make a historical reconstruction of a half century of guano production on the islands, is an exception. The latter study is strongly empirical in nature and attempts to use historical guano data to develop proxy indices of fish stock abundance and to use them as instruments to separate the effects of the environment (for example heavy rain) and fishing on guano production.⁶³ As a result, little attention has been given to an analysis of the social, economic and political dimensions of the local trade.

Using the journal of the *SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* as his platform, Phillips spent much intellectual energy investigating the veracity of the historical claims of Morrell (the first discoverer of guano) and the involvement of the company, De Pass, Spence & Co. in the broader economic history of Namibia. In addition, work has been done on the German colonisation of South West Africa and its subsequent effects. Phillips, like O'Donnell and Skaggs, strongly supports the notion of the existence of a firm link between the guano trade and the unfolding of the global imperialist agenda in the 19th century. However, they differ with regard to the relative importance of guano in the history of international imperialism. This particular link will be further explored in Chapters 2 and 4 within the context of the construction of a 'guano frontier' and the emergence of aggressive American guano imperialism respectively.

The 1983 study by Van Rhyn Greef into the structure, behaviour and performance of the South African fertiliser, although an economic rather than socio-political historical analysis, offered a fuller understanding of the impact of guano as a commodity on the historical development of particular societies and their associated fertiliser traditions.⁶⁴ In addition to contextualising guano within particular fertiliser traditions, it also mapped the local guano trade within the evolution of the local fertiliser industry. G.J van der Linde, Director of the Fertilizer Society of South Africa (FSSA) in 2006, valued the industry at around R3 billion

⁶²A.J. Nathan, "The great guano boom," *Lantern*, 39, no. 3 (1990). The publication was aimed at a general readership and lacks any reference list or bibliography. It also failed to provide an in-depth analysis of the events other than conveying an overview of events.

⁶³L. Van Sittert & R. Crawford, "Historical reconstruction of guano production on the Namibial islands 1843-1895," *South African Journal of Science* 99 (January / February, 2003): 13

⁶⁴F. Van Rhyn Greef, "Die Suid Afrikaanse Kunsmisbedryf: Struktuur, Gedrag en Prestasie," (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Economics, University of Pretoria, October, 1983).

(\$480 million).⁶⁵ Guano therefore also features prominently in the historical development of the larger trade of fertiliser technology.

The focus on the Namibian part of the guano trade created a critical imbalance in the local and regional scholarship on the topic and showcases the limited secondary research on the history of the Cape colonial islands. At the same time, it provides undeniable evidence of the interdependence and integration of the two sets of islands. The Namibian historian Bridgette Lau is in full agreement with this observation and as early 1985 identified various relevant archival groups in the Cape Archives that were effectively used during the course of this study to reconstruct this integrated past.⁶⁶

From the 1840s to the start of the 20th century the Cape guano trade developed in conjunction with the beginnings of what eventually became the process of decolonisation. According to Ronald Robinson this process, and especially the progression from full colonial control to representative and responsible government, is typically characterised by the need to deal with a series of constantly fluctuating political challenges. Furthermore, during this process various interest groups (in particular elites) in the colony and mother country constantly regrouped in order to negotiate mutually beneficial political and economical agreements.⁶⁷ These trends have also been observed in the events surrounding the Cape guano trade between 1843 – 1910 and stand in stark contrast to Berg and Weaver’s observation, based on their analysis of events in Peru, where the guano industry as an economic enclave became a key factor in political change, but was negligible in the economic life of the country where it also failed to strengthen domestic economic elites.⁶⁸ It is however closer to Gorman’s thesis, which argues that guano income did not only provide critical income to the state to consolidate its own power, but also assisted the emergence and strengthening of an urban-based elite who used their networks and patrons to influence the state and use it as an

⁶⁵ G.J. van der Linde, “The South African Fertiliser Industry – a Short History – and Overview of Future Challenges,” *Fertilizer Focus* (May / June, 2006): 23.

⁶⁶ B. Lau, “Sources for the study of Namibian history in the Cape Archives Depot, 1780 – 1910.” *Suid Afrikaanse Argief Jaarblad* (Issue 2, 1985)

⁶⁷ A. Porter, “Britain, the Cape Colony, and Natal, 1870 – 1914: Capital, shipping, and the Imperial Connection,” *Economic History Review* 34 (1981): 544 – 555.

⁶⁸ R. Berg & F.S. Weaver, “Towards a reinterpretation of political change in Peru during the first century of independence,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 20, no. 1 (February, 1968): 73, 81.

instrument to further its particular interests.⁶⁹ These matters and the shifting social, political and economic relationships upon which they were based are discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

The period 1843 – 1910 covers the start, expansion and integration of the trade on the colonial and the Namibian islands as well as the unification of the various British Colonies to form the Union of South Africa in 1910, when the Cape guano trade effectively became the South African trade. During this period the Cape Colony was involved in a struggle for representative and responsible government, German colonisation of South West Africa, various guano islands commissions and disputes, as well as the promulgation of the “Fertilizers Act” (1907).⁷⁰ The extent to which guano impacted on all of these events and processes, as well as their influence on the fate of guano itself, forms the core of this study.

Little exists on the career activities of local guano personalities and their respective companies. This stands in marked contrast to the international situation where a range of studies looked at the life and times of prominent guanopreneurs such as W.C. Grace (USA),⁷¹ Anthony Gibbs (England)⁷² as well as the Australians J.T. Arundel⁷³ and A.W.J. Crowther.⁷⁴ Up to the present time, only the companies De Pass & Co and J.O. Smith & Co. received attention from Rebecca Walker⁷⁵ and Lawlor⁷⁶ respectively. Given its status as a junior research paper, Walker’s study naturally is characterised by a lack of in-depth analysis and critical engagement with all of the information. However, it gives a good account of the nature of the interaction between prominent individuals and groups involved in the trade. Walker’s study of the De Pass Family is a good example of the challenges of family history

⁶⁹ S.M. Gorman, “The state, elite, and export in nineteenth century Peru: Towards an alternative reinterpretation of political change,” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21, no. 3 (August, 1979): 396

⁷⁰ The full title of this act as published in the Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, 17 September 1907, is *The Fertilizers, Farm Foods, Seeds and Pest Remedies Act*.

⁷¹ C. Secada & G. Alexander, “Guano and Shipping: The W. R. Grace interests in Peru, 1865 – 1885” *Business History Review* 59, no. 4 (Winter, 1985)

⁷² W.M. Mathew, *The House of Gibbs and the Peruvian guano monopoly* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981).

⁷³ A. Bright, *Biography of John T. Arundel*, (Unpublished Biography of John T Arundel). <<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/record/804903>>; (December 1,2007)

⁷⁴ W.E.L.H. Crowther, “The development of the Guano trade from Hobart Town in the fifties and sixties Tasmania,” *Papers of the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, (1939).

⁷⁵ R. Walker. “The de Pass family.” *Unpublished B.Hons Thesis*, (Bristol Polytechnic, July, 1979). Walker is a distant relative of the Cape guano trader, Elias de Pass.

⁷⁶ R. Lawlor, “The History of Bird Island,” *Looking Back* 34 (September, 1995).

or biography at work. According to Mackenzie, this form of history-writing is open to manipulation by its authors who either impose their own emotions and experiences upon the subject of their research, or manipulate the life of the subject for present purposes. Such histories are also often geared towards recording the successes rather than the failures of those under scrutiny.⁷⁷ Although not without merit, the Walker study falls in the latter category. The Lawlor study is equally deficient in critical substance and merely provides pieces in the construction of the full picture of the life of an individual whose launch of a rogue guano operation and counter trade as discussed in Chapter 3 revealed both the absence of an Empire-wide guano policy and its complications. It forced the Cape colonial government to embark on a policy-writing process in order to codify its approach to the exploitation of the guano on islands within its territorial waters. This effectively also assisted other guano-mining colonies such as Australia and New Zealand, which became important nodes in the diffusion of the guano frontier as explained in Chapter 2 of this study.

Whereas former chartered companies with guano interests, such as Lever Brothers, evolved into modern multinational entities, most of the local guano companies are defunct. Research into these now non-existent companies and their former structures, functions, relationships and failures is still valuable. Salmon in particular contends that by focussing on all of the aforementioned aspects, a deeper understanding of an important period in world history is achieved.⁷⁸ Furthermore, by studying less successful companies, new insights with regard to company evolution could be gained since many of the now defunct companies used to be pioneers of particular trades.⁷⁹ Through this research, which studies the life and operations of former entities such as De Pass, Spence & Co. and Granger & Co. new information is unearthed to shed light on a series of events of historical significance, both in terms of their impact on local events and contribution to world history.

As mentioned earlier, research into the life and experiences of the Peruvian and Pacific guano labour force, including the Chinese, African Americans and Polynesians, increased to provide

⁷⁷J.M. Mackenzie, "The Bad, the Indifferent and the Excellent: A Crop of Imperial Biographies," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23, no. 2 (May, 1995): 318.

⁷⁸ M.S. Salmon, "A bull market: The recent historiography of Canadian development," *Archivaria* 43, no 1 (January 1997):181 < <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivaria/index/article/view/12182/13194>> ; (October 31, 2007)

⁷⁹ Jones. "Diversification strategies and corporate governance in trading companies":109

a comprehensive literature on the difficulties associated with the exploitation of the magic fertiliser. Local studies in this regard are non-existent, with accounts of the local labour regime under successive colonial governments and private companies still largely unresearched. Local historians could therefore not yet offer a counter argument or support the observation made by Phillips that the labour practices of the guano trade in fact represented a new form of slavery. Given South Africa's own history of slavery, this dimension into the guano narrative has intrinsic value and warrants new research, especially into subjects such as labour resistance and government intervention. The nature of the Cape guano labour regime is discussed in Chapter 6 and supports the argument offered by Phillips.

The colonial guano trade opened a new chapter in the history of conservation of marine animals, including fish and seabirds.⁸⁰ The promulgation of legislation such as the Game Act (1886), Fish Protection Act (Act 15 of 1893) and the South Africa Act (1910), as well as the appointment of officials like the Colonial Marine Biologist (1896) and the Colonial Ornithologist (1904) formally provided for the conservation of fish and game. In this way the Cape Colony took active steps to manage its environment and natural resources more scientifically. The Cape guano trade developed parallel to a 19th century colonial science and the establishment of a local scientific community.⁸¹

Various bio-economic studies⁸² as well as a number of regional histories⁸³ tend to replicate the mistake observed in the mainstream historiography of restricting the 'guano era' to the Peruvian episode. In addition, the guano trade was treated as a single event of short duration with little or no connection to the international trade or the 21st century world. Furthermore, these studies remain firmly stuck in the old paradigm of treating humans and non-humans as

⁸⁰P.D. Shaughnessy, *Historical population levels of seals and seabirds on islands off Southern Africa, with special reference to Seal Island, False Bay*, (Cape Town: Sea Fisheries Research Institute, 1984); A. Payne. & R. Crawford, *Oceans of life off Southern Africa*, (Cape Town: Vlaeberg Uitgewers, 1994); R. Rand. *Die Staatsghwano-eilande: Voëls en Pelsrobbe*, (Pretoria: Departement van Landbou, 1950); G.J.B. Ross & R.M. Randall, "Phosphatic sand removal from Dassen Island: effect on penguin breeding and guano harvests," *South African Journal of Science* 86 (1990): 172-174.

⁸¹ L.D. Bregman, "Snug little Coteries": A history of Scientific Societies in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town, 1824 – 1835." (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University College, London, 2003).

⁸² See publications by Rand, *Die Staatsghwano-eilande*; Shaughnessy, *Historical population levels of seals and seabirds* as referred to in Footnote 80 above.

⁸³ P. L. Scholtz, "Die historiese ontwikkeling van die Onder Olifantsrivier 1660 – 1902: Geskiedenis van die distrik van Van Rhynsdorp," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, January 1964); J. Burman & S. Levin, *The Saldanha Bay Story*. (Cape Town & Pretoria: Human & Rousseau, 1974).

distinctly separate entities with no interaction or reciprocal influence on each other. This thesis offers to redress this insularity by placing the Peruvian trade within the context of a shifting guano frontier with trans-national features. The events outlined during the course of this investigation, especially its undeniable presence in Cape, Oceanic and American history and politics right into the 21st century, effectively countered the idea of the trade being of short duration. The emergence of a new category of entrepreneurs (the so-called ‘guanopreneurs’) and the opposing labour identity of ‘coolies’ and their relationships effectively brings animals and birds together as co-producers of history. Given the nature of bio-economic studies, it also made the critical mistake of viewing the guano trade as a mere extension of the fishing industry. In the process, the trade’s contribution to the historical development of the Cape Colony and the imperial world is neglected and underestimated. During the course of this study, the role of guano in international and colonial politics, agriculture and labour history is outlined to reveal its influence beyond the fishing industry.

The late Lawrence Green, former editor of the Cape Argus and prolific author of 42 books covering various local and regional topics including the guano or bird islands, is undoubtedly the most important writer in the leisure literary category as far as the guano past is concerned.⁸⁴ Writing in the early idiom of what has subsequently become known as “*People’s History*”, he skilfully combined oral testimony obtained from former guano workers and archival research to reconstruct the island past and presented it in an enjoyable narrative form. Although he mostly succeeded in providing a factual account of the guano past based on actual archival research,⁸⁵ the end-result is frequently overshadowed by a lack of proper referencing of primary resources and over-romanticism of events and characters. As a result, and notwithstanding the literary value of his work and its strong focus on the individual and highly romanticized collective life of its subjects, none of his publications can be regarded as scientific historical writing. Furthermore, most of his writing displayed characteristics of what Laracy called the sojourner literature which, like tourism brochures and coffee table publications, frequently portrays islands as earthly paradises covered in a

⁸⁴ The Lawrence Green archives were bequeathed to his friend, the late John Yates - Benyon. By 1995 when research on this topic started, his widow considered donating the bulk of it to an unnamed higher education institution in the United States of America due to a lack of interest from local universities. J. Yates Benyon & H. Snyders, Personal Communication (January, 1995)

⁸⁵ Kaapse Argief Bewaarplek (forthwith KAB): Central Archives Division (forthwith CAD), 2/1/1/63: C14/ 117: Assistant Chief Archivist – R. W. Rand, 24/9/1948

“sexy, rosy glow”⁸⁶ or as ideal places for opportunists, escapists, “explorers of the mind and emotions” or the ideal destinations for those individuals in search of quixotic adventure.⁸⁷ As a result, new myths are created that tend to obscure the complex interplay of a variety of underlying processes and forces.

1.3. The Primary Sources

Given the lack of an authoritative history of the trade, this thesis must break fresh ground in pioneering a socio-political perspective of the Cape trade, based largely on primary sources and public records housed under various archive groups such as Government House (G.H.), Colonial Office (C.O.), Department of Agriculture (AGR), Public Works Department (PWD), Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), Government Guano Island Service (GIS), Lands of the Cape Colony (LND), Treasury (T), Cape Provincial Administration: Secretariat Nature Conservation & Fisheries (PAN) and Native Affairs (NA)⁸⁸ in the various main depots of the South African National Archive Services. In addition, much valuable information is contained in published contemporary sources such as the official reports of Select Committees of the Colonial Government and reports submitted to the colonial legislature.

The archive group Colonial Office (C.O.) is by far the largest group and contains correspondence received by the Cape Governor and the Colonial Secretary from various departments, committees and private individuals, foreign governments, agents, missionaries and miscellaneous bodies. As far as the guano trade is concerned, the 4000 series in particular contained numerous memorials, petitions, complaints and general reports from a wide range of private individuals, customs officials, local merchants and ship captains. These documents included petitions for the right to collect guano on the Cape territorial islands, claims for discoverers rights, protection for their rights of occupancy against potential opponents as well as complaints about perceived unfair treatment from the side of the Colonial Government.

⁸⁶P. Pirie, “Untangling the myths and realities of fertility and mortality in the Pacific Islands,” *Asia- Pacific Population Journal* (June, 2000): 8.

⁸⁷ H. Laracy, “Quixotic and Utopian”: American adventurers in the Southwest Pacific, 1897 – 1895”, *Pacific Studies* 24 (1/2), (March/June, 2001): 39 – 40.

⁸⁸B. Lau, “Sources for the Study of Namibian History in the Cape Archives Depot, 1780 – 1910” *S.A. Argiefjaarblad*, (1985). (Provides a useful overview of some of the most important archival record groups with regard to the history of the guano era along the Namibian coast, see footnote 66.)

Given the lack of a formal Cape Guano policy, these documents form the basis of a new policy process that led to the promulgation of the Cape Guano Ordinance of 1845.

The Cape Governor and the Office of the Secretary of State were primarily responsible for managing British policy and actual governance of the Cape Colony. Thus the archive group Government House (G.H.) contained the official correspondence between London (the metropolis) and Cape Town (the colonial outpost) and therefore serve as the best source of information on the relationship between the two entities concerning matters of policy and governance. As such, the first official communication from members of the first management Committee with regard to the African Guano Rush on Ichaboe and the establishment of a new guano frontier along the Namib coast is to be found within this particular group (GH1/161). It also deals with the relationship between the Cape Colony and the metropolis around key policy issues such as official consultation, transfer of commitments and unauthorised spending on guano loading infrastructure in order to provide infrastructure at the offshore islands within its area of jurisdiction (GH.23/15). This group also contains significant material on the relationship between Germany and Great Britain, especially with regard to issues such as the Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission (GH 21/17 – 21/21). Claims related to British subjects in the territory and the future of the guano islands north of the Orange River (1884- 1886) and the Cape Colony and German South West Africa colonial authorities over issues such as the treatment of indigenous groups used as guano labour on the nearby offshore islands (GH 35/32).

Prior to 1890 the guano islands within the territorial waters of the Cape Colony were administered as crown territories and therefore information on them resorts under the archive group Lands of the Cape Colony (LND). With the annexation of the islands along the Namib coast they were placed under the same jurisdiction. With the appointment of a Government Guano Agent in 1890, the islands were placed under the administrative control of the Department of Crown Lands & Public Works. In the wake of a negative report on the treatment of the guano labour force and the local farmers' growing demand for cheap guano, all the islands were placed under the colonial Department of Agriculture headed by the Superintendent of Government Guano Islands and accountable to the Minister and the Colonial Legislature. These transfers and new systems created a substantial source of information, which enables the researcher to map the evolution of the government guano

system from distant dependencies exploited by private entrepreneurs to a state-controlled government exploitation system accountable to the colonial legislature.

Due to the remote location of the guano islands, guano diggers and leaseholders interacted closely with the indigenous population, especially in German South West Africa. The Colonial Office therefore regularly received correspondence from a variety of individuals, groups and claimants about trade, interaction with local leaders, inspections and the political situation. A large proportion of this information is housed within the archive group of Native Affairs, which assisted the research on the racial dimensions of the interaction between the guano labour force and local people of a different ethnic origin.

The official records of the Cape Colony, both published and unpublished, constitute an important additional source of information on the guano islands. The proceedings of the various Select Committees (1861,⁸⁹ 1896,⁹⁰ 1899,⁹¹ and 1907⁹²) generated large volumes of original testimony from the ranks of guano diggers and headmen as well as civil servants and other knowledgeable persons. The proceedings also provide a very important insider-perspective on life on the islands. This is further supplemented by annual reports from the various line departments submitted to the colonial legislature as part of the political oversight process. In addition, vital information is contained in resources such as the debates recorded in the Cape Hansard and the Votes and Proceedings of both the House of Assembly and Legislative Council. Equally valuable sources such as the various Government Gazettes carried important announcements and notices related to the guano trade (i.e. new regulations, tender opportunities, the state of the shipping, system arrangements or a call for witnesses to assist the proceedings of the various Select Committees).

⁸⁹KAB: Amptelike Publikasies van die Kaap Kolonie/Official Publications of the Cape Colony (forthwith AMPT PUBS CCP): Report of Select Committee on the Annexation of Ichaboe (forthwith SC), July 1861 (A.11 – '61)

⁹⁰KAB AMPT PUBS CCP: Report of the Select Committee (SC). on the guano islands, (A.3 – '95); KAB AMPT PUBS CCP: Report of the Select Committee (SC) on the guano islands (A.12 – '97), KAB AMPT PUBS CCP: Report and Papers of the Commission of Inquiry into the management of the Government Guano Islands, July – August 1897, (C.10 – '98)

⁹¹KAB AMPT PUBS CCP: Report of the Select Committee (SC) on the guano islands (A.30 - '99)

⁹²KAB AMPT PUBS CCP: Report of the Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, Year 1907 (G.33. – 1907)

Witnesses on various occasions also wrote and published articles on aspects of the guano trade in literary magazines such as the *Cape Literary Magazine* and *Chambers' Journal*. In addition, some of the major participants in the unfolding guano drama on occasion used contemporary newspapers such as the *Commercial Advertiser*, *Ons Land*, *The Cape of Good Hope & Port Natal Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*, and the *Cape Times* to promote their own causes. The ensuing polemics and public response to this correspondence constitute important sources of information that provided this thesis with important insights in into the fundamental understanding of the trade and its various dimensions.

1.4. Conclusion

Southern African voices have been oddly silent in an on-going conversation about guano internationally. This study uses a variety of theoretical approaches such as island, frontier, social and labour theory and the conventional political-economical lens to draw South African history into this conversation. As indicated, the availability of an abundance of primary resource material in the local archives and a dramatic growth in the number of secondary studies about various aspects of the international guano trade makes it possible to add a distinctly South African and African voice to this international conversation. Such a voice, if properly attuned to the nuances of the various strands of the debate (ranging from guano imperialism, labour history and resistance to guano, shifting frontiers and the modern polity) have the potential to contribute fundamentally to the existing pool of knowledge about a critical period in the history of humanity in general and South Africa in particular. It also contributes to broadening the on-going discussion about the meaning of animals (such as the guano-producing seabird) in human history as well as contributing substantially to the exploration of human impact on the environment and recording change over time. In addition, this study contributes to the discourse about the nature, characteristics and designation of historical time. It particularly challenges the notion of the Peruvian Guano Age as *the* period of significance in world history. The evidence, as this thesis demonstrates, indicated that the latter merely represents a distinct period in the life of one nation and that the legacy of the international guano trade continues to be felt well into the 21st century.

CHAPTER 2

FROM PERU TO ICHABOE –THE DYNAMICS OF A SHIFTING GUANO FRONTIER, 1840 – 1845

2.1. Introduction

Since the formulation of Frederick J. Turner's original thesis on frontiers, and due to his insistence on the flexibility of the term 'frontier', variations on the theme (medieval,¹ hunting² and crayfish frontiers) were formulated.³ This has contributed to the invigoration and evolution of the term.⁴ Within the last decade, Stewart Firth formally introduced the notion of a 'guano frontier'⁵, with reference to the activities of governments, guano entrepreneurs (guanopreneurs) and guano diggers in an area stretching from the west coast of Peru, via the south-western coasts of Africa and up to the north-eastern peak of Australia as indicated on the composite map (Map 1) below. The frontier in question is defined as an extra-European territory penetrated by merchants, shipmasters, shipping agents and other entrepreneurs intent on exploiting guano.

The frontier as a historiographical term is loaded with meaning. In this chapter, the argument is put forward that guano production not only generated its own economical and political frontier but, in addition to its geographical dimensions, also changed what guano implied for human society. These issues contribute to a broader understanding of the notion of 'frontier'. One example is the idea that a commercial frontier might not necessarily involve concomitant settlement given the harsh physical features and lack of life-sustaining resources on some of the African islands. Another idea approaches frontiers as places of exchange of sophisticated culture and knowledge rather than merely areas of rough ignorance. This chapter also aims to

¹ C. J. Bishko. "The Frontier in Medieval History." *Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association*, Mayflower Hotel, Washington D.C., (29 December, 1955)

² R. Wagner. "Zoutpansberg: The dynamics of a Hunting Frontier." S. Marks & A. Atmore (eds.). *Economy and Society in Pre- Industrial South Africa*, (New York: Longman, 1980)

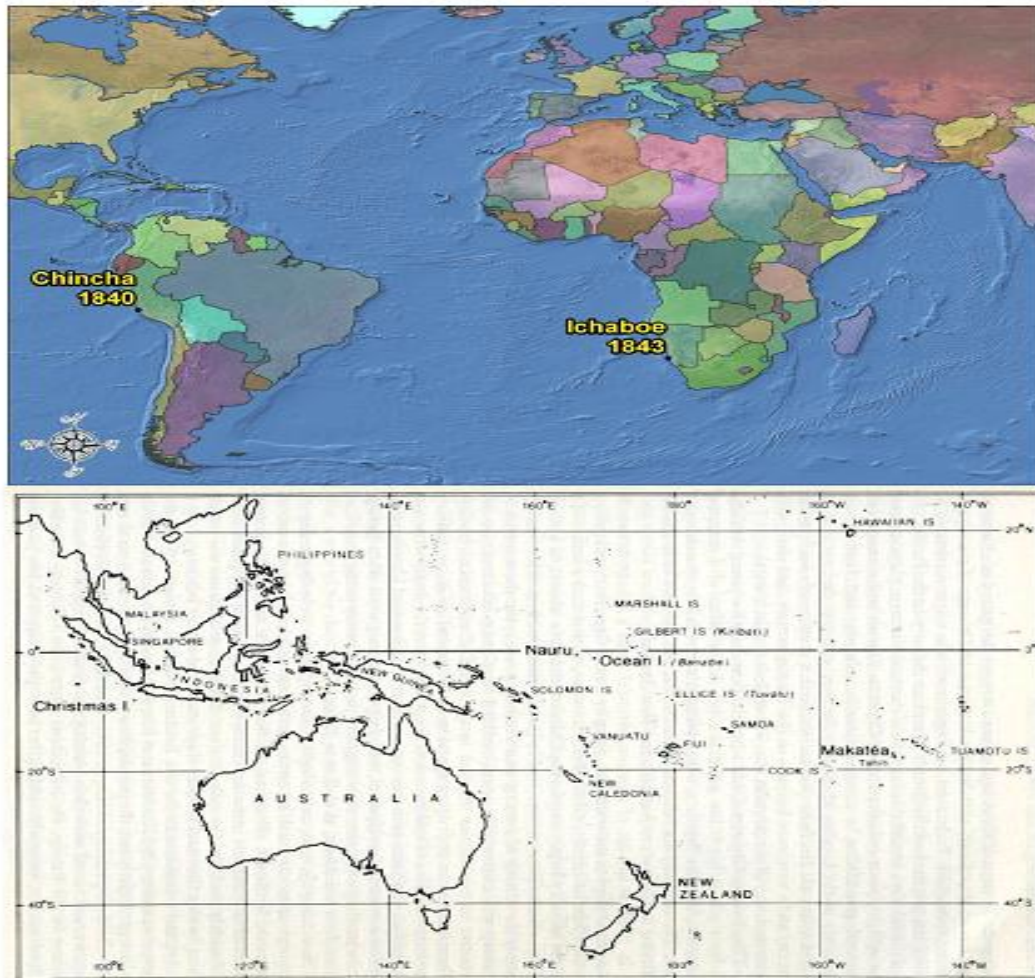
³ L. Van Sittert. "*Labour, Capital and the State in the St. Helena Bay Fisheries, c.1856 – c. 1956. Unpublished PhD Thesis*, (University of Cape Town, 1992)

⁴ J. Adelman & S. Aron. "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History", *The American Historical Review* 104(3), 1999;

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/104.3/ah000814.html>;(19/12/2007)

⁵ Firth, "The Pacific Islands and the Globalization Agenda":181

add to a broader understanding of ongoing studies of the ‘frontier’ as a historiographical concept.



MAP 1: THE 19TH CENTURY GUANO FRONTIER⁶

⁶ Maps prepared by Marius Mostert, Chief Information officer at Saldanha Bay Municipality. The map of the Pacific Ocean used in the composite map is taken from Barry McDonald & Maslyn Williams. *The Phosphateers: A History of the British Phosphate Commissioners and the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1985)

McCrone is of the opinion that frontiers are both isolated and a meeting point of peoples, societies and cultures. Frontiers are therefore also characterised by “accommodation between invaders and indigenes and the hybrid residuals of these encounters.”⁷ Furthermore, all frontiers have forces and a “political community as a community of masters”⁸ to ensure proper interrelationships. The basic social unit of the frontier in the 19th century was individualised organised groupings supplemented by an agent of authority to deal with disputes involving differences with external groups which also served as “one’s own fighting group” when the nearby colony could not offer frontier defence or resistance from deviants.⁹ Historians Dan O’ Donnell and Christine Duffy Burnett described American actions with regard to the guano islands in the Pacific Ocean as actions in imperialistic border extension¹⁰ and attempts at better border management.¹¹ For the purposes of this study, Adelman and Aron’s definition of frontiers as “borderless lands” and areas of interaction that allowed for both mixing and accommodation will be used.¹²

2.2. From Resource Location to the Emergence of the Guano Frontier – 1800 - 1840

The guano frontier originated as a resource location on the west coast of Peru as a result of a fertiliser tradition based on the use of the excrement of gannets, cormorants, penguins and pelicans for the improvement of land used for the cultivation of crops and staples such maize, potatoes, edible roots and legumes.¹³ The Peruvian Inca in particular collected substantial volumes of bird faeces (guano) from the nearby offshore islands of Lobos, Guanape and Chincha on the west coast near Lima and within its territorial waters. Using innovative irrigation methods and a system of guano fertilisation they succeeded in achieving high crop yields on land fertilised in this way and were able to enjoy a high level of food security based

⁷ Adelman & Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders”

⁸ M. Legassick, “The frontier in South African historiography.” S. Marks & A. Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre- Industrial South Africa*, (New York: Longman, 1980), 50

⁹ Legassick, “The frontier in South African historiography”: 60

¹⁰ O’Donnell, “The Pacific Guano Islands: The Stirring of American Empire in the Pacific Ocean,” *Pacific Studies* 16, no. 1 (March, 1993)

¹¹ C. Duffy Burnett, “The Edges of Empire and the Limits of Sovereignty: American Guano Islands” *American Quarterly* 57, no.3 (2005)

¹² Adelman & Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders”

¹³ Y. G. De La Vega, *Royal commentaries of the Yncas*. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1871), 5

on a food surplus of between 3 – 7 years.¹⁴ Given the close connection established between food security and guano, the product became a fundamental part of the cultural and religious life of the Inca and the resource most closely associated with their mythical rebirth as a people. Central to this process were the bird gods, Waman Kantax and Urpay Huachac (“*she who gives birth to birds*”), the mystic mother of both birds and coastal people and in whose nests (“quillairaca” or “silver vaginas of the moon”) both are reborn.¹⁵ On the Mazorka Island on the coast of Huacho, north of Lima, they also built a “waka” and altars to worship and make sacrificial offerings of young maidens to the Bird God.

Due to the centrality of guano both in its culture and religion, Inca society protected rather than traded the resource.¹⁶ To protect their way of life and the knowledge that underpinned it, they formulated a range of special measures, rules and an appropriate penal code to outlaw disturbance of the birds, egg theft, trespassing and unauthorised entry to the islands during the breeding season. In addition to declaring these transgressions capital crimes, a comprehensive management system was institutionalised in the days before Spanish conquest, which provided for the supervised collection, distribution and utilisation of the product to the benefit of all sectors of society (including orphans, the poor, widows, the disabled and families of conscripted soldiers).¹⁷ These measures were enforced with ruthless efficiency. Odell & Preston also labelled the general management system as imperialistic.¹⁸

Giezen argues that myths (including those connected with guano and sea birds) such as those observed in different island communities, are vital mechanisms for understanding the manner in which identities were formed in the past and are understood in the present.¹⁹ Particular

¹⁴ National Research Council, *Lost Crops of the Inca: Little known Plants of the Andes with Promise for Worldwide Cultivation: Report of an Ad Hoc Panel of the Advisory Committee on Technology Innovation Board on Science and Technology for International Development*, (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1989), 1

¹⁵ R. Cushman, “The Moon’s Vagina & The First Guano Lords: Fertilizer and Fertility in Pre-modern Peru” *Paper presented on occasion of the Minisymposium des Zentrums für Umweltgeschichte*, IFF, 1070, Wien, Schottenfeldgasse 29 (October 8, 2007)

¹⁶ J. Martinez-Allier, “Ecology and the Poor: A neglected Dimension of Latin American History,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23, no. 3 (October, 1991): 631

¹⁷ W. H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1847), 127

¹⁸ P. R. Odell & D. Preston, *Economies and Societies in Latin America: A Geographical Interpretation*. (London: Wiley & Son, 1973): 118

¹⁹ T. Giezen, “Gender, myth, and mythmaking,” *IIAS Newsletter* 37 (June, 2005): 13

rituals are important mechanisms for the spiritual renewal of their practitioners, their relatives and the earth in all its facets. This process of renewal brought about a wide-ranging feeling of social harmony amongst people and between people and nature.²⁰ The various forms of religion and rituals also helped communities to give expression to the different gods, spirits and forces supposedly controlling the human world.²¹ Clearly, the meaning of guano for such societies differed substantially from what it came to mean for the 19th century Western societies, namely a tradable commodity and a means to wealth accumulation. The Peruvian guano islands were therefore much more than a physical boundary, but rather an indicator of the means central to the survival of a whole civilisation. Within this context, Guano therefore also signified a distinctive people, their place, and their culture.

The transformation of guano into a commodity and the resource frontier into an economic and political frontier is directly attributable to new advances in the science of plant nutrition (literally a shift in the knowledge frontier) in the 19th century. Before the 19th century, most farmers and agronomists lacked a full understanding of the chemical basis of soil depletion.²² Through centuries of trial and error they accumulated a substantial body of indigenous knowledge on soil management techniques to prevent erosion and restore the growth capacity of soil.²³ The general neglect of the soil across geo-climatic zones,²⁴ coupled with centuries of over-exploitation, cultivation of soil-depleting single crops and the use of unsustainable agricultural practices (including shorter fallowing periods and fewer crop rotations) resulted in an environmental fertility crisis. The crisis was directly attributable to farmers or farming communities and providers of agricultural credit who demanded a quick guaranteed return on their investments. Within the context of agriculture in the South American states, Taylor appropriately named them the unrealistic “time-merchants.”²⁵ With little recourse to open land, overexploitation led to new waves of soil erosion and the creation of extremely

²⁰ E. A. Lawrence, “The symbolic role of animals in the Plains Indian Sun Dance,” *Society & Animals: Journal of Human – Animal Studies*, 1, no. 1, 2004. <<http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa1.1/lawrence.html>> (July 06, 2007)

²¹ C.B. Horseley, “Splendid Isolation Art of Easter Island: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 11, 2001 to August 4, 2002.” <<http://www.thecityreview.com/easter.html>> (November 23, 2006)

²² J. R. McNeil & V. Winiwarter, “Breaking the Sod: Humankind, History, and Soil.” *Science* 304 (June 11, 2004): 1628

²³ Van Rhyne Greef, *Die Suid Afrikaanse Kunsmisbedryf*: 30

²⁴ L. Badalian & V. Krivorotov, “Applying Natural Sciences to Studying History: Regarding the Example of England and The Industrial Revolution, Part II”, *Santalka Filosofija* 14 no. 3 (2006): 37

²⁵ R. H. Taylor, “The Sale and Application of Commercial Fertilizers in the South Atlantic States to 1900,” *Agricultural History* 21, no.1 (January, 1947) : 48

“depauperate environments.”²⁶ By the dawn of the 19th century and for most of the period, widespread environmental infertility and adverse climatic conditions (such as droughts and harsh winters) combined to create global “climates of hunger”²⁷ manifested by a series of disastrous trans-continental crop failures and famines.²⁸

Driven by the emotional and social effects of famine, the pressure to produce more under the right conditions led to an increased demand for fertilisers. Since no ideal fertiliser existed at the time and progress with the manufacturing of chemical alternatives was slow, most societies were stuck with their traditional soil enhancement practices and fertilisers such as animal dung, potash, lime and crushed bone to improve farmland. Over the period 1815 – 1842 England imported nearly 21 000 tons of bone for the manufacture of chemical fertiliser for crushing into a more soluble state. By the 1840s, as a result of important breakthroughs in the field of plant nutrition, guano replaced bones as the farmer’s fertiliser of choice. During the first decade of the 19th century, some of Europe’s leading chemists such as Martin Klaproth and Fourcroy revealed the nitrogen and phosphate richness, solubility and suitability of seabird guano for both heavy and light soil types (based on samples provided by German scientist Alexander von Humboldt).²⁹ Possibly as a result of inconclusive experimental results of the early analyses as well as a lack of understanding of the real value of the soil-restoring properties of the product amongst farmers,³⁰ this knowledge initially remained confined to the scientific community and the pages of its journals.³¹ After University of Durham Professor Johnston reconfirmed guano’s rich chemical composition in the 1840s, the first building block in the commoditisation of guano was positioned. For the product to embark on its final journey towards a saleable product and for the guano frontier to finally emerge, a change was needed in the meaning of the product for Peruvian society (the

²⁶ Worster. *Transformation of the Earth*: 1103

²⁷ R. A. Bryson & T. J. Murray, *Climates of Hunger: Mankind and the World’s Changing Weather*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977):3

²⁸ During the course of the 19th century crop failures and famines were recorded in China (1810 -11; 1846 and 1849); Japan (1830s); Europe (1816 – 1817); Africa (Egypt (1835), Zululand (1810’s); Cape Verde (1830); the Iberian Peninsula (Spain, 1811-12) to Great Britain and Ireland

²⁹ W. M. Matthew, “Peru and the British guano market, 1840- 1870.” *Economic History Review* 23 (1970):112

³⁰ Craig. *The African guano trade*: 26

³¹ J. Goodman, “Guano Happens (Sometimes).” *Geographical* (November, 2006): 41
<www.geographical.co.uk> (15/7/2007)

successor of the now destroyed Inca civilisation). The dynamics of this process form the basis of the next discussion.

2.3. Concessions, Shifting Meaning and the Emergence of the Peruvian Guano Frontier

The Peruvian guano island group consisted of an estimated 84 islands providing a nesting area of approximately 8116 hectares and a home for 18 different seabird species.³² During the colonial period the Spanish colonists largely ignored guano and saw no real economic value for the product.³³ Instead they preferred to fertilise their sugar plantations with the manure of free-range animals combined with the traditional system of crop rotation and fallowing.³⁴ The only seemingly useful product of the guano bird was its egg shells, which were crushed for use in strengthening building mortar.³⁵ However, knowledge of guano did leave the shores of Peru. Guano and related products were known in the Netherlands in the 17th century.³⁶ This is borne out by the Dutch colonists. Soon after the colonisation of South Africa in the mid 17th century by the Dutch, Jan van Riebeeck's men were sent to collect guano from the off-shore islands near the Cape coast for farming purposes, as discussed in this and the next chapter.

The first observable shift in the meaning of guano for Peruvian society occurred during the era of Spanish rule when small-scale domestic trading in guano by some of the locals was permitted. As such it was detached from its original role and status where it was intimately connected with the survival of the Inca civilisation. For the rest, all other trading activities were restricted to European-born Spaniards who were in possession of the required trading licences and who had access to a boat. The early guano traders were thus denied an opportunity to export their product and to cultivate a foreign market. By July 1830, having won independence, the military authorities exempted the internal trade from paying custom

³² D. C. Duffy, "The guano islands of Peru: the once and future management of a renewable resource", *Birdlife Conservation Series*, 1 (1994): 69 – 70

³³ J.P. Olinger, "The guano age in Peru": 14

³⁴ P. F. Klaren, "The Sugar Industry in Peru", *Revista de Indias*, LXV 233 (2005): 35

³⁵ Duffy, "The guano islands of Peru": 70

³⁶ G.T. Cushman, "The most valuable birds in the world: International conservation Science and the Revival of Peru's guano industry, 1909 – 1968." *Environmental History* 10, no 3 (2005)

<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/10.3/cushman.html>>; (26/04/2007)

dues in order to aid local farmers.³⁷ In this way guano became merely an aid to local agriculture and a commodity with no connection to the cultural well-being of the nation.

In the immediate post-independence phase local and foreign entrepreneurs in Peru, such as Barriolhet, Aquilles Allier and the British company of Gibbs & Crawley, who had long observed the successful domestic use of guano, recognized the potential commercial value of the product. This critical shift in awareness was at the heart of a process to scientifically determine the potential market value of a product that had never been fully tested commercially. In order to have guano scientifically tested, the parties in 1837 – 1838 provided guano samples to their overseas business partners for experimentation and analysis.³⁸ When Johnston confirmed guano's rich chemical composition and its ability to stimulate plant growth, he literally formulated a new meaning for guano and began the race to obtain monopoly concessionary rights. This race and the political manoeuvring of the principal actors that characterised this phase not only hastened the full international commoditisation of the product, but also contributed to the shaping of the subsequent African guano trade that followed in the mid 1840s. It is therefore necessary to broadly look at events in Peru before the evolution of the guano frontier is discussed further.

The process of obtaining a guano concession from the post-independence Peruvian government was fraught with difficulties. Based on their experience of exclusion under Spanish rule, a protectionist alliance of *Consulados* (shopkeepers, agriculturists and artisans) and *Caudillos* (military leaders) was severely opposed to economic liberalization and any further foreign control of the economy after centuries of Spanish rule.³⁹ They supported indigenisation of the economy. The military regime of General Gammarra, however, was burdened by multiple challenges ranging from a crippling foreign debt of at least £1,82 million sterling,⁴⁰ a poor credit status, internal political divisions, and a lack of a unifying

³⁷J. Levin, *The Export Economies: Their pattern of development in historical perspective*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1960): 30

³⁸ Mathew, *The House of Gibbs*, 24

³⁹ N. Jacobsen, "Book Review." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23 no. 2 (May, 1991):448

⁴⁰ For a full account of the state of Peruvian public debt see Table 2 in C. Vizcarra, (2006), "*Guano, credible commitments and state finances in nineteenth century Peru.*" Mimeo, September, 2006 University of Vermont. http://www.international.ucla.edu/economichistory/eh_papers/vizcarra_state.pdf; (15/07/2007): 42

national vision.⁴¹ The regime was also in dire need of new sources of income in order to consolidate the newly independent state. Despite its preference for indigenous control over the economy, the local business elite possessed neither the capital nor access to sufficient credit as a result of an under-developed banking system. The military regime itself was dependent on emergency loans, custom duties, and a head tax in order to keep itself afloat. To complicate matters, the pressure for further political reform increased exponentially. Against this background Gammarra's regime had to take political action, which fundamentally and irrevocably changed the meaning that Peruvian society and its predecessors had attached to guano for centuries.

In order to obtain the greatest advantage from a potential guano concession and appease its different constituencies, in November 1840 the military regime opted for a strategic compromise and awarded an exclusive six-year concession to a multi-national consortium of British and Peruvian businessmen for an estimated amount of £12 million sterling or 60 000 pesos, payable in three instalments.⁴² This was soon extended to nine years after payment of an additional 30 000 pesos. The first guanopreneurs thus secured a potentially lucrative monopoly at a very low input cost, based on a new understanding of the potential value and meaning of the guano resource.

Given the condition of the post liberation state in Peru, political instability severely limited the lifespan of successive governments and directly impacted on the future of state agreements such as the guano concession. When the Gammarra-regime was deposed, the new government of General Menéndes cancelled and withdrew the guano concession on 27 February 1841. In addition, the offshore guano islands were formally nationalised in December 1841. This effectively brought into existence the first formal guano frontier, which was both geographic and political in nature. It also disrupted the regular supply to European countries in general and to Great Britain in particular.

⁴¹ P. Gootenberg, *Imagining Development: Economic ideas in Peru's "Fictitious Prosperity" of Guano, 1840 – 1880*, (Berkeley: California, University of California Press, 1993); <<http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft3199n7qk/>> (July 15, 2007)

⁴² W. M. Matthew, "Foreign contractors and the Peruvian government at the outset of the guano trade," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52 no 4 (1972): 603

Given the regime's own lack of knowledge of the exploitation of the resource, managing the resource as a government enterprise under uncertain political conditions proved nearly impossible. As a result, a new short-term concession with extensive preconditions was awarded. In terms of the new 12 month contract, the concessionaires were responsible for all entrepreneurial functions (collection, shipping, marketing and sales) under a new consignment dispensation. Furthermore, they had to pay the bulk of their consignment sales over to the Peruvian state. To ensure full compliance with the terms of the new concession, the Peruvian authorities instituted various monitoring mechanisms, including a system of special consuls at harbours to inspect the cargo and to issue sailing instructions.⁴³ These conditions added further time delays to the export and sale of the product. In return, the concession holders were entitled to an unlimited supply of free guano to cover their operational costs.⁴⁴ Finding themselves in a situation of "obsolescing bargaining power", there was very little that either guano concessionaires or commercial farmers could do to reverse the situation.⁴⁵

As a result of their tenuous hold on the concession, the consortium hastened the process of finalising the full commoditisation of guano. To build a client base, they appointed the UK-based company MacDonald & Co. as marketer, distributed free samples to interested parties for experimentation and employed consulting chemists to give talks and demonstrations in order to lend scientific credibility to their marketing claims. As a direct result of these efforts, guano volumes in the period 1841 – 1842 increased substantially from 2881 tons to 20,398 tons.⁴⁶ However, this was not enough to safeguard the concession since it was once again cancelled in early 1842, much to the frustration of the commercial farming sector. Continued political instability also compromised the third concession, which was awarded on 18 February 1842. Against this background, the English Royal Agricultural Society offered a prize of £1000 for the discovery of "an acceptable substitute" for this unsatisfactory

⁴³ Levin, *The export economies*: 33

⁴⁴ Matthew, "Foreign Contractors," (1972): 611- 612

⁴⁵ M. Bucheli. "The politics of vertical integration in extractive industries." *Business History and Political Economy*. 2007:8, <http://www.business.uiuc.edu/Working_Papers/papers/07-0112.pdf>; (May 20, 2008)

⁴⁶ R.S.F. "Statistics of Guano." *Journal of the American Geographical and Statistical Society* 1 no. 16 (June 1859): 181

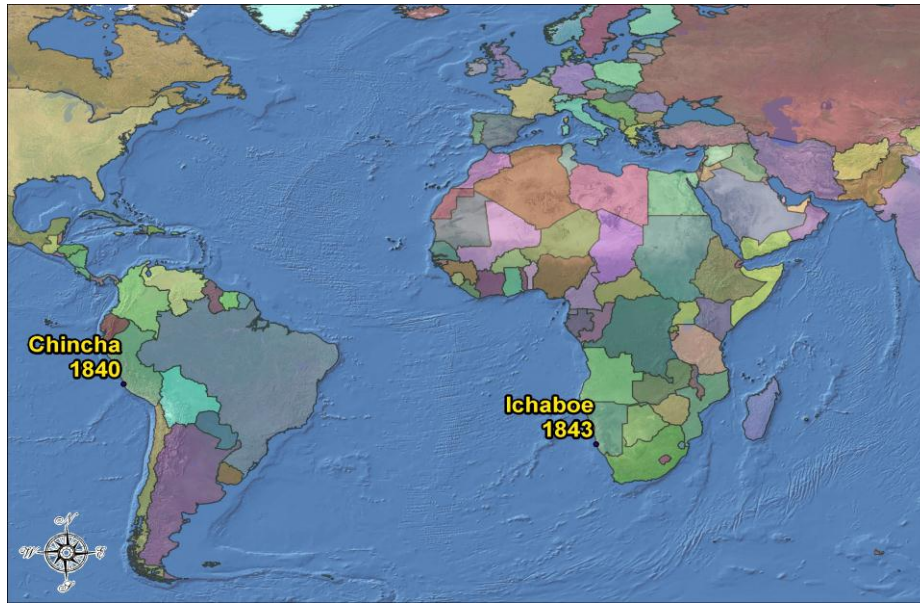
situation.⁴⁷ Guano had clearly acquired new meaning for industrialised Great Britain and her commercial farming sector.

The seemingly arbitrary manner in which the various guano concessions were cancelled must be seen in context. Given the continued domestic strife and instability faced by the various Peruvian governments, income from guano sales became a critical resource for the various successor regimes. It also freed the military regimes from dependence on a restless electorate and its various pressure groups. As sole owner of the islands the income derived from guano exploitation provided the various regimes with a firm grip on national affairs.⁴⁸ Through this sectarian usage, guano was finally and firmly detached from its original roots and became a servant of power politics and its associated ideologies. Following the cancellation and re-awarding of the fourth guano concession during 1842, tensions within the ranks of the concessionaries heightened and eventually became divisive. Gibbs, Crawley & Co. supported a reduction in sales prices as well as the implementation of a uniform pricing system in order to attract more business and to hasten the transition to guano fertilisation. The other members of the consortium, however, favoured price variation and credit sales at a higher rate in order to obtain the maximum financial return.⁴⁹ Against this background, in July 1843 the world was informed that a new guano source was discovered on the island of Ichaboe on the southwest coast of Africa, in an area unclaimed by any sovereign nation. The geographic guano frontier as a production frontier with its origins in Peru and driven by the needs of British agriculture for a cheaper fertiliser, thus formally shifted across the Atlantic as indicated in Map 2 below. This illustrates that frontiers are temporary and sensitive to both natural and political factors.

⁴⁷ W.T. Jordan, "The Peruvian Guano Gospel in the Old South." *Agricultural History* 24 no. 4 (October, 1950): 212

⁴⁸ Berg & Weaver, "Towards a reinterpretation of political change in Peru": 72- 73

⁴⁹ Matthew, *The House of Gibbs*, 5



MAP 2: THE SHIFTING GEOGRAPHICAL AND PRODUCTION FRONTIER ⁵⁰

2.4. The Dynamics of the Ichaboe Guano Frontier, 1843 – 1845

The discovery of an alternative guano source unsettled a wide range of direct stakeholders in the Peruvian trade, including the concession holders, investors in guano shares and the original financiers of the war of independence.⁵¹ They feared that this new discovery would undermine the still embryonic market and that an over-supply of guano of an undetermined quality would result in lower prices and therefore negligible returns on their substantial investments. These fears were justified since unclaimed territories invariably turned out to be anarchical. This turn of events was therefore a direct threat to their collective wealth and necessitated urgent action to prevent and counter the establishment of an alternative and uncontrolled trade. Taking action, however, proved to be extremely difficult as the discovery was located in “no-man’s-land”. Matters were also further complicated by reluctance and caution in official circles with regard to new territorial expansion and its associated expenditure. The British government not only followed a policy of non-interference with regard to monopolies, but the English Royal Agricultural Society actively supported efforts to

⁵⁰ All maps used in this study were produced with the assistance of Marius Meiring, Chief Information Officer at the Saldanha Bay Municipality

⁵¹ Stewart, *Chinese bondage*, 84

find alternative guano sources to the benefit of British farming.⁵² The guanopreneurs were thus in a very poor bargaining position. With few alternatives left, a desperate attempt for relief was launched through the courts but proved unsuccessful and left the first guanopreneurs with no alternative but to participate on an equal footing in the new guano rush.⁵³

2.4.1. From Naming and Claiming to Anarchy

The existence of guano on Ichaboe along the Namib coast was well known amongst British seamen, given their frequent visits to that part of Africa.⁵⁴ Located on the fringes of the polity, this area potentially carried the seeds of an anarchic frontier where the survival of the strongest would prevail. The guano trade was first placed on a new trajectory when Andrew Livingstone, a Liverpool Master Mariner who closely followed the growing interests in guano fertiliser in Britain, with the financial backing of businessmen John Rae and Norman Macleod, initiated a secret investigative expedition to verify claims attributed to American shipmaster Benjamin Morrell of the existence of a substantial source of guano on the obscure island of Ichaboe along the Namib coast. The objective behind this venture was to secure a new guano monopoly free from the control of the Peruvian monopolists. Having overcome navigational obstacles, the crew of the ship “*Ann*” confirmed the accuracy of the claims in February 1843. The initiating parties found themselves standing on the threshold of potential substantial wealth. All they had to do was to transform their secret knowledge into a successful commercial venture. With this objective in mind, Livingstone tried to raise further finance by issuing shares in a public company.⁵⁵ However, the temptation to derive maximum advantage and sole benefits proved too strong for Livingstone’s partners.

Enticed by the possibility of securing sole benefits (by claiming first mover advantage) James Rae, son of one of the original financiers, and Francis Farr, one of the shipmasters in the expeditionary fleet, outmanoeuvred Livingstone by publicly attaching their names to a newly

⁵² W. M. Matthew. “The imperialism of free trade, Peru 1820 – 1870. *Economic History Review* 21(1968):568

⁵³ G. McCall Theal, *The History of South Africa since 1795*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1920): 235.

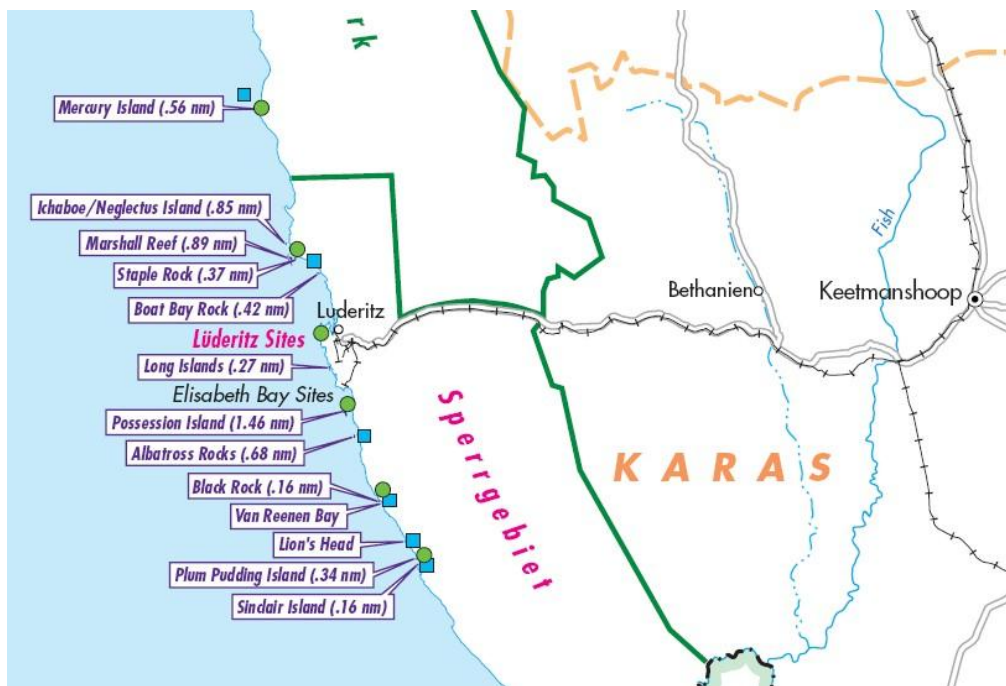
⁵⁴ Van Sittert & Crawford, “Historical reconstruction of guano production” : 13

⁵⁵ A. Livingstone, “The west coast of Africa and islands adjacent: 312

discovered island (presumably Ichaboe) as a means to establish first official claims to the source.⁵⁶ The critical element in a political manoeuvre for advantage, according to Edelman, is the creation of meaning or the construction of beliefs about the significance of events, problems and persons. The act of naming and claiming is therefore a crucial and necessary mechanism to achieve strategic objectives or outwit the opposition, mobilise the necessary support and allocate of benefits.⁵⁷ The fact that the partners failed to inform Livingstone about their intentions and acted unilaterally to secure the spoils for themselves, illustrates a classical case of anarchic frontier behaviour. These actions effectively terminated the initial partnership and prematurely ended the first proposed African guano monopoly. It also ensured that the “Livingstone Initiative” became the first victim of the new guano frontier before it was even formally established. This indicated that despite contextual differences, most frontiers contained certain anarchic features that would impact on the dynamics of a particular situation. The island of Ichaboe and its neighbouring islands (pictured in composite Map 3 below), the new node in the guano frontier, then set the scene for unfolding events that followed the transcontinental shift of the frontier.

⁵⁶ Craig, “The African guano trade”: 31

⁵⁷ M. Edelman, “Political Language and Political Reality,” *Political Science* (Winter, 1985): 11



MAP 3: ICHABOE AND NEIGHBOURING ISLANDS

2.4.2. Frontier Dichotomies: Anarchy, Accommodation and the ‘Lettered Frontier’

Following the failure of the Livingston Initiative, the rush for guano freight from Ichaboe resumed in earnest. Most of the early arrivals were ill-prepared and lacked reliable information about the exact location of the island and its geography as well as the type of equipment needed for effective exploitation of the resource. They could therefore not turn first-mover advantage into monopoly control. The second wave of arrivals, however, was not only better prepared but also demonstrated an advanced understanding of the requirements for the efficient organisation, collection and dispatch of guano. In its ranks were shipmasters, supercargoes and charterers of British vessels.⁵⁸ Whether they were members of the Peruvian consortium and its trading network or guano bondholders is not clear. A close analysis of their modus operandi, especially their actions with regard to naming the first management structure to control guano collection and claiming for themselves the right to speak on behalf of the whole island community, strongly suggested that this might have been the case. The establishment of a controlling structure can also be regarded as the first monopolistic action of the African trade and indicative of what was to come.

The leader group, consisting of at least twenty shipmasters, organised themselves into a special management body, called the Committee of Shipmasters and Others (forthwith COSO or Committee) assisted by a secretary with a view to control all guano loading activities on Ichaboe. The committee also adopted a distinctive flag and a coat of arms.⁵⁹ They then appointed two of their founding members, one Captain Benjamin Wade, the shipmaster of the *Douglas* as “arbiter of claims and injuries”, allocator of guano pits and harbour master⁶⁰ and Captain Burnett of the *Rival*, as committee secretary.⁶¹ Wade’s first task was to establish, albeit without the prerequisite legal or political mandate, a new (guano) frontier on 11 November 1843 by declaring British sovereignty over Ichaboe under the pretext of protecting their national commercial interests.⁶² In order to place the exploitation of the resource on a

⁵⁸ KAB: Government House (forthwith GH.) 1/161: Memorial - Benjamin Wade – Lord Stanley, 26/12/184

⁵⁹ Ex member, “The African guano trade”: 625

⁶⁰ KAB:GH. 1/161: 2798: Memorial & Memorandum - Benjamin Wade – Lord Stanley, 26/12/1843

⁶¹ Craig, “The African guano trade”: 40.

⁶² KAB: GH. 1/161: 2798: Wade Memorandum – Admiralty, 26/12/1843

sound footing, a system of special work teams instead of sailors for digging and loading guano and a system of supervision through supercargoes to ensure the correct loading of ships according to demarcated loading zones was introduced. Furthermore, the practice of a free-for-all collection of guano had to give way to a system of individual “guano pits.” This brought a sense of order to the working arrangements and contributed to a faster loading rate. To strengthen the system and to ensure general compliance with the new loading arrangements, the Committee used their superior navigational skills and strategically employed the natural obstacles such as the surf, ocean depth, seaweed volumes and the state of the ocean floor to monopolise the best areas on the eastern and northern side of the islands for the erection of special loading stages.⁶³ They also adopted a set of rules to regulate loading and the assignment of pits, confident in the knowledge that Ichaboe was an island “untrammelled by custom-house or other regulations” other than their own, “where no lords of the soil could interfere to claim a purchase-money.”⁶⁴

Given the detailed nature of the actions of the Committee, the question arises as to the significance and political meaning of introducing a coat of arms and appointing of a harbour master. A Coat of Arms is a general feature of the nation state and a symbol of its political authority. According to Richard Mohr, the meaning of coats of arms may also best be understood by their history, by the political contests to which they are enlisted, and by their impacts within particular social settings. As such they are an important signpost to the interpretive framework of the time and mentality of their creators.⁶⁵

A close investigation of the design features of the coat of arms (such as the Latin motto “*Sic vos non vobis guano ficatis aves*”) shown in Figure 2 below, as well as the bits of information provided by a former member of the Committee of Management is instructive.⁶⁶ In addition, the formulation of Wade’s memorandum to the Imperial authorities is equally revealing. The

⁶³ Ex Member, “The African guano trade”: 13

⁶⁴ *South Australian Register*, 23/01/1845

⁶⁵ R. Mohr, “Enduring Signs and Obscure Meanings: Contested Coats of Arms in Australian Jurisdictions.” Paper presented to the workshop on Contemporary Issues in the Semiotics of Law, IISL, Oñati; 15-17 May 2002: 5-6

⁶⁶ Ex Member of the Committee of Shipmasters & Others (1845) stated that: “The.... coat of arms, resting on bags of guano is one considered suitable to the Committee; its fidelity to existing circumstances at Ichabo, will be apparent to anyone who was ever there,” *Nautical Magazine*, XIV (1845): 617

trouble taken to craft a symbolic object that complied with the general rules of heraldry and that conveyed a political message is significant. The use of Latin similarly fulfils a political function. Most sailors were not conversant in nor understood the language and were therefore not able to interpret the meaning of the motto. Although a literal translation thereof revealed a fairly innocuous meaning (“*not for yourselves, ye birds, your guano nests ye build*”), its lack of intelligibility by the majority had a disempowering effect. In its original context, the motto “*sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves*” was a line in an anonymous praise poem of the Roman poet Virgil to Emperor Augustus but it was claimed by another poet, Bathyllus, as his work. When the situation was finally rectified, it became a metaphor for credit claimed by one person for work done by another as well as a reference to unselfish work (“by you, not for you”).⁶⁷ Within the context of 19th century Ichaboe where one group appropriated the power to organise the work of others, the motto “*Thus you labour not for yourselves, others get the credit*” or alternatively “*others profited from your labour*”, assumed ominous proportions and may even be considered as an attempt at establishing a coercive exploitative system. The coat of arms was not only an object aimed at impressing those who were expected to submit to the power of the Committee of Management, but may also be considered a physical representation of the social and exploitative power vested in them. Together with what Mohr called “a paucity of interpretants” of Latin, the coat of arms “derives its power as much from what cannot be interpreted as for what can.”⁶⁸ There is thus little doubt that the COSMO as the self-installed political masters of the island community of Ichaboe in fact mimicked the nation state through their actions.

⁶⁷ J. Richardson, Emeritus Professor of Classics, University of Edinburgh; ‘Sic vos non vobis’ – The School Motto”; <http://www.raglanjunior.org/index.php/about/info/sic_vos_non_vobis_-_the_school>; (June 19, 2010)

⁶⁸ Mohr, “Enduring Signs and Obscure Meanings”: 22



FIGURE 2: ICHABOE COAT OF ARMS⁶⁹

Functioning frontiers cannot afford to operate in a political vacuum without some form of policing authority. Due to its natural features, its sense of isolation and its lack of life-sustaining resources such as food and fresh water, Ichaboe Island was therefore not fit for human settlement and did not strictly qualify as a port of entry. Wade, in his memorial to the Imperial authorities, also specifically mentioned the absence of any indigenous people on the island as a result of this lack of life-sustaining resources.⁷⁰ The appointment of a functionary with the title of Harbour Master therefore appeared incongruent with general practice. The position of Harbour Master was normally based on legal prescripts aimed at regulating shipping and crews and was therefore loaded with political and executive authority.⁷¹ Under this contemporary law, the supervisory role of the officer in quest in included the collection of rates of harbour pilotage, harbour dues, tonnage dues, wharfages rates, regulating the ballasting of vessels, payment of bonds for the observation of customs laws and the disembarkation of people.⁷² The new monopolists could therefore confidently declare in the memorial that Wade drafted on their behalf that, “we have throughout acted in a

⁶⁹ Ex Member, “The African guano trade”:

⁷⁰ KAB: GH. 1/161: Memorial - Benjamin Wade – Lord Stanley, 26/12/1843

⁷¹ E. Goebel, “Management of the Port of Saint Thomas, Danish West Indies during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.” *The Northern Mariner / Le Marin du nord* VII no. 4 (October, 1997): 47

⁷² A good example in this regard is Act 18 of 1842 published by Sir George Grey, South Australian Governor. *Victoriae Reginae, Act 18 of 1842, Act for the better preservation of the Ports, Harbours, Havens, Roadsteads, Channels, Navigable Creeks and Rivers [in Her Majesty’s Province of South Australia]and for the better regulation of Ships and their Crews in the same*”; Province of South Australia

straightforward, honourable and just manner to our entire approbation and consequently beg most respectfully to recommend him to your Lordship's notice."⁷³

These events are consistent with Benton's argument that when parties or individuals cross boundaries, they travel with their own culture as well as geographical and legal knowledge and when it was necessary to assert legal authority, they based it on the understanding that "crown subjects could carry jurisdiction into distant places" and therefore could exercise the geographical and legal principles of "dominium" (the right to possess territory) and "imperium" (sovereign jurisdiction).⁷⁴ Beyond the organisation of guano digging, the effort of a smaller group to position itself as the overarching management structure, and therefore as a quasi-political and judicial authority, must then also be seen as an attempt to eliminate the political vacuum and to establish itself as the frontier's "political community of masters"⁷⁵ authorised to assume, albeit without popular consent, the responsibility of managing relationships on Ichaboe. This effectively put paid to the traditional view that frontiers were "unlettered" and proposed instead that frontiers are also places of interaction and knowledge exchange where, when expedient, the nation state is mimicked.

Despite the decisive nature of their actions and their acting as if the Imperial government were on their side, the Committee remained a group of individuals who, in line with Firth's description, "seek a living beyond the legal system of their own countries"⁷⁶ and who through entrepreneurial actions unrelated to conquest, created a new frontier.⁷⁷ This turned the task of the Harbour Master into an unpleasant undertaking. Recognising the futility of their actions without legal backup, Wade addressed a memorandum to the Admiralty requesting the appointment of a resident magistrate to replace the moral authority of the Harbour Master as well as to investigate whether Portugal may have any claim to the island.⁷⁸ The Home Government was not yet ready to act on their behalf. The "only practical step" they were promised was a visit by a warship from the naval station at the Cape of Good Hope to protect

⁷³ KAB: GH. 1/161: Memorial - Benjamin Wade – Lord Stanley, 26/12/1843

⁷⁴ Benton, "Empires of exception": 5

⁷⁵ Legassick, "The frontier tradition": 50

⁷⁶ Firth, "The Pacific Islands": 181

⁷⁷ Benton, "Empires of exception": 7

⁷⁸ KAB: GH : 1/161: 2798, Wade – Admiralty, 26/12/1843

the assembled shipping at Ichaboe.⁷⁹ At the same time the Colonial Office undertook to engage the Admiralty on the matter in order to determine their views.⁸⁰ By late March 1844, the latter informed the Colonial Office that the Cape Naval Station was instructed to examine and report on the islands as well as on the state of the anchorage. Further action would only follow once the investigative reports were received and studied.⁸¹ This only increased the anxiety of the Ichaboe monopolists.

Unperturbed by their lack of a legal mandate or the existing policy vacuum, but bolstered by their confidence in their own collective ability to enforce their will, the COSO in traditional anarchic fashion took full control of the island and charged payment of £1 per 200 tons of guano plus a further five shillings for “administrative expenses” for any additional freight above 100 tons. In addition, all new arrivals were forced to assist with the loading of the ships preceding their own.⁸² Acting as a proper harbour and customs authority and mimicking the proper political authorities, refusal to comply was met with a denial of both anchorage and freight. Those under charter from the Home Country had no option but to pay and assist in order to secure a load and thereby strengthened the authority of the self-made masters of Ichaboe. Under this regime, according to the Australian newspaper, *The Courier of Hobart*, 6000 tons of guano from Africa and Peru was imported into Britain.⁸³

As expected, this regime caused great dissatisfaction amongst those excluded from the official management structure. Initially the latter group challenged the rules by constructing their own landing stages, but when the loyalists thwarted their efforts, the challenge turned violent during March/April 1844 when the physical confrontation turned into a full-scale mutiny. Given their overwhelming majority, the labourers soon got the upper hand and declared Ichaboe a guano republic off-limits to all officers and loyalists.⁸⁴ According to Benton, such actions characterised by “rogue polities” and self-proclaimed kings and similar others, when directed against legal authorities, must be regarded as acts of counter-

⁷⁹ KAB: GH.1/161: 2798, I. Stephen – John Barrow, 18/3/1844

⁸⁰ KAB: GH.1/161: 2798, G. Hope – B. Wade, 18/3/1844

⁸¹ KAB: GH.1/161: 2798, Admiralty – Barrow, 20/3/1844

⁸² Ex Member, “The African guano trade”: 628

⁸³ *The Courier*, 29/10/1844

⁸⁴ L. Green, *Panther Head*. (Cape Town,;Howard Timmins, 1955), 92 ; Craig.”The African guano trade”: 40

sovereignty.⁸⁵ Although the “rogue guano republic” did not come into being as a result of the rejection of any legal authority, the fact that all crews are covered under maritime law transformed their mutiny into an act of defiance of the law. The dispossessed shipmasters, supercargoes and shipping agents, who were denied the right to load guano, then directed a request to the naval authorities in the Cape Colony, hoping to capitalise on the involvement of local businessmen in the rush. The appeal of the Committee for protection of property, profit and the constraining of labour under British law against their own creation, represented a new shift in frontier relations. Actively seeking the involvement of a legal sovereign authority further emphasised the fact that though the frontier may have anarchic features, when it is expedient and when the authority of the controlling group is threatened, government authority is sought. It therefore also confirmed the current view of frontiers as both spaces of mixing and accommodation.⁸⁶

The involvement of the authorities in this matter was motivated by a combination of factors. Although guano fertilisation was introduced into Cape agriculture as far back as the 17th century under the governorship of Jan van Riebeeck⁸⁷ and Zacharias Wagenaer⁸⁸ respectively, a similar fertiliser tradition never developed locally. This was mainly due to the abundance of land for farming during that period. At the beginning of the 19th century, most farmers still used animal dung, which was collected with a great deal of effort from a range of widely distributed pasturages. To compensate for the lack of sufficient volumes, farmers made provision for long fallowing periods.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the Cape Colony and the rest of the 19th century world experienced frequent crop failures⁹⁰ and struggled to secure a grain surplus as a result of soil infertility.⁹¹ Cultivating wheat was particularly difficult in some areas such as the Overberg with its lime soil, compared to the Swartland district with its more

⁸⁵ Benton, “Empires of exception”: 6

⁸⁶ Legassick, “The frontier tradition”: 45

⁸⁷ H. B. Thom (ed.), *Jan van Riebeeck, Dagregister II*, (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1974), 109

⁸⁸ A. J. Boëseken, *Dagregister en Briewe van Z. Wagenaer*, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1973), 245

⁸⁹ L. Guelke, “Die Blanke Setlaars, 1652 – 1780”, H. Gillomee & R. Elphick (eds.), *’n Samelewing in Wording*, (Cape Town: Maskew MillerLongman, 1990), 50

⁹⁰ W. Dooling, “In search of profitability: Wheat and wine production in the post-emancipation Western Cape,” *South African Historical Journal* 55(2006): 90 – 91

⁹¹ D. Van Zyl, “Die Geskiedenis van die Graanbou in die Kaapkolonie, 1795- 1826.” *Argief Jaarboek vir Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* (forthwith AJB / AYW) 27, (Pretoria, 1968)

sandy soil.⁹² In addition to this variation in soil quality, regular and widespread droughts rendered only small pockets of the colony suitable for cultivation without irrigation. Consequently, many farmers preferred cattle farming.⁹³ Against this background, guano was reintroduced to the Cape Colony in January 1844 when the first two loads arrived in Cape Town in January 1844. Despite the agricultural demand for guano in Great Britain and the import of 77 073 tons from Ichaboe during 1844,⁹⁴ the authorities failed to grant the required condonation and instead displayed a distinct reluctance to intervene.

The initial hesitation to act despite the growing demand for guano in the agricultural community must be put into proper perspective. Despite posing as agents of the imperial government and their use of language and rituals that showed similarities to delegated legal authority,⁹⁵ the Committee of Shipmasters were nothing of the sort. Given the difficulties in administering a far-reaching empire, uncontrolled and unsanctioned territorial expansion was not promoted. The British government also had no formal guano mining or trading policy to begin with and no need for one, given the fact that Britain had not exercised any control over any of the known sources of guano. The official response indicated quite clearly to others, especially potential challengers, that the Committee, for all its posing as a representative of imperial control was, as Legassick put it, “more hope than a predestined fact.”⁹⁶ Furthermore, its response was consistent with its earlier position when it declined requests for intervention on behalf of British investors when the Peruvian concession was threatened. However, the position was soon to be changed as a result of a combination of factors discussed below.

The bay of Angra Pequena, the centre of the African rush at this time, offered Cape merchants an opportunity to sell provisions duty free. Guano traders were also able to participate on an equal footing in the provision of the growing market. In addition, a mutually beneficial scheme was concluded between Cape merchants and guano shippers with the latter

⁹² J. Wilson, “Rural Revolution – Wheat, Wool and Politics in the Overberg”, *Contree* 31 (April,1992): 3

⁹³ A. J. Christopher, “Crown land disposal in the Cape of Good Hope, 1853 – 1914.” *Historia*, 29 no.1 (May, 1981): 40

⁹⁴ R. S. F., “Statistics of guano”: 182

⁹⁵ Benton, “Empires of exception”: 27

⁹⁶ Legassick, “The frontier tradition”: 62

being offered provisions in exchange for the transport of fish, fresh produce and water from Cape Town.⁹⁷ All the interested parties could therefore readily identify themselves, with attempts to remove all restrictions, irrespective of whether such measures were imposed by the rebels or the COSMO. When the issue of naval intervention from Simon's Bay was therefore raised, those excluded from the island showed very little dissent. An emissary was then sent to Simon's Bay, the naval headquarters of the local branch of the Royal Navy. A warship then visited the island and reorganised work and accommodation arrangements on the island. This included a new division of guano pits, loading arrangements and the reconstitution of the management committee under Captain Owen of the *Zenobia*, who was appointed Commodore and assisted by a committee of 12 individuals with the authority to "exercise full power" until another warship arrived.⁹⁸ In addition, new rules were adopted and implemented. The recognition of these rules by all on the island, and the presence of military force used by successive commanders of visiting warships such as the *Isis*, *Thunderbolt*, and *Clio* to enforce the new rules, established a legal standard with regard to ownership of the island.⁹⁹ Although shipping crews were able to deliver guano stock weighing 35 000 tons to all British ports by the first of May 1845,¹⁰⁰ this caused a new policy dilemma since additional demands were placed on the naval authorities. When the guano source was nearly depleted and ships increasingly failed to load a full cargo, the ship captains requested the naval authorities to act as a legal authority by issuing "a certificate of their having been there for the satisfaction of their owners."¹⁰¹

With depletion a reality, the focus shifted to the territorial waters of the Cape Colony and specifically Malgas Island where a new guano discovery was made in 1844 and a new rush ensued. Resource depletion therefore became the second motivator for shifting the frontier and creating a new point of interaction. These events form the basis of the discussion in Chapter 3.

⁹⁷ J. Kinahan, "The Historical Archaeology of Nineteenth Century Fisheries at Sandwich Harbour on the Namib coast." *Cimbebasia* 13 (1991): 5

⁹⁸ *The Courier*, 23/5/ 1844

⁹⁹ KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. (A.11 -'61); Testimony of Capt. J. Spence, 9/7/1861: 30 – 31

¹⁰⁰ *The Courier*, 17/6/ 1845

¹⁰¹ *The Australian*, 26/4/1845

2.5. The Commercial and Environmental Effects of the Shifting Guano Frontier

Despite the short duration of the first phase of the African guano trade, it fundamentally impacted on the further growth of the Peruvian trade. The availability of new guano types from Africa naturally led to an oversupply on the British market. This also resulted in a slight reduction in the overall price on the British market to the benefit of less wealthy farmers who were now also able to purchase, test and shift to the new fertiliser of choice. However, the lack of sophisticated knowledge about the relative quality of the various types was problematic. In the absence of a system of pre-sale analysis of guano's nitrogen content, dishonest marketers continued to exploit the farming community and to manipulate the market.¹⁰² Some of those who were out to make easy money deliberately exploited the ignorance and inability of farmers to distinguish between Peruvian and other guano by unscrupulously selling whatever they had as the "real thing". They also downplayed the rumour that the ammonia level of some of the African products was reduced over the course of the long sea journey.¹⁰³ Collectively, these events increased the frustration of the commercial farming community who had developed an interest in the steady supply of the fertiliser.

In addition to progressively advancing greater knowledge of the relative merits of the varieties in the market, the availability of different guano types also greatly benefited the science of plant nutrition. Through the joint efforts of guano merchants and farmers, scientists were able to make vital breakthroughs with regard to determining the composite elements of guano and thus dramatically advance progress towards the manufacturing of artificial fertilisers. In a related development, a new scholarly debate emerged around the blanket use of guano for all crop types. One school of thought questioned the wisdom of the former practice and instead proposed the appropriate use of a combination of guano and other fertilisers with a phosphate rather than a nitrogen base in the cultivation of certain crops. According to the scientific knowledge at the time, it was better in the case of crops like turnips to use more phosphate-based fertilisers such as bone-meal or artificial manures.¹⁰⁴ As a direct result of these very public debates and the direct involvement of the agricultural

¹⁰² Olinger, "The guano age in Peru": 16

¹⁰³ Craig, "The African guano trade": 47

¹⁰⁴ Matthew, "Peru and the British guano market"(1970): 116

community through its organised associations, a constant flow of updated information in the form of pamphlets, journal and magazine articles as well as regular newspaper reports were available, thereby increasing public understanding of the developments in the field with serious implications for a future Cape industry.¹⁰⁵ In most cases Cape Town-based guano merchants aimed to supply the same overstocked European market, instead of imitating the successes achieved in the West Indies and developing other potential colonial markets such as Natal, Mauritius and the St. Helena Island with their British-orientated plantation agricultural system.¹⁰⁶ Targeting these potential markets would significantly reduce the cost of long distance shipping and ensure the effectiveness of the product.

Guano collection had a dramatic impact on the animal life on the various colonial islands and Ichaboe. This included both seabirds and seals that frequented the rocks on the islands. The frantic human activity and physical scraping of the islands to the rocky bottom disturbed the very topography of the islands and the traditional nests and burrows of the guano-producing seabirds.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the constant noise and movement of the labour force and the use of firearms made the islands more uninhabitable and unsuitable for nesting purposes. The frightened seabirds deserted the islands, creating the impression that the guano trade had come to its end. This was however not the case, given the superficial nature of the human disturbance. Guano collection only disturbed the natural living environment of the birds but had no effect on the pelagic fishing resources, which served as their main source of food. The presence of seabirds was associated with the availability of shoals of pelagic fish more than a century ago.¹⁰⁸ It is therefore instinctive for these birds to return to their original habitat after a short absence for as long as sufficient food is available.

Reconstructed catch series for sealing compiled by David and Van Sittert indicated that during the extended period of c. 1840 – 1860, which overlaps with the era of the Guano Rush (1843 - 1845), sealing continued unabated (though at a reduced rate) and took a backseat to guano collection. Based on export and import figures from the Namib islands, they concluded that this period contributed significantly to the export of 65000 seal skins and the killing of at

¹⁰⁵ Matthew, "Peru and the British guano market"(1970): 114

¹⁰⁶ Craig, "The African guano trade": 34

¹⁰⁷ Payne & Crawford, *Oceans of Life*, 270

¹⁰⁸ P. D. Shaughnessy, *Historical Population levels of seals and seabirds*, 61

least 1,93 million seals in Southern Africa during the 19th century.¹⁰⁹ This disturbance, combined with guano collection, effectively rendered the island unproductive for at least one year.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The guano frontier originated as a geographic location for a socio-cultural resource central to the identity, lifestyle and worldview of the indigenous Peruvians who went to great lengths to protect both the resource and the knowledge underlying its use. As a result of colonisation and the reconfiguration of the subjected societies of Latin America by Spanish settlers, the resource gradually obtained a different meaning far removed from its original roots. Following an expansion of the knowledge boundaries of plant nutrition and progress in the field of fertiliser science, guano obtained significant commodity value and was therefore re-cast in a totally different light. As a result, the geographical frontier also became an economic frontier. Under the influence of post-independence developments and following the nationalisation of the resource islands, the frontier then also became a political boundary. Once again this was accompanied by a change in its meaning for the new nation-state of Peru, the successor state to the Inca. The deliberate linking of guano with the political sovereignty and well-being of the nation, coupled with the constant revision and retraction of the collection and distribution concession, created a market shortage and instigated British and American farmers to find an alternative and affordable product. With the discovery of an African alternative, the exploitation frontier shifted and effectively began to undermine the value of the Peruvian concession, much to the detriment of the political regime in that country. The rush for Ichaboe on the southwest African coast and the subsequent battle for monopoly control led to all sorts of complications on the new frontier.

Based on the events outlined in the course of this chapter, new insights were gained with regard to frontiers, their nature, triggers and movements. Contrary to popular belief, frontiers are not necessarily places of rough ignorance. Following the actions of the dominant group in their attempt to mimic the nation-state through symbols and symbolic actions, it is safe to conclude that frontiers are actually places of cultural/knowledge exchange and thus literate’.

¹⁰⁹ J. David & L. Van Sittert, “A reconstruction of the Cape (South African) fur seal harvest 1653 – 1899 and a comparison with the 20th century harvest,” *South African Journal of Science* 104 (March/April 2008): 110

Furthermore, frontiers are not necessarily anarchic, as commonly perceived. The events at Ichaboe in particular indicated that in order to function and to deal with uprisings that may occur, frontiers may attempt to regulate them by clinging to the notion of accommodation. Such uprisings should not be seen as acts of anarchy by speculative entrepreneurs mimicking the nation-state, but should rather be approached as acts of counter-sovereignty. As far as the movement of frontiers is concerned, the evidence also indicated that resource demand, depletion, extension of knowledge boundaries and the legal imperative all contributed to shifts and further extensions of the same. Frontier extension had environmental, socio-political and economic effects. On the economic level, new discoveries did not only introduce variety into the market, it also contributed to the lowering of prices and the capturing of new segments of the market, such as farmers with fewer resources and the producers of artificial fertilisers.

Although the Cape Colony earned an additional amount of nearly £47 000, which was put to good use financing its administration and improving colonial infrastructure, the exploitation of the resource severely disrupted the animal life and ecology of the islands. This led to the departure of a large number of birds and the killing of an equally high number of fur seals, which left a number of islands useless for the guano, sealing and egg trade. Malgas Island in Saldanha Bay (within the local territorial waters) then became the centre of a new guano rush and created a new policy dilemma for the Cape and Imperial authorities.

CHAPTER 3

“A FORTUNATE ADDITION?” - FROM A FREE-FOR-ALL TO A CAPE GUANO POLICY, 1843 – 1845

3.1. Introduction

The shifting of the guano frontier from Ichaboe to the territorial waters of the Cape Colony brought an end to what Newbury has called “the hunter-gatherer phase of commercial ventures.”¹ Accompanying the new discoveries was the introduction of specific guano policy and legislation to enable both the annexation and monopolisation of guano islands in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In comparison to the no-mans-land of Angra Pequena, the Cape Colony and its offshore islands were part of the British Empire and therefore fell under British law. Within this context, the use of violence to gain an unfair business advantage was not only risky but also contrary to the rule of law. Cape Town was not only an organized political community, but also boasted an active mercantile association, the Commercial Exchange. Two distinct commercial groupings: the mercantile “elite” and an emerging commercial middle class dominated economic life.² The arrival of guano in Cape Town (and the discovery of guano on islands within Cape territorial waters) coincided with a period of intense political rivalry between the colony’s key political institutions, namely the Governor, Legislative Council, Cape Judiciary and the Cape Town Municipal Council. A new policy dilemma emerged, namely how to legitimise the local guano trade whilst simultaneously maintaining efficient government control over the commodity. The kind of policy-making inherent to this situation was a process of bargaining, competition, persuasion and compromise among interest groups and government officials.³ This chapter will show that the movement from policy dilemma to a formal Cape policy for the administrative and political management of the local guano trade manifested itself as a three-sided battle between the colonial authority, its citizens and foreigners for control of the product.

¹ Newbury, “Mammon in Paradise”: 48

² D. Warren, “Merchants, Commissioners and Ward Masters: Municipal and Colonial Politics in Cape Town.” AYB / AJB (Pretoria, 1992)

³ T. R. Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, 8th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), 310

This chapter traces the evolution of the process that led to the adoption of a formal Cape guano policy. It began as a policy issue driven by the frustrations of interested parties and was amplified by a constant stream of memorials and the use of public platforms to pressurise the colonial authority to obtain access rights. It shows how the activities of a small group of well-connected and politically influential business personalities conspired to link politics and guano, creating a role within a larger constitutional drama. It will be argued that, while the new guano policy and its accompanying administrative system removed resource-poor entrepreneurs from the race for fair access, it simultaneously frustrated a core group of well-connected local businessmen. The chapter will show that as the colonial authority had to contend with acts of civil disobedience, jurisdictional challenges and the set-up of a rogue trading system in direct competition with the official regime, these events placed further strain on the already poor relationship between the colonial state and its citizens and transformed the trajectory of the guano trade in the years after 1845.

3.2. Towards a Guano Policy Agenda

Although the Dutch settlers at the Cape had collected guano for agricultural use from the offshore islands as far back as the 17th century, no local guano fertiliser tradition developed. By the time of their departure at the beginning of the 19th century their official representative, Commissioner De Mist, tasked with the handing-over of the Cape to the English, could still only recommend the constant rotation of cattle kept in small paddocks to produce dung and collect it for use as fertiliser.⁴ Four decades later, on the eve of the re-introduction of guano into Cape society, John Centrelives Chase, a prominent Eastern Cape British settler, observed that nothing was known about compound manures and that the time-honoured practice of collecting fertiliser as needed for dressing agricultural land from the nearby cattle kraal was still prevalent.⁵ Van Zyl ascribed the persistent struggle of Cape farmers to secure an adequate grain surplus up to the 19th century to a limited knowledge of fertilisation.⁶ However, in August 1842, fourteen months prior to the arrival of the first guano from

⁴K.M. Jeffries, ed., *The Memorandum of Commissary J.A. De Mist, containing Recommendations for the Form and Administration of Government at the Cape of Good Hope, 1802* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1920)

⁵J.C. Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay, with statistics of the Colony*, (London: Pelham Richardson, 1842): 150

⁶D. Van Zyl, "Die Geskiedenis van die Graanbou in die Kaapkolonie, 1795 - 1826", AYB / AJB 27, (Pretoria: Government Printer for Department of National Education, 1968)

Ichaboe, Thomas Ramsden launched the first recorded effort to initiate a guano market in Cape Town with guano obtained from Malgas Island in Saldanha Bay.

Ramsden was most likely not acquainted with the Peruvian trade, considering the fact that he never registered any claim to the guano deposits on this island. Neither did the arrival of the product raise any particular interest from the ranks of the colonial authorities, farmers or merchants. This discovery only became general knowledge and entered the policy domain in 1844 when a dispute erupted between the colonial authorities and several local businessmen who attempted to claim discoverer's rights to the guano on the island. Ramsden had great difficulty selling his product and after months of trying to do so, was still in possession of half of his original shipment.⁷ Based on Chase's remarks on the non-existence of local compound manures and Ramsden's distinct lack of success in disposing of what was a highly sought-after product elsewhere, it is safe to assume that Capetonians lacked a sophisticated scientific understanding of both the growing international guano market and the progress made with regard to plant and fertiliser science despite the existence of the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society. This institution was established with government aid to provide the agricultural community with appropriate advice and was tasked with the promotion of local agriculture.⁸ Ramsden's dilemma was not unusual and was a typical example of the struggle of 19th century small businessmen who tried to launch a risky venture with very limited capital.⁹ Although he was a partner in a Hout Street canteen and had business dealings with Benjamin Norden, the future guanopreneur, his limited sales success indicated that he was not a member of the existing commercial or agricultural network of merchants and farmers with Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society membership.¹⁰ Had this been the case, guano would have entered the policy domain earlier and Ramsden would most probably have had a much better chance of disposing of his stock. He also found himself in a dispute with some of his customers for not delivering a professional service as boatman and on

⁷ KAB: Colonial Office (C.O. hereafter), 4020: 133, Collector of Customs – Governor, 26/12/1844

⁸ P. Van Breda, "Ontstaan van die eerste Landbou- en Boereverenigings in die Kaapkolonie tot 1883." *Contree*, 14 (1983): 21

⁹ W. Gamber, "Gendered Concerns: Thoughts on the History of Business and the History of Women," *Business and Economic History*, 23 no. 1 (Fall, 1994): 129

¹⁰ KAB: Cape Supreme Court (forthwith CSC) 2/6/1/24:11; 20/5/1845

occasion had to pay damages after overloading a boat full of stores.¹¹ Despite his distinct lack of sales success and his failure to elevate guano to the local policy agenda, Ramsden can still be regarded as an early pioneer of the Cape trade.

As will become clear, the credit for sowing the seed of guanopreneurship in the Cape Colony belonged to Cape businessman and Ward Master of the Cape Town Municipality, Benjamin Norden, who actively participated in stripping the islands during the first guano rush along the Namibian coast during the period 1843 - 1844.¹² According to a witness, unknown Cape Town personalities were active participants in the proceedings of the first management structure established on Ichaboe to ensure order and to secure a controlled monopoly.¹³ From this vantage point and oblivious of Ramsden's experience fourteen months earlier, Norden landed the first load of Ichaboe guano in Cape Town in January 1844.

Compared to Ramsden, Norden was far better equipped for this new venture. He was not only a prominent businessman but also a landowner in six districts of Cape Town as well as in Colesberg with property holdings worth at least £2750 in 1841.¹⁴ In addition to being described as a "prosperous merchant",¹⁵ he was also an active member of key networks such as the Board of Ward Masters and the local Jewish Society and a leading activist who [in May 1841 together with like-minded individuals] tried to reform the Commercial Exchange (the single most important business association in Cape Town) to become more broad-based and inclusive. Based on this combination of factors, Norden had a far better chance to succeed with his guano venture and could therefore safely be designated the founder of the Cape guano trade. As a member of the colonial elite, he was also better placed to steer the matter of guano exploitation rights into the policy domain. This conforms to Dye's observation of policy communication as "intraelite" (i.e. policy issues formulated and

¹¹ KAB: CSC 2/6/1/24:11; 27/5/1845

¹² L. Herman, *The History of the Jews in South Africa from the earliest Times to 1870*. (London: 1930), 111

¹³ Ex Member of the Committee. "The African guano trade": 630. Norden is however not mentioned in the list of founder members of the Committee of Shipmasters & Others attached to Wade's Memorial of March 1844 to both the Colonial Office and the Admiralty. It is however possible that he might have been a member of the reconstituted committee under the supervision of the naval authorities following the mutiny on Ichaboe.

¹⁴ J.L. Meltzer, "The Growth of Cape Town Commerce and the Role of John Fairbairn's Advertiser (1835 - 1859)." *AYB / AJB*, (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1994): 144

¹⁵ Warren, "Merchants, Commissioners and Ward Masters": 10

amplified by organised interest group leaders, influential constituents, wealthy contributors and other influential people have the best chance of being placed on the formal agenda).¹⁶

The arrival of Ichaboe guano unleashed a new entrepreneurial wave in Cape Town, especially amongst leaseholders involved in fishing and collecting sealskins and penguin eggs on the offshore islands within the territorial waters of the Colony. All were hoping that they would be allowed to exploit the guano in their areas of operation. In February 1844, shortly after the arrival of the first guano batches in Table Bay, the Trustees of the insolvent estate of local businessman John Norton, Messrs John King & R.W. Paton, submitted a memorial to the Governor requesting the right to collect guano for their own account.¹⁷ This was followed in May 1844 by a further request to have the remainder of this lease transferred to the Trustees.¹⁸ Norton (who had held the six-year lease since 18 October 1841, which allowed him to collect penguin eggs and seal skins on the Bird- and Chuan Islands on the coast of Algoa Bay) owed the colonial authority £33.12s.9d for annual rent, a fine of £10 for late payment and an additional fine of £25 for breach of contract.¹⁹ Sensing an opportunity to redeem himself financially, his Trustees appealed to the Colonial authorities for a second chance. This request was however firmly declined.

Norton's request was declined firstly on legal grounds, namely that the law did not provide for the automatic transfer of existing leases to third parties.²⁰ His Trustees therefore had to obtain a successful tender of their own before they could get a return on their original investment through their business transactions with Norton. Policy matters also played a role in the decision of the Colonial authorities. Since the guano trade originated in Peru, Britain (and by implication also her colonies) had no official guano policy. The transformation of the Peruvian trade into an international guano trade involving Cape colonials created a fresh policy issue for the administrators of the Cape Colony. This is evidenced by the Imperial

¹⁶ Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, 300

¹⁷ KAB:CO. 4020:101, John King & R.W. Paton: Trustees of the Estate of John Norton – Governor, 23/02/1844

¹⁸ KAB:CO. 4020:100, John King & R.W. Paton: Trustees of the Estate of John Norton – Secretary to Government, 10/05/1844

¹⁹ KAB:CO. 4020:101, John King & R.W. Paton: Trustees of the Estate of John Norton – Governor, 23/02/1844

²⁰ KAB:CO. 4020:101, John King & R.W. Paton: Trustees of the Estate of John Norton – Governor, 23/02/1844. Notes scribbled on the original memorial. No record of a formal communication to the applicant could be found in the records.

feedback in response to the Wade Memorandum of December 1843. The Imperial response of formally withholding approval of the annexation and declaration of British authority over Ichaboe was therefore consistent with the process of handling a policy vacuum. Under the circumstances, dispatching a warship from Simon's Bay to protect the pioneers of the African trade was the most practical action, since it afforded the authorities an opportunity to investigate the matter prior to initiating a more comprehensive response.²¹

When the guano question entered the public domain in Cape Town, the local colonial administration found itself in the midst of an administrative reshuffle, further complicating matters. Governor George Napier, who was supposed to lead the policy process within the colonial administration *ex officio*, was in the process of leaving Cape Town following a recall to Britain. A review of his original decision with regard to the Norton memorial therefore had to wait until a new Governor assumed office. Furthermore, he left behind a colonial legislature with neither the right to establish investigative commissions nor to subpoena witnesses to give evidence. A proper policy process, which included the drafting of new regulations, public submissions and debate as well as drafting a comprehensive administrative system to control the collection and sale of guano, was therefore the sole prerogative of the Colonial Governor. No mechanisms for citizen participation in the policy-making process existed at a time that colonial citizens demanded a greater say in the colonial administration.²² The nature and location of the guano market complicated matters further since the market of the early 1840s was essentially an export market and was still developing. Based on the Ramsden experience and the location of the market, guano collection and trading were speculative with no guarantees of a sustainable financial return. It was also highly unlikely that struggling businessmen such as Norton would have the capacity to establish anything beyond a small-scale operation. When matters normalised with the appointment of Sir Peregrine Maitland in March 1844, guano was understandably low on the priority list of the Cape authorities. A far more pressing issue was the constitutional deadlock within the colonial government.

²¹ KAB: GH.1/161: 2798, G. Hope – B. Wade, 18/3/1844

²² M. George, "John Bardwell Ebdon: His Business and Political Career at the Cape, 1806 – 1849." *AYB / AJB* 49, (1), (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1986): 70

3.3. The Dynamics of Guano Policy-Making

During the course of 1844, guano forced itself onto the political agenda on the back of an influx of memorials and claims by individuals seeking access to the resource on offshore islands within the Cape Colony's territorial waters.²³ In this regard discoveries on Malgas Island in Saldanha Bay in particular, forced a rethink and the formal initiation of a policy-making process. Amongst the agitators were local merchants John Bardwell Ebdon and Antonio Chiappini, co-shareholders in the Association for the Improvement of Cape Wool and the later Natal Cotton Company respectively and according to George also the "main defenders of the rights and privileges of the Legislative Council."²⁴ Others included Benjamin Norden who was involved in the Ichaboe trade right from the beginning, as well as Ward Commissioner Harrison Watson, a partner in the company of Thomson, Watson & Co. and a member of the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society. These personalities represented social, political and economic groups in the various spheres of the Cape Colony. It is not hereby suggested that all of these personalities were consistently anti- or pro-government. Watson occupied the ranks of both the mercantile elite and political conservative "collaborationist" group - people with close links to the colonial political bureaucracy and a special relationship with the Governor.²⁵ Governor Maitland therefore had more than his fair share of political challenges in October 1844 when a guano rush for Malgas Island in Saldanha Bay became a distinct possibility and warranted immediate intervention from the colonial authorities.

During the Ichaboe Rush (1843 – 1845), guano collectors initially paid very little attention to Malgas Island. The fact that the island resorted under the custom's regime of the Cape Colony and was therefore subject to certain tariff charges may have discouraged interested parties. Like Newbury's "hunter-gatherers", most shipping crews or shipmasters had little intention of creating new ventures and demonstrated limited entrepreneurship, except to rush

²³The use of tactics such as memorials and claims are all part of what Dye (1995) has called political tactics aimed at creating, dramatising, raising awareness and pressuring government towards adopting a particular policy agenda.

²⁴George, "John Bardwell Ebdon": 68

²⁵Warren, "Merchants, Commissioners and Ward Masters": 15

to obtain a free load of guano for maximum profitability.²⁶ However, with the exhaustion of the Ichaboe stocks and increasing competition for freight, attention shifted southwards. This compelled Maitland to confront guano politics as well as some of the personalities who had left their destructive imprint on the northern islands. With valuable naval information about the problems associated with the Ichaboe Rush at its disposal, the Cape colonial authorities acted to prevent a free-for-all. A key priority was to determine the actual size of the resource in order to manage it properly. Following a full survey, the Colonial Surveyor General reported that the total available guano on Malgas covered an area of at least eight acres and a depth of seven to eight yards.²⁷ Based on this measurement and with the Malgas deposits as its point of reference, the colonial government erected staging to facilitate loading before formally announcing its intention to sell guano from all of its islands to all-comers (irrespective of nationality) at £1 per registered ton on 5 November 1844. This nominal fee was merely to cover of the costs related to the survey and to provide basic loading infrastructure such as a jetty at the island. In addition, these expenses still had to be formally approved by the Imperial authorities since there was no similar precedent within the British Empire for the Cape Colony to follow. It was further decreed that those interested in obtaining guano freight from any territorial island could only do so by purchasing a loading license from the Office of the Collector of Customs in Cape Town.²⁸ Interested parties were also warned not to expect any government assistance during the loading process, except in cases where too many licenses for the available guano were issued and there was a need for loading priority.²⁹ In order to police a geographically dispersed area, a follow-up notice dated 31 December 1844 tasked all Civil Commissioners, Resident Magistrates, Peace Officers, and other public officials with enforcing these rules. In this way guano was elevated from a fringe issue to a formal policy matter backed by its first formal set of rules.

²⁶W.B. Gartner, "Who is an Entrepreneur? Is the Wrong Question." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (Summer, 1989): 62

²⁷KAB: Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, March 21, 1845, Government Notice, November 5, 1844

²⁸KAB: Central Archives Depot (forthwith CAD), 2/1/1/63 : C14/ 117: Assistant Chief Archivist – R. W. Rand, 24 / 9 / 1948

²⁹KAB: Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, March 21, Government Notice, November 5, 1844

These practical measures were without precedent in the British Empire. Prior to this action, the only official response of the Imperial Government in Peru was to place a special Consul on the Chinca Island for monitoring purposes. The measures announced by the Cape Colony were therefore significant as the first steps towards the establishment of the first formal guano policy anywhere within the British Empire. There was therefore no need for guano speculators to pretend that they possessed the required legal or delegated authority to control and direct exploitation as was previously the case at Ichaboe.

Whilst the decision to regulate the collection of guano on the colonial islands using a system of licenses prevented some problems, it also created new ones, particularly for the relationship between the government and commerce. As the number of opponents to the authority's new management system increased and transcended class and political boundaries, new political and other issue-alliances emerged which also found their way onto the policy agenda. These matters form the basis of the discussion in the next section.

3.3.1. Guano Claims and Policy Contestation

Robert Arthur Cain, an Irish shipmaster from the port of Greenock, Ireland (who visited Saldanha Bay in September 1844 while exploring the various coastal islands) also discovered guano deposits on Malgas Island. In order to establish a priority or preferential claim he notified the Resident Magistrate of the area, Mr George Marsh, of his discovery and followed it up with a memorial to the colonial government, stating that he “present himself to the government to prefer a claim to any benefit they may be disposed to grant him as the discoverer.” The basis for this claim was as follows:

*“...when aided by the practical knowledge of the article, he ascertained the existence and value of the said deposit, which but for his research he feels borne out in saying might have remained dormant for years.”*³⁰

Based on a search of customs records, the veracity of this claim was refuted and swiftly repudiated. After establishing that the potential rights actually belonged to an unknown

³⁰KAB: CO. 4020: 150; Memorial of Robert Arthur Cain – Secretary to Government, 21/10/ 1844

boatman, subsequently identified as Ramsden, permission to collect guano from Malgas Island was refused to Cain.³¹ The message to entrepreneurs was clear: that the colonial authorities had no intention of awarding rights based on claims of either first discovery or use as a basis for a concrete policy. Being a visiting shipmaster (with Ireland as his home-base) Cain, like those before him, also lacked a local network and access to those with influence and power and could therefore not influence the policy process. Dismissing his claim was therefore fairly easy. The problem, however, was the extent to which this method could be generalised to any future claim emanating from those who were far better connected.

The difficulty of sustaining this approach became clear when the colonial authorities received a similar claim from Antonio Chiappini, owner of the Cape Town-based company A. Chiappini & Co., who had multiple business interests that ranged from wool farming (as a member of the Association for the Improvement of Cape Wool), cotton-trading (through the Natal Cotton Company) and inter-colonial trade as far as Australia. In addition, he was a member of both the Commercial Exchange and the “collaborator group” who were by all accounts closely connected with most of the previous colonial government’s functionaries.³² In a claim submitted on 24 December Chiappini refused to identify the island in question, except to indicate that the island in question was located north of Cape Town. He also indicated that he was willing to identify the island to the Collector of Customs following the successful conclusion of a joint venture with the colonial authorities.³³ It is not clear whether this strategy was meant to test the resolve of the new Governor or was merely an attempt to use his long-standing and intimate relationship with the authorities to his advantage. Whatever his motivations were, his strategy backfired as all his proposals were summarily declined. The colonial authorities were not yet ready to conclude entrepreneurial agreements or to draft policy based on selective disclosure of information and subtle forms of blackmailing. In addition, claims based on discoverer’s rights were once again rejected. The denial of these requests, however, incurred the wrath of the politically connected and rejected entrepreneur. Chiappini, unlike Norton or Cain, was politically well connected. Resenting the rejection of his “legitimate claims” and offers of joint ventures, he declared himself in favour

³¹KAB:CO. 4020: 150; Secretary to Government – Collector of Customs (COC.), 23/12/1844

³²Warren, “Merchants, Commissioners and Ward Masters”:

³³KAB: CO. 4020:151, A. Chiappini & Co. – Governor, 24/12/1844

of having the system scrapped and labelled the actions of the colonial authority as tantamount to open opposition to private enterprise.³⁴ This dragged guano matters into an already volatile and polarised political situation.

In December 1844 ship-owner N. Mellon attempted to obtain rights by extending an offer for the conclusion of a favourable public-private partnership extending beyond the terms laid down by the guano licence regulations. Submitting a parallel memorial to Chiappini's claim, he registered a request for the bulk removal of 10 000 tons of freight at a rate of one pound, and one shilling additional per registered ton (new measurements).³⁵ This non-offensive approach and willingness to engage with the authorities within the parameters of the established regulatory procurement framework differed noticeably from that of Chiappini. The former evidence also indicates that Mellon was a single operator that lacked a strong business-support network. Consistent with the colonial authorities' known position, the Mellon-offer was also declined. Despite the consistency of its actions, refusal or half-measures did not resolve the existing policy dilemma. Instead, it generated new and stronger opposition from its entrepreneurial-inclined citizens.

The first direct challenge to the colonial authority's attitude to claimants and their insistence on discoverer's rights came from George Twycross, who discovered a significant guano deposit on Dyer Island near Cape Agulhas. Like his predecessors, he was also in financial difficulty and identified the discovery as a potential means to resuscitate his struggling business.³⁶ As a result he followed the established method of submitting various memorials to the authorities requesting the right to collect guano freely for the remainder of his existing lease in January 1845. He was particularly offended by the Colonial Government failure, i.e. "giving no privilege as the present lessee" with no means of paying such demand.³⁷ At the same time he voiced his unhappiness with the official dismissal of his "legitimate rights" while allowing others to introduce rabbits onto the island. Like his predecessors, he offered to provide the authorities with a guarantee or surety for payment of 20% for the right to collect

³⁴ KAB: CO. 4020: 143, A. Chiappini & Co. – Governor, 18/06/1850

³⁵ KAB: CO. 4020:152, N. Mellon – Governor, 21/12/1844

³⁶ KAB:CO. 4027:156: Memorial George Twycross – Governor Maitland, 13/1/1845

³⁷ KAB:CO. 4027:659: Memorial George Twycross – Governor Maitland, 11/1/1845

guano from the island.³⁸ Both the Collector of Customs and the Secretary to Government failed to respond immediately despite Twycross increasing his financial offer for the right to remove guano from Dyer Island.³⁹ Frustrated by the slow response from the colonial authorities, Twycross took the law into his own hands, resorting to guano theft. The Collector of Customs therefore impounded Twycross' boat and equipment to show the colonial state's determination not to allow wilful transgressions of official regulations. Fortunately for Twycross, nothing more serious happened and his boat was returned after three days.⁴⁰ This inaction had little to do with the colonial authority's feelings of benevolence, but was a direct result of the lack of legal standards, given the absence of a formal policy or penal code for transgressions of this nature. The existing guano licence system therefore had to be amended by the colonial authorities.

As a result of the obvious profitability of the guano, the demand for substantive exploitation rights increased amongst Cape businessmen interested in accessing the guano export market. Based on its established position, the Cape authorities continued to delay the initiation of a proper policy debate. Instead they continued to focus on the imperial instruction to investigate and report on the full extent of all guano deposits within their jurisdiction. This attitude was supported by their own faith in the workability of the measures contained in the recently promulgated Guano Ordinance. Pre-occupation with imperial matters and the existence of an official decree, however, did not stop the constant stream of memorials and letters from various interested parties who continued to submit claims demanding discoverer's rights. A growing sense of anger and impatience with the authorities was evident from the correspondence. The disregard of the colonial authorities undoubtedly reminded the Cape citizens of the lack of proper representation in the light of the systematic disempowerment of the Legislative Council by successive colonial governments and in 1841 the Cape Municipal Council demanded full representative government after it became the self-appointed articulator of public opinion in Cape Town.⁴¹ To aggravate matters, more discoveries were made and claims were registered from Donkin Bay on the west coast to Algoa Bay on

³⁸ KAB:CO. 4027:157: Twycross – Governor Maitland, 27/1/1845

³⁹ KAB:CO. 4027:158: Twycross – Maitland, 31/1/1845

⁴⁰ KAB:CO. 4027 : 661, Twycross – Governor, 31/1/1845

⁴¹ Warren, "Merchants, Commissioners and Ward Masters": 133

the east coast with islands such as Dyers, Dassen and Bird Island (False Bay) in between. The Cape's guano frontier became a contested policy frontier based upon the actions of people like J.O. Smith and Antonio Chiappini who were both influential members of Cape society.

John Owen Smith represents a different trajectory in the struggle for guano rights as opposed to Twycross and others. When the first guano arrived in Table Bay in January 1844, Smith was still en route to Cape Town after a visit to England. Shortly after his arrival on 21 January,⁴² he succeeded in obtaining the fishing and sealing licence for Bird Island, Algoa Bay, formerly held by John Norton.⁴³ Norton, as mentioned earlier, was unsuccessful in his efforts to convince the colonial authority to allow him collection rights. As an astute businessman, Smith was constantly on the lookout for new opportunities to advance his economic interests (in the boating establishment, shipping, selling of gun powder, sheep farming and property development).⁴⁴ When the guano craze hit Cape Town in the absence of any policy in early 1844, he began to capitalise on his good fortune, only to be prevented by the colonial authorities as his actions were contrary to the conditions of his lease. Furthermore, he became an interested spectator of government's own appropriation of the proceeds of the trade. In open defiance of the Guano Ordinance, Smith simply went ahead and launched a rogue enterprise. Firstly, he sold guano for fifteen shillings per ton in direct competition with the official government price of £1. Secondly, he embarked on overseas trading by employing F. Joly in London as his marketing agent.⁴⁵ These actions were an unambiguous rejection of the official policy. This also communicated a strong sentiment that as far as the leaseholders were concerned, the existing fishing and sealing lease were enough grounds for the right to remove guano from the same locality. When the government retaliated by appropriating the guano, Smith objected and used his attorneys to ascertain his rights and to position himself to be able to effectively oppose any attempt to terminate his hold over Bird Island. This standoff resulted in the first deviation from the official course and provided the first chink in an already contested policy.

⁴² A. Porter, "John Owen Smith 1804 – 1871," *Looking Back* 24 (1984): 94

⁴³ KAB:CO. 4020:101; John King & R.W. Paton: Trustees of the Estate of John Norton – Governor, 23/02/1844

⁴⁴ A. Porter, "John Owen Smith and the Port Elizabeth Public Library," *Looking Back* 10 (1970)

⁴⁵ KAB: Public Works Department (PWD hereafter) 2/3/12/B.300 Précis of Papers in the Office of the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works relative to the removal and sale of guano from the Bird Islands, Algoa Bay, April 1886 (hereafter Précis of Papers): 4

Fearing Smith's legal threat and following the advice from the colonial legal establishment, the authorities embarked on a process of negotiation to convince Smith to comply with the existing regulation. On the other hand, Twycross' property had been confiscated as a result of his transgression. The authorities offered Smith £25 000 to abandon his rights and to vacate the island.⁴⁶ Smith refused, proposing a compromise whereby he would receive 50% of the proceeds of all guano licenses issued as compensation for terminating his activities. On 6 May 1845, contrary to its official position, a formal agreement between Smith and the colonial government was accepted as a compromise. In terms of this agreement Smith would take responsibility for all entrepreneurial activities (collecting, bagging and exporting of guano) while the authorities would take responsibility for overseas marketing. In addition, Joly (Smith's original agent) had to cease his activities or the agreement would be terminated as there was little room for a rogue trader competing directly with an official government operation. It was agreed that once operational costs had been deducted, the net profit would be equally distributed. It was explicitly stipulated that the agreement would remain valid until all the guano on the island had been removed. This particular stipulation was extremely problematic because it ignored the fact that guano birds are migratory (they left the islands on a seasonal basis and added to the existing deposits on a continuous basis). It was also extremely difficult to demarcate exactly where the new deposits started and where the old ones ended. The source was virtually permanent and thus presented a major structural flaw in the Cape's guano administrative system.

The special agreement between Smith and the colonial government created an unhealthy precedent given the consistent rejection of similar claims. To fully understand the real state of affairs, it is necessary to consider Smith's personal networks within the colonial administration. The attorney responsible for the management of Smith's legal affairs, E. Christian, was an influential member of the Commercial Exchange, the Colonial Harbour Board as well as a member of the Legislative Council (1851 – 1853).⁴⁷ These links provided him with very powerful allies with direct links to important colonial functionaries - a trend that was also observed in other parts of the international guano trade. In addition, Smith played an important part in the political and social affairs of the Eastern Province. He

⁴⁶ KAB: PWD. 2/3/12/B.300: Précis of Papers: 2

⁴⁷ Warren, "Merchants, Commissioners and Wardmasters": 138

organised a defence strategy for Port Elizabeth against a possible Xhosa attack (1835), provided space for a government customs office and bond warehouse, and was a businessman, justice of the peace, an auctioneer and agent for Lloyds.⁴⁸ These were not the sole reasons for his preferential treatment as there is certainly evidence of other less successful clashes between him and the colonial authorities.

However, when one considers the combination of his various roles and the strategic importance of the eastern districts for the colonial project, Smith became much more than an ordinary businessman and more of a valuable ally and *de facto* functionary in the colonial network. This also placed him in the ranks of the colonial political elite whose policy input, based on the animosity generated by the existing approach to guano collection, has largely been ignored. Given the key role that he and his peers played within the larger scheme of things and the influence that they were able to muster, it infused a certain flexibility into policy formulation that could only benefit those commercially and politically well-connected. Furthermore, Smith's special dispensation represented the first case of a Cape Town based business receiving priority treatment. This was extremely significant for those who plied their trade from Cape Town. Understandably, concerns existed that once the colonial authority reported the full state of the guano resource to the Imperial Government as requested, London-based entrepreneurs would be able to outmanoeuvre their colonial counterparts because of their closer contact to the Westminster political network. Those close to the policy frontier in Cape Town, therefore, had more than a passing interest in the Smith Affair. These events also give credence to Day's assertion that elite political constituents influence the final policy outcome.⁴⁹

Policing the Cape guano trade proved difficult and resulted in alienating some citizens. These issues warranted serious and immediate attention to prevent the system from collapsing, especially in the light of cases similar to the Twycross case. The Cape Colony could not afford an escalation in guano thefts along its west and east coast. Income from guano collection during the short period of its existence proved to be very profitable. By 31 December 1844 the colonial treasury had already accrued £1276 without any significant

⁴⁸ Porter, "John Owen Smith and the Port Elizabeth Public Library": 93- 95

⁴⁹ Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*, 301

capital layout.⁵⁰ Maintaining this readily available income (or “fortunate addition” as it was described by the Colonial Secretary) from a source under the sole control of the authorities became a priority.⁵¹ Equally important was preventing lawlessness on the guano islands to the detriment of the Colony. It was therefore not surprising that (as the colonial authority developed a financial interest in the control of the guano islands) the number of failed claims increased and the different perspectives offered by these claimants as potential input in a new policy fell by the wayside. This approach was, however, not sustainable given the already fragile political state of the Colony and the growing division between the ruling bureaucracy and the citizenry.

3.3.2. From a ‘Non-judicial Opinion’ to a Formal Policy Process

At the beginning of 1845 functionaries within the colonial bureaucracy began to question the legal basis of the colonial government’s guano collection arrangements. This followed a number of applications claiming that Judge Menzies of the Cape Supreme Court had expressed the opinion that “*being merely or mainly the droppings of unreclaimed birds, of a base nature, it [guano] could not in law (emphasis in the original) [be] deemed to be property or to be possessed of legal value.*”⁵² This question had serious practical and legal implications. If the basis of the policy and its accompanying system were in doubt, it meant that the requirement of obtaining a licence before collecting guano was also without force and effect. This indicated a return to the hunter-gatherer situation where the strongest power rules. The policy dilemma therefore deepens significantly. Despite doubts about the real reason behind the new developments, operating according to an ad hoc policy was wholly unsustainable. The only way to resolve the current dilemma was to formulate and promulgate a formal policy with sound administrative arrangements. In a sense, the earlier attempt to silence or at best ignore the voices that tried to influence the policy debate failed and forced the colonial authority to create proper measures to manage the guano resource. For a proper understanding of the unfolding policy process and its interface with the basic tenets of imperial law, this process must be considered in detail.

⁵⁰KAB:Central Archives Division (forthwith CAD) 2/1/1/63: C14/117, Assistant Archivist – R.W. Rand, 24/9/1948

⁵¹J. Burman & S. Levin, *The Saldanha Bay Story*, (Cape Town & Pretoria: Human & Rossouw, 1974), 97

⁵²KAB: GH. 23/12 : 36, Maitland – Stanley, 27/2/1845

Based on the strategic considerations outlined above and with a view to prevent guano theft and uncontrolled collection as well as to rectify the legal deficiencies, the Colonial Government published Ordinance 4, (the so-called Guano Ordinance) on 1 January 1845.⁵³ According to this ordinance all guano, irrespective of location within the jurisdiction of the Cape Colony or its dependencies, was forthwith declared Crown property.⁵⁴ After further refinement during January it was formally promulgated as law on 21 March 1845, thereby finally removing all uncertainty around guano collection on the colonial islands and other colonial dependencies. Special care was also taken to address those issues identified as problematic by the member of the Cape judiciary. In this regard the ordinance stated unequivocally that all unclaimed or non-concessionary and saleable guano was declared Crown property and that theft would be punishable by law.⁵⁵ As a control measure, Ordinance 4 of 1845 also provided for definite administrative arrangements to streamline control of the exploitation of the various islands. In terms of the new regulations the Collector of Customs and the Secretary to Government were responsible for the overall management of the guano collection system pertaining to the colonial islands and dependencies.⁵⁶ In those areas far from Cape Town where significant discoveries were made, the administrative responsibility with regard to issuing loading licenses was delegated to a number of functionaries, including ordinary custom officials, resident magistrates,⁵⁷ field cornets⁵⁸ and Civil Commissioners.⁵⁹ In addition to the formal administrative tasks, the various officials were also tasked with the prevention of guano theft.

The Guano Ordinance provided for various offences and related penalties. Any offender who collected guano without the expressed authority of the colonial government would be liable for a maximum fine of £100 as well as a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months that may or may not have included manual labour. Any accomplices would be liable for similar punishment in addition to running the risk of having their property (boats and equipment)

⁵³ KAB:GH. 23/12 : 36, Maitland – Stanley, 27/2/1845

⁵⁴ KAB:Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, March 21, 1845

⁵⁵ KAB:Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, Friday, March 21, 1845

⁵⁶ KAB: GH. 23/15 : 153: Maitland – Stanley, 28/10/1845

⁵⁷ Ex Member, “The African guano trade”: 641

⁵⁸ P.L. Scholtz, *Die historiese ontwikkeling van die Onder Olifantsrivier 1660 – 1902:*

Geskiedenis van die distrik van Van Rhynsdorp, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, January 1964:136

⁵⁹ KAB: PWD. 2/ 3/12/ B.300 Précis of Papers

seized. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the system, a reward system of informants was also provided for. Any informants whose report led to a successful conviction would receive half the fine payable by the convicted offender.⁶⁰ The fines attached to the new Ordinance were particularly steep and the fact that the whistleblowers could earn half of that revenue as reward, clearly added to the weight of the potential punishment. This is further demonstrated by the fact that [by the start of the local trade] someone as unfortunate as Norton was unable to settle his government debt of an estimated £70 that stood between him and economic survival. Furthermore, an analysis of property values in Cape Town in the late 1830s and early 1840s indicated that with £150 sterling, C. McKenzie and J. Letterstedt were able to procure significant pieces of land in Stellenbosch and Rondebosch respectively. These transactions boosted their property portfolio significantly.⁶¹ The comprehensive new policy formalised and expanded the original aims contained in the early measures and strengthened the former system. The new measures, however, also cleared the way for those with substantial financial resources whilst excluding those with limited capital to invest in a speculative venture since it increased the operating costs associated with guano collection. The tone for the further development of the system and the potential dominance of the trade by the resource-rich was thus finally set. The policy, its status as colonial legislation and related issues prior to its subsequent application on Malgas and the other colonial islands, form the basis of the discussion in the next section. The intricacies of the policy process within the system are also expanded upon.

3.3.3. The Cape Guano Ordinance and Imperial Law

In accordance with standard procedure in the British Empire, all colonial measures were subject to review by the Colonial Office to ensure full compliance with existing Imperial legislation, rules, precedents and procedures. In addition to complying with the aforementioned, the approval or rejection of any serious legislative proposal was determined by the type of measure, the colony from where it originated and “the attitude which the

⁶⁰ Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, Friday, March 21, 1845

⁶¹ Meltzer, “The growth of Cape Town commerce”: 144

Colonial Office chose to take towards its enactment.”⁶² The arrangements and the resulting cost incurred by the Cape authorities to facilitate guano collection on the coastal islands were undertaken without the prior approval of the imperial government. Until this matter was rectified, there was a real possibility that the proposed policy and its accompanying administrative system would be rejected. In line with the standard requirements, the Colonial authority communicated its actions to the Imperial authorities on different occasions. In February 1845, just prior to the promulgation of the Guano Ordinance, Governor Maitland requested formal approval for passing the legislation.⁶³ Naturally the Colonial Office in the person of Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for Colonies, raised concerns about the expenses incurred in an industry which the authorities had little exploitation knowledge of.⁶⁴ Given the importance attached to guano by the British farming community, the proposed ordinance was then handled as an act approved by the Governor and already in force.⁶⁵ In addition, the Imperial Government requested more detailed information on expenditure (for staging and loading) and the extent of guano resources to report back to London-based merchants.⁶⁶ By October 1845, with a full year’s experience of managing guano collection with the aid of a system of licenses, the Cape authority was able to report on the effectiveness of measures implemented as well as the actions taken to ensure separate and regular reporting to and by the offices of the Collector of Customs and the Secretary to Government.⁶⁷ This was supplemented in November with further correspondence to inform the Colonial Secretary of all the steps taken and expense incurred in regulating the collection of guano on the colonial islands. All these requirements were part of the Imperial Government’s efforts to curb territorial expansion as well as to keep colonial expenditure within reasonable limits.

Formal approval for the expenditure remained outstanding for a substantial period of time.⁶⁸ This state of affairs was not unusual, nor was it indicative of serious differences in the interpretation of policy. Non-approval in the domain of colonial administration was however considered a very serious matter, particularly since special permission could impose a

⁶²D.B. Swinfen, *Imperial control of Colonial legislation, 1813 – 1865: A study of British policy towards colonial legislative powers*, (London: Clarendon Press, 1970), 36

⁶³ KAB:GH. 23/15: 36; Maitland – Stanley, 27/2 /1845

⁶⁴ KAB: GH. 23/15:153; Maitland – Stanley, 28/10/45

⁶⁵ Swinfen, *Imperial control of Colonial legislation*, 36

⁶⁶ KAB: G.H. 1/167 : 21; Stanley – Maitland, 28/2/1845

⁶⁷ KAB: G.H. 23/15: 153; Maitland – Stanley, 28/10/1845

⁶⁸ KAB: G.H. 23/15: 41, Maitland – Stanley, 6/2/1846

restriction on the powers of the local legislature and therefore had to be handled with the utmost care. Furthermore, approval was usually only refused when the particular act contained a suspension clause and action was required.⁶⁹ The Guano Ordinance was not subject to restrictions or any further legal impediment to its implementation and enforcement. However, certain key policy matters had to be clarified prior to its approval. In May 1845 the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, submitted the Ordinance to the Privy Council for Trade and requested the Lords to give their opinion as to “whether this enactment would be productive of any such injury of this Kingdom as should prevent the confirmation of it by Her Majesty.”⁷⁰ Given the status of guano within British agriculture, the Privy Council did not object to the Ordinance except for requesting that the Cape Legislature refrain from imposing levies on the export of guano.⁷¹ This stipulation complicated matters since the requirement of a guano licence was similar to a special levy and could therefore be construed as an obstruction to the free trade.⁷² The Colonial Office therefore had to search for further clarification since opposing views could result in the non-confirmation of what had become a critical piece of economic policy in the Cape Colony. In the midst of this policy discussion, the Council received various complaints from guano traders about the amount charged for the licence and the “injurious effect” it was likely to have. In addition, the Council of Trade had to consider other related issues, such as the influx of different guano types of varying quality from all over the globe; the difficulty of determining guano’s real value; and the complex matter of a fair charge to levy within the context of the Imperial Government’s stated commitment to encourage duty-free imports to benefit British agriculture.⁷³

These various issues resulted in a long drawn-out policy debate characterised by the mutual exchange of briefing notes and position papers between two of the key imperial institutions central to determining imperial economic policy. In the end, enough common ground was found to enable consensus and the Privy Council adopted the position that the guano licence be regarded as “a certain payment by way of price paid for the article” and to redeem some of the cost that government incurred in providing basic infrastructure to facilitate loading at

⁶⁹Swinfen, *Imperial control of Colonial legislation*, 37

⁷⁰KAB: G.H. 1/171 : 21; Stanley – Maitland, 16/9/1845

⁷¹KAB: G.H. 1/171 : 21; Office of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade – J. Stephen , 10/5/1845

⁷²KAB: G.H. 1/171 : 21; N. Thorpe – Lefevre, 23/5/1845

⁷³KAB: G.H. 1/171 : 21; Lefevre - Stephens, 14/ 6 /1845

certain islands.⁷⁴ The colonial authorities also had to accept the position of the Colonial Office that any change in the charge for guano would result in a mandatory repayment of the price difference to all of the previous buyers. Such a result would “encourage the business of carrying away the guano to the adjacent continent, there to be stored as an article of sale and export” by local dealers and speculators rather than the Treasury.⁷⁵ It was thus left to Lord Stanley and his department to decide on the best action to benefit the imperial cause. The Guano Ordinance was then recommended for Her Majesty’s signature and communicated for formal implementation. This outcome did not make it easier for Cape Town’s business elite to access guano cheaply, as they were now obliged to obtain rights within the framework of British Imperial law.

This novel ordinance to address a very practical local problem laid the foundation for similar policy arrangements, particularly in Australia and the United States of America. When guano was discovered on various islands and rocks in the Pacific Ocean and along the coast of Western Australia during the late 1840s, the Cape Colony was in a strong position to suitably advise its Australian counterparts with regard to a proper management system.⁷⁶ As a direct result of this advice, the Queensland Coast Islands Act of 1879 was promulgated whereby certain guano islands were claimed by the Australian authorities.⁷⁷ More importantly, within two years after the Cape Colony promulgated its Guano Ordinance, the 34th Congress of the United States of America took similar action and adopted the Guano Islands Act on 18 August 1856. An all-encompassing policy was drafted to ensure full coverage of American influence in all guano locations (including islands, rocks and keys).⁷⁸ This legislation had strikingly similar features to its Cape counterpart. This aspect and its implications for the development of the Cape trade will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The mere existence of a new policy, however, was not sufficient to regulate the relationship between guano hunters, entrepreneurs and the colonial government. Given the geographically

⁷⁴ KAB: G.H. 1/171 : 21; Lefevre - Stephens, 14/ 6/1845

⁷⁵ KAB: G.H. 1/171 : 21; Stephens - Lefevre, 15/7/1845

⁷⁶ KAB: GH 1/363:46, Lord Carnarvon – Sir Henry Barkly, 25/10/1876

⁷⁷ *Queensland Coast Islands Act*, 1879, <http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdID=52>, (December 6, 2007)

⁷⁸ *Guano Islands Act*, Thirty Fourth Congress, Session 1, Chapter CLXIV, <<http://memory.loc.gov/llsl/011/0100/01410119.gif>> (September 25, 2007)

dispersed nature of the local trade and the mounting dissatisfaction amongst local businessmen as a result of restrictions on free exploitation of the islands, new jurisdiction and policy challenges arose (such as a mutiny on Malgas Island and civil disobedience in the form of guano theft and rogue trading). This forms the basis of the discussion in the next section.

3.4. Policy, Mutiny and Jurisdictional Challenges

Despite the efforts of the colonial government to prevent serious problems at Malgas Island, it was not humanly possible to plan for every eventuality. As soon as the official measures were put in place, the rush for guano started. Crews from all over the world and Cape Town congregated on the various islands situated in the bay, with particular attention to Malgas Island guano (regarded as similar in quality to that on Ichaboe). Most positioned themselves on the land adjacent to the islands. This brought together contracted seamen (normally subject to fixed wages and alcohol rations) and ordinary labourers (free agents) who were able to sell their labour to the highest bidder. Given the different traditions, labour disputes and social altercations erupted as the traditional discipline of the sea was subverted in the rush of ships in Saldanha Bay.

In order to achieve a faster loading rate, some shipmasters approached the local Government Resident George Marsh to assist with the recruitment of local labour. The recruits who reported to Marsh were free labourers with better remuneration than the contracted seamen. These differences were aggravated by race and precipitated physical confrontation between the two labouring groups. On 13 May 1845 all work ceased and the European sailors, together with a significant number of their unemployed comrades, attacked the government-recruited Malay labour force.⁷⁹ Intoxicated by “frequent draughts of alcoholic compounds,” they literally chased these workers into the sea and they had to be rescued by their employers.⁸⁰ To emphasise the economic and ethnic basis of their uprising, the mutinous sailors demanded a salary raise from 3/ to 4/6 per day with rations and also declared that they

⁷⁹ KAB: CO. 4026:551, W. Field – E. Boyes, 13/5/1845

⁸⁰ E.F. Hatfield, *St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope*, 81

would not “allow any man of Colour to work or land on the island” (emphasis in the original).⁸¹

This mutinous behaviour challenged the accepted principle of the right to sell one’s labour to the highest bidder and thus placed the mutineers on the wrong side of colonial and maritime law. Furthermore, their actions also explicitly challenged the established order by rejecting the arrangements of the Resident Magistrate as the local representative of colonial jurisdiction and law, and can therefore be regarded as acts of counter-sovereignty steered by self-proclaimed leaders.⁸²

In a situation similar to the earlier Ichaboe Rebellion, the mutinous sailors seized control of the island and denied shipmasters access. The shipmasters then approached the colonial authorities for assistance in order to restore their unhindered commercial activities. While awaiting formal colonial intervention the Resident Magistrate, George Marsh, tried to reverse the tide of counter-sovereignty and restore some order with the assistance of some shipmasters and a group of loyal sailors who were sworn in as special constables and armed with rifles and short sabres.⁸³ Despite their efforts, they failed to recapture the various landing stages needed to get onto the island. The rebels in turn used any means available, including dead penguins and guano, to prevent any landing.⁸⁴ This confirmed an earlier report by the Captain of the bark “*Abel Gower*” that the local police were of no use.⁸⁵ Having lost the fight to restore jurisdiction, a delegation was despatched to Cape Town to request formal military intervention. To restore order and its formal authority as representatives of Britain, the naval authorities dispatched a warship to Saldanha Bay. This had the required effect and re-established the conditions necessary for the peaceful exploitation of the island.

Given their involvement in a speculative activity and fearing loss of money and labour as a result of possible arrests and the legal stipulations for dismissal (i.e. full payment of all the

⁸¹KAB: CO. 4027:578 – Memorial of J. Seawright & Co. On behalf of the Shipmasters & Agents at Hoedjiesbay – Secretary to Government, 17 May 1845. A total of 56 ships captains and shipping agents signed the memorial.

⁸² Benton, “Empires of exception”: 4

⁸³Ex Member, “The African guano trade”: 641

⁸⁴E.F. Hatfield, *St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope*, 81

⁸⁵ KAB: CO. 4026:551, Bark of Abel Gower – J. Foster, 1/5/1845

wages together with a compensation), most shipmasters chose the pragmatic option of not laying any charges for mutiny. They were also content to accept promises of better discipline and productivity from their workforce.⁸⁶ This pragmatic attitude confirmed Park's observation that the mid 19th century marine sector showed an increased level of tolerance of disturbances such as desertion and work stoppages.⁸⁷

The actions of the rebels must be seen in context. Representatives of the colonial authority never made provision for labour recruitment in the existing policy. As previously indicated, sailors were recruited at the request of local shipmasters. However, this unofficial means undermined the established recruitment practices (especially unofficial ones) used in most international ports or sailor towns. Although the recruitment of sailors in Europe had been on a formal footing since the 18th century (culminating in the conclusion of a formal written work contract) in practice a far more informal regime was adhered to. In numerous international ports it was common practice that recruiting shipping crews was largely left to boarding-house keepers (or "crimps"). Crimps acted as the intermediaries between the official or government shipping master, the shipmaster and sailors. In this capacity, the crimp finalised the negotiations (including the remuneration) with the shipmaster and guaranteed that a recruit be present at the stipulated time.⁸⁸ Part of this agreement included the exchange of advance notes for cash and other provisions, all of which saddled the sailor with significant financial debt prior to starting work and left him with little room for further negotiation. Furthermore, the wage position of seamen gradually weakened after 1815 as a result of an emerging international maritime labour market. An increase in the availability of more skilled sailors resulted in a greater availability of more training opportunities offered by private instructors.⁸⁹ The European seamen's insurrection against the use of cheap Cape Malay labour and their rejection of local jurisdiction must therefore be seen as an attempt to protect their economic interests, and cannot therefore be regarded as either a pre-meditated mutiny or

⁸⁶ Witt, "Master next to God?": The merchant captain from the 17th to the 19th century." *The Sea in European History*. (Edizioni Plus, 2001): 240

⁸⁷S.H. Park, "Rough Waters: Life at Sea in the 19th Century", Conference Paper (University of Connecticut, 1995), 10

⁸⁸J. Fingard, "Masters and Friends, Crimps and Abstainers: Agents of Control in 19th century Sailortown", *Acadiensis* 8, no. 1 (Autumn, 1978): 25

⁸⁹ Witt, "Master next to God": 239

an action against failure of command. Viewed from this perspective these actions (in line with Busch's arguments) actually represent nothing more than work stoppage.⁹⁰

The labour war was rekindled shortly after the departure of the naval force. Given the high levels of militancy, the dissatisfied labour force once again resorted to rebellion and prevented any work from taking place. The shipmasters again called for military intervention.⁹¹ The naval force under the command of Captain C. Wylie of *HMS Cleopatra*, with the assistance of Baptist priest and member of the Bethel Seamen's Union, the Reverend James McGregor Bertram, succeeded in restoring peace to such an extent to enable the final scraping of Malgas Island.⁹² By July 1845 the Collector of Customs also instructed all colonial functionaries responsible for general administration to stop issuing guano licenses, given the near exhaustion of the source and the fact that the remaining quantity was not enough to provide for everybody that had purchased a licence.⁹³ By October 1845 the last guano was finally removed from Malgas Island, leaving the colonial authority's grip on the exploited territorial islands somewhat battered but still firm.

Despite the fact that there were still adequate guano deposits on some of the other colonial islands they were too wet, full of feathers and regarded as inferior quality compared to the Malgas Island product.⁹⁴ In addition, the colonial government had to repay the license fees of a number of merchants and shipmasters that had failed to collect a full load from Malgas⁹⁵ and Dassen Islands.⁹⁶ Having finally stripped this resource, the first phase of the Cape guano trade came to its end. This did not end the struggle of various leaseholders to obtain the right to be allowed to collect guano from the islands under their control. They still regarded the Guano Ordinance as an unjust piece of legislation and increased their resistance. The resistance of the island leaseholders and other interested businessmen to the Guano

⁹⁰ Park, "Rough Waters: Life at Sea in the 19th Century": 11

⁹¹ Hatfield, *St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope*, 87

⁹² Hatfield, *St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope*, 61- 62

⁹³ KAB: CAD, 2/1/1/63: C.14/117, Assistant Archivist – R.W. Rand, 24 / 9 / 1948

⁹⁴ Such guano, as on Jutten Island, according to an anonymous correspondent to the *Nautical Magazine*, necessitated a process of sifting and drying before it could be sold and therefore increased the production costs. Guano obtained from Bird Island in Algoa Bay was of equally poor quality and could only attract 10 shillings per ton from the Natal Government. See Anonymous, *Nautical Magazine*, 11 September 1845, pp. 528 – 529

⁹⁵ KAB: CO. 4026 / 459: B. Norden – Collector of Customs, 28 / 8 / 1845 and W. Field, Collector of Customs – B. Norden, 2 / 9 / 1845

⁹⁶ KAB: CO. 4031 / 616: James Seawright – Governor, 25/3/1846

Ordinance as well as the response of the colonial government will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.5. Policy and Guano Income, 1844 – 1845

By 1845 most of the guano on the colonial islands had been removed, with the exception of the remainder on locations such as Bird Island. As shown in the discussion of the labour problems during this phase, the Cape guano frontier was typically characterised by the lawlessness and absence of control typical of such newly opened frontier areas.⁹⁷ The Cape Colony, however, still derived an income from the sale of guano licenses for use in infrastructure development and improvement. From December 1844 – December 1845 the actual revenue collected from the islands (based on the sale of licenses to 174 ships) amounted to £46 682.10s.6d. Expenses for the same period, on the other hand, amounted to £4200, highlighting the profitable nature of this industry. The total quarterly statistics for the income collected from the various islands is attached as Table 1.⁹⁸

TABLE 1: GUANO INCOME, 1844 - 1845

DATE	VALUE IN POUND STERLING
31 December 1844	£1,276-9s-9d
31 March 1845	£10.865-2s-5d
30 June 1845	£2.113-17s-10d
30 September 1845	£25.705-17s-9d
31 December 1845	£3.913-5s-4d

⁹⁷R. Rand, *Die Staatsghwano-eilande: Voëls en Pelsrobbe*, (Cape Town: Sea Fisheries Research Institute, 1950), 3

⁹⁸KAB:CO. 525, Treasury and Audit Office – Colonial Office: Statement of Revenue and Expenditure of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1844

This table reflects that guano provided the Cape government with a valuable supplementary source of income and, as expressed, a “fortunate addition” of about £51 000.⁹⁹ This resulted in increased optimism amongst local businessmen that the Colonial Treasury would use this additional income to benefit public works and colonial infrastructure in general and the construction of a dry dock in Mouille Point in particular.¹⁰⁰ In this case the similarities with Peru are once again strikingly evident. Peru hoped to use the proceeds from guano to build railways all over the country (i.e. “*guano rail tracks*”). Similarly, Cape Town hoped to use guano income as a means to finance the building of a dry dock, (i.e. to build “*guano dry-docks*”). However, given the diverse needs of the Colony, guano income had to be spread over a wide range of functions including public works and infrastructure development.

3.6. Conclusion

The promulgation and implementation of the Guano Ordinance policy was the culmination of a short but intensive process of issue-creation, amplification and persuasion driven primarily by a group of well-connected individuals and influential interest groups. During the evolution of the process, the colonial authority had to deal with diverse guano-claiming techniques ranging from negotiation, theft and rogue trading to the more conventional submission of memorials in an unstructured and informal policy process. In addition, the colonial authorities (despite their unwillingness to initiate a formal policy process) were provided with a variety of policy options such as using fishing leases as a basis for guano rights, granting discoverer’s rights, and the possibility of establishing joint ventures and public-private partnerships. The existence of a non-judicial opinion that questioned the legal basis of the Guano Ordinance confronted the colonial authorities with the possibility of uncontrolled guano collection and theft. This matter was remedied by declaring guano the property of the Crown.

Although it was not its formal intention, the colonial authority finally settled on a hybrid management model consisting of the continuation of the guano collection license system for

⁹⁹KAB:C.O. 539, Treasury and Audit Office – Colonial Office: Statement of Revenue and Expenditure of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1845

¹⁰⁰KAB: C.O. 564, Treasury and Audit Office – Colonial Office: Statement of Revenue and Expenditure of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1846

the majority of the inshore islands and a joint venture based on the Bird Island Agreement. The operational aspects were handled by a private enterprise and marketing rested with the colonial authority. In this way, the Treasury was certain to continue to benefit from the trade as had been the case since opening the exploitation of Malgas Island.

The Guano Ordinance still had to pass the test of imperial scrutiny since those who were denied first discoverer's rights contested it. This started a second policy debate wherein the interests of both the Colonial Treasury and British agriculture in general were considered. In the end, the Cape Colony's approach of selling guano licences was accepted as the only sound basis for managing the resource to the benefit of the Colony. This was unprecedented since no similar policy existed anywhere in the British Empire. With guano also being discovered along the Australian coast and the emergence of American guano imperialism in the Pacific Ocean, this piece of local, practical policy provided the basis for variations in the rest of the British Empire (Australia in particular) and the United States of America. It also effectively eliminated small businessmen from the Cape trade, leaving it open to larger groups with better resources and political connections.

CHAPTER 4

“OBNOXIOUS AND PREJUDICIAL MONOPOLIES”¹ – SHIFTING GUANO RELATIONS AND POLITICS IN THE PERIOD, c.1847 – 1872

4.1. Introduction

In the struggle for monopoly of the exploitation of a commodity, access to political, commercial and social networks are critical. Such networks are especially important as a means to discriminate between potential friends or foes,² creating a climate of mutual trust,³ and as a crucial mechanism to secure pro-business paternalistic government interventions or government-assisted individualism.⁴ The Cape Colony in the 19th century has been described as the meeting place for a complex web of overlapping and ever-changing co-ethnic and other social, political and commercial networks.⁵ These networks fundamentally influenced the direction of the further development of the guano trade. Those outside the established colonial network wanting to secure exploitation rights had to find innovative ways and means to either access, bypass or recast the established networks to suit their own agenda. Within the context of the guano trade, whether a potential partner possessed location-specific knowledge (especially sole or privileged information about the location of a potential guano resource); a sound reputation; and the ability to attract investors and potential partners was of critical importance.⁶ Equally important was the ability to successfully manage the interface between commerce and colonial and Imperial politics.

¹This quotation derives from statements made by the Murison Brothers in a petition dated 10 August 1861 to the Colonial legislatures during their battle to reverse the Ichaboe monopoly granted to their opponents, De Pass & Co, Watson & Thomson and Robert Granger & Co. See also KAB: C.55 – 61: *Cape of Good Hope: Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council*

²A.Thompson, “The Power and Privileges of Association: Co-ethnic Networks and the Economic Life of the British Imperial World,” *South African Historical Journal* 56(2006):46

³H. Cox and S. Metcalfe, “The Role of Networks in the Early Development of the Borneo Company Limited”, Centre for International Business Studies, Research Paper in International Business, 7-97 (South Bank University, 1997): 4

⁴J.A. Fry, “Constructing an Empire? Guano, Bananas, and American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 3 (Summer,1996): 484

⁵Thompson. “The Power and Privileges of Association”: 46

⁶Cox & Metcalfe, “The Role of Networks in the Early Development of the Borneo Company Limited”: 12

This chapter will argue that on the macro-level of inter-governmental relations, the already strained relationship between the Imperial Government and the Cape Colony worsened as a result of differences of opinion about the locus of control and the use of guano income for imperial as opposed to local purposes. This was further aggravated by inconsistent policy application and contradictions as well as problems that were directly connected to certain inherent administrative deficiencies. Collectively, these factors placed further pressure on the already tense relationship between the Colonial Government and its citizens. When guano income was threatened by the emergence of aggressive American trans-ocean guano imperialism, the Cape government moved to restructure what used to be an African guano trade into a Cape guano trade dominated by a small group of local entrepreneurs holding official leases from the colonial authorities. On a micro level, the struggle to secure the guano monopoly led to violent confrontation, which left its own particular mark on the development of the Cape trade. It will be argued that the involvement of key personalities within the Cape colonial society and the trade provided guano with a small part within the unfolding political drama and the struggle for self-government. The events surrounding the guano trade therefore added to our understanding of the self-government movement without suggesting that guano as a commodity, as was the case in Peru, ever became a key driver of the local constitutional struggle.

4.2. Extraterritoriality, Guano Policy and Monopoly, c.1846 – 1853

The transfer of exploitation control of a resurgent African trade from British-based speculative entrepreneurs to Cape businessmen during the period 1847 – 1853 placed the local trade on an important new trajectory. Upon discovery of substantial new deposits on Ichaboe in 1847, the company J.S. de Wolf & Co. (based in Great St. Helens, London and working from Liverpool) monopolised the island.⁷ According to contemporary sources, poor market conditions, caused by an over-supply of guano and coupled with the speculative activities of unscrupulous dealers, prevented them from fully exploiting their advantage. Poor financial decisions and speculative choices resulted in De Wolf's insolvency. The monopoly then passed over into the hands of a loose grouping comprising the British-based companies of Gibson, Linton & Co., Lawrence Best & Co. and two individual shipmasters, the captains

⁷ KAB: GH. 21/18: Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission – Testimony of John Spence, 31/3/1885

Tompkins and Murray.⁸ Working from their base in Liverpool, both companies faced high operational and transport costs. By 1850 Gibson & Linton filed for insolvency and disposed of their monopoly by selling it via their partner and manager, Captain Tompkins, to the Cape Town-based companies A & E de Pass & Co. and Seawright & Co. of Cape Town as well as to Captain Carrew.⁹ Within the space of four years, Lawrence Best & Co. suffered the same fate and in turn sold their shares to Thomson & Watson and R. Granger & Co. of Cape Town. The Southwest African guano trade, dominated by local businessmen, thus effectively became part of the Cape guano trade.

The relative ease with which the transfer of ownership and the structuring of the Ichaboe ‘partnership’ took place was facilitated by the climate of mutual trust forged within the context of political struggle. During their collective involvement as members of the strategic leadership core of the Anti Convict Committee (AAC) in the 1849 “Convict Crisis” in Cape Town, citizens of the Colony effectively prevented the Imperial Government from transforming the Cape into a penal settlement. George Thompson of Thomson Watson & Co., Thomas Ansdell of Seawright & Co., as well as Antonio Chiappini of A. Chiappini & Co. served on the main committee whilst Aaron de Pass of A & E De Pass and Ansdell served on the AAC’s Vigilance Committee tasked with preventing the unloading of the transported convicts. Their success during this campaign and the bonds of trust forged laid the basis for the vital relationship needed to structure the formal exploitation of Ichaboe and the surrounding islands in the no-mans-land beyond the Cape frontier.

The presence of Cape Town-based companies in an extraterritorial location was no aberration. As Legassick and Ross have shown, there had been strong local support for the principles of free trade and a growing interest in commercial expansion amongst the Cape merchant class since the 1820s.¹⁰ Their activity was, however, still in direct contravention of the Imperial Government’s strict curtailment policy issued in 1850 aimed at lowering government expenditure, which in itself was brought about by changes in fiscal policy in

⁸ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9; S.C. A 11- ’61: Testimony of T. Boyce, 9/7/1861: 10

⁹ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9; S.C. A 11- ’61: Testimony, 11/7/1861: 51

¹⁰ M. Legassick & R. Ross, “From Slave economy to Settler Capitalism: The Cape Colony and Its Extensions, 1800 – 1854”, in *The Cambridge History of South Africa: From Early Times to 1885* (vol. 1), C. Hamilton; B.K. Mbenga & R. Ross. eds (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 269

Britain.¹¹ Legassick and Ross also suggest that the struggle for representative government, which coincided with the resurgence of the trade, was driven by the attempts of those in the merchant class to actively free funding for the further development of the Cape Colony.¹² The location of the Ichaboe trade in an area beyond the political jurisdiction of the Colony, however, made it vulnerable to attack from both local and foreign parties. This will be discussed in the next section.

4.3. Contesting the Ichaboe Monopoly, c.1850 - 1861

All monopolies or duopolies, whether awarded by governments or not, were vulnerable and faced potential contestation. The Ichaboe monopoly was no exception. In the absence of formal British authority to regulate the trade and to protect the business operations of the guanopreneurs along the Namib coast, the Ichaboe monopoly (i.e. a non-government monopoly with open entry) made their controllers convert their foothold into an efficiency monopoly (i.e. where they are the most efficient producers of the product in the market).¹³ As an open monopoly in an open and contested frontier and field of trade where competition can arise over night, they also had to take steps to prevent their possible ejection from the island. Furthermore, with four groups working in a relatively small space, it was just as crucial to ensure a proper working relationship amongst the work teams of the various shareholders. They also had to structure their common workplace appropriately to achieve optimal results and to avoid potentially disruptive labour disputes of the sort that had previously characterised exploitation at Ichaboe and Malgas Island.

For ease of mining, the island was divided into three distinct operational zones by the individual work teams supervised by a company Headman. All groups however shared the available landing stages.¹⁴ Furthermore, the traders fixed their own boundaries and drew their own maps to demarcate ownership.¹⁵ Walls were built to keep the wind and sea away and

¹¹ N. Etherington,(2003), “*The Western Australian Constitution in its British Imperial Context*”, < www.historycouncilwa.org.au/25%20October%2003%20%5D%20Etherington%20Paper.pdf:2 (15 July 2010)

¹² Legassick & Ross, “From Slave economy to Settler Capitalism ”: 294

¹³ H.F. Sennholz, “The Phantom called ‘Monopoly’,” *The Free Man*, (March, 1960): 163

¹⁴ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. A11-’61; Testimony of Sheperd, 5/7/1861: 1

¹⁵ KAB: GH. 21/18: Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission – Testimony of John Gove, 20/4/1885

timber fences erected to prevent penguins from entering the demarcated breeding areas.¹⁶ The island workforce also killed seagulls when necessary to prevent them from stealing the eggs of the other guano-producing birds.¹⁷ In addition, they had to protect the island from unauthorised landings by possible competitors and enemies (in accordance with the principle of “defence of the whole and the protection of the whole”).¹⁸ A fully armed boat was also kept on standby to discourage unauthorised landings.¹⁹ These steps, which were aimed at averting an external attack, were supplemented with the appointment of Captain Carrew as Justice of the Peace in 1854 to provide law and order on the island. As the designated peace officer he was tasked with enforcing regulations drawn up by Aaron de Pass of the company A & E de Pass for this specific purpose.²⁰ These measures laid the basis for the treatment of guano-producing seabirds as a national resource.²¹

As expected, the Ichaboe monopoly soon became the target for other parties interested in controlling the resource. Furthermore, reports of aggressive American guano imperialism especially a rush to annex any source of guano, reached the Cape Colony. Additional pressure resulted from local reports of hostile action by visiting American shipping crews (e.g. confiscation of a load of coal from Penguin Island and killing a Chief Officer of a Cape Town ship).²² The possibility of a new guano rush involving Americans directly impacted on the relationship between the Cape colonial government, the Imperial authorities and their citizens, which in turn influenced the further unfolding of the guano trade.

4.3.1. The American Guano Islands Act (1856) and Cape Colonial Relationships

As a result of a growing demand for guano fertiliser in the Southern states of the United States of America (USA), American businessmen contracted shipping crews to collect and import guano from the coasts of Peru and Africa. During the Ichaboe Rush (1843 – 1845), the American Consul in Cape Town unsuccessfully tried to convince his political principals of

¹⁶ KAB: GH. 21/18: Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission – Testimony of Christian William Pettersen, 20/4/1885

¹⁷ KAB: GH. 21/18: Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission – Testimony of J. Spence, 31/3/1885

¹⁸ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. A.11 – ’61; Testimony of R. Granger, 11/7/1861: 52

¹⁹ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. A.11- ’61; Testimony of Spence, 9/7/1861: 26

²⁰ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. A.11 – ’61; Testimony of B. Sinclair, 9/7/1861: 19

²¹ Rand, *Die staatsghwano-eilande*, 10

²² KAB: GH. 31/9: 156, 18 December 1863

the need to annex the main and surrounding islands within the bay of Angra Pequena.²³ This prompted the local colonial newspaper, the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, to implore local businessmen to be aware of American actions and to establish a local market for the product.²⁴ By December 1850, following a period of relentless lobbying by their public representatives, Southern farmers succeeded in extracting a public commitment from President Filmore to do everything in his power to ensure access to a cheap and affordable product. Prior to this, frustrated American entrepreneurs stole guano from the Peruvian Lobos Islands and the Spanish Isla de Mona in Puerto Rico. Only the threat of direct military force and the possibility of inter-state war prevented the wholesale stripping of the resource and illegal occupation of the islands in question.²⁵

Matters came to a head in 1855 after a group of Americans claimed Barker (or Nantuckett) Island, an offshore island outside American territorial waters. To protect their foothold, they made representations to the United States Congress and prayed for the extension of American authority to all new areas where guano discoveries were made. The U.S. Congress relented by promulgating the Guano Islands Act in August 1856. This measure made America the second country, after the Cape Colony, outside of Peru to implement a formal guano policy. In terms of this Act the mere presence of any American on any island, rock or key was sufficient grounds to regard such a location as American territory and therefore liable for formal annexation. By 1859, in accordance with the new Act, American citizens annexed 48 guano islands, rocks and keys in the Pacific Ocean²⁶ as well as Navassa Island in the Jamaican Channel within the territorial waters of Haiti.²⁷

As expected, American actions resonated throughout the 19th century guano world. As news of these actions spread locally, Cape guanopreneurs active in the area beyond the Colony's northern frontier had cause for concern since they were still operating in an area that could

²³ A.C. Watson. "The African guano trade.":

²⁴ E. Rosenthal, *Stars and Stripes in Africa*, (Cape Town: National Books, 1968), 65

²⁵ E.F. Frank. "History of the Guano Mining Industry, Isla Da Mona, Puerto Rico." *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* 60, no. 2 (August,1998): 21

²⁶ D. O'Donnell, "The Nineteenth century Pacific Guano Trade," *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archeology* 19, no. 2 (1995): 31 – 32

²⁷ F. Spadi. "Navassa: Legal Nightmares in a Biological Heaven?" *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin* (Autumn, 2001): 115

best be described as a judicial vacuum. Fear, exaggeration, and distortions were rife. Rumour even suggested that in the event of an American landing, the invading mob would disfigure the ships.²⁸ Despite evidence to the contrary (i.e. a distinct lack of aggression from ships loading at adjacent islands) American ships like the “Ceres” were denied landing rights, a guano load and access to any product samples upon arrival at Ichaboe in 1859.²⁹ The monopolists also made no secret of their readiness to defend their foothold with all the means at their disposal.³⁰ Despite their pretence, they realised the limitations of their approach. Both J.D. Thomson and Robert Granger argued that as British citizens they were entitled to British protection. Granger, in particular, believed that only the British flag would prevent their possible dispossession and declared in no uncertain terms: “I say I am a British subject, and I consider that wherever I locate myself, whether on a barren rock or otherwise, I expect the protection of my Queen if asked for.”³¹

Despite the various pleas from its citizens, the Cape government displayed no urgency in addressing what local businessmen perceived as the imminent danger of aggressive American guano imperialism. This attitude was not only consistent with its official position, but was also motivated by the absence of any significant hostile actions or indicative incidents. Official indifference caused anxiety within the local business community and stimulated new internal tensions and open conflict between some of Cape Town’s most prominent businessmen and politicians, as explained in the next section.

4.3.2. Attacking the Monopoly: Pirates, Interlopers & Family

The most sustained attack against the Ichaboe monopoly, however, did not come from the Americans but from the Cape Town-based firm Murison & Co, the former associates of De Pass, Spence & Co. This precipitated a shift in personal, business and political relationships and led to actions which, given the interconnectedness of the individuals involved, had serious political implications for the government of the Cape Colony.

²⁸ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. - A.11 - ‘61: Testimony of Captain J. Spence, 9 July 1861: 28

²⁹ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. - A.11 - ‘61: Testimony of Captain J. Spence, 9 July 1861: 29

³⁰ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. - A.11 - ‘61: Testimony of T. Boyce, 9 July 1861: 12

³¹ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. - A.11 - ‘61: Testimony of R. Granger, 11 July 1861: 35

Gordon Murison, the main protagonist in the first local attempt to seize monopoly control through violent means, was a brother to James Murison of the maritime and shipping company of Murison & Anderson, who were part of a group of interested businessmen who launched an effort to improve loading facilities in Cape Town harbour as far back as 1840. This effort was prematurely terminated when the Cape Town Municipality refused permission for the work to proceed because they feared the monopolisation of harbour facilities by a small group of the larger commercial establishments.³² James Murison, De Pass and others also attempted to establish the Cape Chamber of Commerce as an alternative to the Commercial Exchange dominated by larger business groups in 1850. The De Pass and Murison groups had a lot in common as campaigners for fair business practices and the general improvement of harbour facilities for the benefit of all colonial shipping. As a result of this shared interest and prior collective action, De Pass, Spence & Co. extended an offer of employment to Gordon Murison and upon acceptance placed him with their guano shipping crew. These good relations were short-lived and only lasted until 1859 before turning sour. They almost immediately added a new dimension to life on the Ichaboe guano frontier. Although the reason for this sudden deterioration was not disclosed, it was certainly serious enough to prompt Spence to send a power of attorney to his agent in Mauritius in 1859 to dismiss (“turn him out of ship”) Murison as a crew member and to sell the “*Meteor*” on which he was employed.³³ He was left behind in Mauritius while his fellow crew members were provided with the necessary passage back to Cape Town. Thus Murison vowed vengeance and committed himself to work towards the termination of the Ichaboe monopoly (to literally “bring down guns and blow the houses down about our ears.”)³⁴ Although he acknowledged that he had no better claim to the islands than anybody else, nor could he offer any legal grounds for such a claim, he was adamant that he would not be denied access to a resource located in no-mans-land.³⁵ De Pass, the other actor in the Murison-affair, was equally adamant not to give way to his opponent’s claim, which he described as having “no

³² Warren, “Merchants, Commissioners and Ward Masters”: 63

³³ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. 11 – ’61: Testimony of Capt. J. Spence, 9th July, 1861: 23. In his evidence before the Select Committee, Spence indicated that reasons were given to Murison but never fully disclosed it to the Commission. Given the attempts by all parties to establish the strongest claim, this failure to take the authorities in his confidence therefore could only be explained as a precautionary measure to ensure that his claims are not damaged by actions that breach British law or that oversteps the bounds of reasonableness.

³⁴ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of T. Boyce, 9/7/1861: 11

³⁵ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of A. Murison, 15/7/ 1861: 45

more claim to them than any of your servants, leaving your employ, to claim a part of your property”.³⁶ According to his opponents, Murison’s actions were nothing less than a “piratical attempt”³⁷ by certain ‘interlopers.’³⁸

The deliberate use of pseudo-legalistic terminology such as ‘pirates’ and ‘interlopers’ appears to have been part of a deliberate effort by the parties concerned to conceal their claims and actions so that they appeared both valid and incontestable. It also validates Benton’s contention that individuals in remote locations tended to carry jurisdiction to wherever they were and deliberately used rituals and language to suggest delegated authority, which in reality was not always the case. This however does not wholly apply to merchant shipping, which the guano trade was a fundamental part of.³⁹

Despite his weak claims, Murison and his colleagues set out to claim the African guano frontier on moral grounds, claiming that it was an attempt to “get a living as well as themselves”.⁴⁰ Realising the inadequacy of trying to justify their actions, Murison organised a fighting force equipped with cutlasses and revolvers.⁴¹ When this force attempted to land on Ichaboe in November 1860, they were held off by an armed counterforce of between 100 and 200 men.⁴² In preparation for exactly this type of incident and to ensure sufficient legal grounds for its defence, the Ichaboe monopolists claimed to have solicited legal advice prior to the incident from the Cape Attorney-General, William Porter. Porter advised them “not to

³⁶ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of A. De Pass, 11/7/1861: 68

³⁷ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of R. Granger, 11th July 1861: 52. The term “interlopers” became a useful label for all of the Ichaboe monopolists to describe the attempt by the Murison group and others to change the status quo on Ichaboe.

³⁸ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of J. D. Thomson, 9/7/ 1861: 36

³⁹ The behaviour of all shipping crews and others such as supercargoes on the high seas was governed by a combination of actual maritime law (which clearly defined actions such as mutiny and piracy and its associated penalties) and some long-standing informal codes (or forms of abstract controls) unique to the sector. These measures allowed the sector to operate and function efficiently. Those who accused their opponents of being pirates and interlopers thus clearly followed a deliberate strategy to establish both a legal and moral basis for the defense of their own claims.

⁴⁰ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of Capt. Duncan, 11/7/1861: 49

⁴¹ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of Capt. J. Spence, 9/7/1861: 31

⁴² In the only account of this incident, extracted from the testimony delivered before the *Select Committee into the Annexation of Ichaboe* in 1861, both parties were at pains to downplay their level of armed preparation or the nature of the actual conflict which is described as a “scuffling”, claiming to have used nothing more than cutlasses, seal clubs and shillales

shoot anyone but to keep them off in any way.”⁴³ To achieve this, they dispatched three vessels and over a 100 men to the island in addition to building sandbag fortifications (“batteries of sandbags”) and barricading all possible landing places. A number of men were also armed with rotten eggs, which they threw at the intruders. The Murison group’s attempt to gain control over the island failed. When both parties were confronted by the Colonial Government and asked to explain their actions and why firearms were used, they downplayed the whole affair. Andrew Murison (the aggrieved party) described the incident as nothing but a “scuffling” with limited loss and stated that only tents and stones were thrown into the invading boat.⁴⁴ The only explanation was that neither side wanted closer scrutiny by the authorities.

Based on the historical evolution of events in the African trade, it was extremely important for the guanopreneurs not to portray the guano frontier as an anarchic and dangerous place. Under normal circumstances such a state of affairs would have led to full government intervention, including the repatriation of British citizens from the potentially dangerous situation. This was clearly not what both the opposing forces had in mind. As Robert Granger articulated before the Select Committee on the Annexation of Ichaboe in 1861: “...my men would certainly defend themselves, the other going there would be the aggressors. Government does not interfere with men who may kill each other in the street; they take up the murderer and punish him, but do not always prevent the murder.”⁴⁵

The attempt to take control of the frontier by violence also impacted on the relationship between the Murison brothers. As the events unfolded James Murison, a businessman and brother to both George and Andrew Murison, maintained his strong business links with De Pass, Spence & Co. In addition to chartering vessels to De Pass, Spence & Co. for the transport of guano to Mauritius, he maintained a safe distance from the guano trade. When questioned about this issue, James stated in no uncertain terms that he had always avoided anything to do with it, and had apparently never even questioned his siblings about their

⁴³ KAB: GH. 21/18 – Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission - Evidence of J. Spence, 31/3/1885

⁴⁴ KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. 11 –’61: Testimony of Capt. A. Murison, 11/7/1861: 42

⁴⁵ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 –’61: Testimony of R. Granger, 11/7/1861: 52.

activities in this regard.⁴⁶ George, a guanopreneur with exploitation control over Plumpudding, Pomona and Seal Island (adjacent to Ichaboe) sided with Andrew and attacked the main monopoly and their exclusion from the latter. This leaves one with the distinct impression that the trade in guano and its downstream activities had more than a passing effect on business and family relationships.

The failure to unseat the Ichaboe monopolists by anarchic means forced the opposing parties to revert to political and judicial means to achieve their objectives. This, once again, involved the Imperial and Cape government in guano affairs. During this process new strains developed in the relationship between the two political authorities at a time when the transfer of political power and the issues of representative and responsible government coincided (which included an intense debate about the relationship between the colonial state and its citizens around guano as a policy matter).

4.4. Guano, ‘Acts of Sovereignty’ and the Challenges of Policy Transfer

Awarding representative government to the British colonies, including the Cape Colony, in 1854 unleashed a new campaign for a fully responsible government since most colonial legislatures had widely differing interpretations of the extent of their powers.⁴⁷ Natal politicians, who regarded their power as theoretically defective and impractical, argued that “nothing short of responsible government could cure the political evils of the constitution.”⁴⁸ Political activists in Australia such as Victorian politician and attorney, General George Higinbotham, argued that under a system of responsible self-government, the new constitution in effect provided colonies with a “full instalment of responsibilities” over all colonial matters. According to Parkinson, this implied that the constitutions that accompanied responsible self-government provided a clear division of functions and could accordingly only work if the Imperial authority (as the ruling power) refrained from interfering in local matters.⁴⁹ Any interference or obstruction could therefore be regarded as a subversion of the

⁴⁶ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. 11 – ’61: Testimony of J. Murison, 15/7/1861: 69 – 70

⁴⁷ P. Romney, “A conservative reformer in Upper Canada: Charles Fothergill, Responsible Government and the “British Party”, 1824 -1840.” *Historical Papers / Communications Historiques* 19, no 1 (1984): 43

⁴⁸ J. Lambert, “The responsible government question in Natal, 1856 – 1893,” *Kleio* (1975): 24

⁴⁹ C. Parkinson, “George Higinbotham and Responsible Government in Colonial Victoria.” *Melbourne University Law Review* 6 (2001); <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/journals/MULR/2001/6.HTML>>; (June 25, 2010)

policy transfer process.⁵⁰ Although the Cape Colony was not yet under responsible government, the British Empire was awash with interpretations of the Higinbotham type. Cape citizens largely shared the idea that “legislatures must possess the attribute of sovereignty” as propounded by some politicians in Canada.⁵¹ As a fledgling representative government, the local authorities were eager to prove their commitment and readiness to handle their own affairs. The issue of long-term control over Ichaboe and neighbouring islands raised by the Murison brothers meant that guano became one of the first significant testing grounds for the debate regarding the evolving relationship between the two governments.

Following the numerous appeals for naval intervention by various guanopreneurs Admiral Keppel, commander of the Cape naval station, sought direction from the Admiralty since the act of issuing and/or sanctioning rules as well as maintaining a physical presence on the islands (as was done previously) proved problematic. The practice of providing armed backup, for example when a warship is despatched while lacking any legal basis for intervention, was particularly problematic. “Such proceeding” according to the Admiralty, “can be considered as an act of sovereignty.”⁵² He therefore recommended that the islands be annexed as British property since “annexation would cost nothing and deprive nobody” as a means of preventing appropriation by France.⁵³ Recognising the unintended long-term consequences of such actions, Sir. F. Rogers supported Keppel’s recommendation, dependent on the concurrence of the Foreign Ministry.⁵⁴ In the interregnum between these memoranda the Ichaboe monopolists formally requested political intervention by the Imperial Government on 21 January 1861. They also communicated their firm commitment to resist any attempt to dislodge or dispossess them and the grounds for their claims. They also

⁵⁰ Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) defines a policy process as “the process by which actors imitate or emulate policies developed in one setting to develop programmes and policies within another” See P. Carroll, “Historical trends in policy transfer in Australia”, Refereed Paper presented to the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference (University of New Castle, September 25–27, 2006): 2

⁵¹ Romney, “A conservative reformer in Upper Canada,”: 48

⁵² KAB:GH 1/282:253, W. Romaine – Sir F. Rogers, 8/3/1861

⁵³ KAB: GH 1/282:253, Rear Admiral Sir H. Keppel – Captain Eden, 1/1/1861

⁵⁴ KAB: GH 1/282:253, Sir F. Rodgers – W. Hammond, 23/3/1861

expressed their disappointment with the no-show of the naval authorities at Ichaboe, especially since the threat of American guano aggression was still a possibility.⁵⁵

When the British Government finally acted in April of the same year by ordering the annexation of Ichaboe,⁵⁶ the issue of colonial jurisdiction, rights and responsibilities became a point of dispute. After annexation on 21 June 1861 Ichaboe became a British territory and a dependency of the Cape Colony, and the matter was reported to the Admiralty on 20 August, who in turn notified the Colonial Office on the 24th. The Cape Colony (the governing authority) was only informed two weeks after the Colonial Secretary's approval.⁵⁷

The unilateral decision to annex Ichaboe arguably had more to do with the state of the domestic guano market in Britain than with the need to prevent violence on the frontier. By 1861 the British guano market was flooded by large volumes of different varieties of guano obtained and imported from a range of new and dispersed locations. Selling prices, however, remained high as a result of the low quality. To make matters worse, in addition to manipulating the market and its supplies, certain unscrupulous individuals and groups also continued to sell low-grade guano as the real thing. This motivated some of the leading agricultural unions and politicians to campaign to lower prices or find alternative guano resources free from the control of any other nationality.⁵⁸

In addition to prioritising the interests of British farmers in the mother country, the Imperial Government also made the mistake of engaging in a form of coercive rather than cooperative policy transfer at a time that local policy innovation and reinvention was supposed to be the order of the day.⁵⁹ Firstly, the Government failed to timeously inform the newly installed representative government of the Cape Colony of its intentions with regard to Ichaboe. Secondly, it was particularly insensitive to the fact that the local authorities had only 48 hours

⁵⁵ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. 11 – '61: Testimony of R. Granger: 55

⁵⁶ KAB: GH. 1/282:253, W. Hammond - Sir F. Rogers, 1/4/1861

⁵⁷ KAB: GH. 1/282: 253, Colonial Secretary – Governor, Sir George Grey, 13/4/1861

⁵⁸ Matthew, *The House of Gibbs*, (1981), 98

⁵⁹ P. Carroll, "Historical trends in policy transfer in Australia," Refereed Paper presented to the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference (University of New Castle, September 25 – 27, 2006): 2

notice about the forthcoming events (on 19 June 1861).⁶⁰ By the time the Cape Governor received the notice about the pending annexation and the Imperial government's expectation with regard to the administration and policing of the island, annexation was already a *fait accompli*. The request that the Colonial legislature gave annexation its serious "consideration" was therefore cynical and communicated a total disregard for the local institution. Similarly, the request that the Cape Colony had to indicate how it planned to finance its management and policing, was nothing short of political disrespect. Thirdly, given the poor state of the colonial Treasury, following a reduction in the Imperial allocation for its general administration, the Cape Colony could hardly afford any new expenditure as implied by new extra-territorial commitments.⁶¹ These omissions effectively transformed the guano debate into a policy discussion on the features and boundaries of the new political relationship between the Cape and the Imperial governments following representative government and beyond.

Colonial parliamentarians experienced the actions of the Imperial Government as disrespectful and indicative of total lack of appreciation for the role that they and their institutions played. In particular, they questioned the political motives behind the Ichaboe-decision.⁶² In its subsequent discussion of the matter on 2 July, parliament resolved to delay its endorsement of the actions of the Imperial Government pending an independent investigation and recommendations by a Select Committee of its own choosing. They also resolved on 18 July 1861 that the same Committee be tasked to report on the constitutionality of the Imperial Government's right to annex territory without prior consultation with the local legislature.⁶³ These actions not only bordered on open defiance of an imperial order, but also demonstrated that the legislature was claiming the right to pass judgement on the actions of a higher authority. It is also significant that while the imperial notice represented routine imperial bureaucracy and authority at work, the appointment of the Select Committee by the Cape Parliament conveyed to the mother country an unambiguous message of local people's understanding and interpretation of their constitutional mandate. In addition, it represented

⁶⁰ COGH: *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly* (forthwith HA), April 26 – August 14, 1861: 194

⁶¹ COGH: HA; *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly*; 19/6/1861: 194

⁶² COGH: HA; *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly*, 18/7/1861: 377

⁶³ COGH: HA; *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly*, 18/7/1861: 377

the colonial citizenry's insistence that the Imperial authorities acknowledge the newly established political relationship of granting and implementing representative government.

Despite these actions appearing radical and wayward, they were consistent with events in Australia, Canada and Natal - the sister colonies of the Cape Colony. As indicated previously, the transition from representative to responsible government was essentially a process of policy and institutional transfer from the Imperial to various Colonial governments. During the interim period, legislative councils were supposed to develop their own policy development capacity and self-interest and act as a "filter within which the value and applicability of the English laws and policies were carefully scrutinised, either before being transferred to the colony, or, in the case of existing legislation, before being modified in ways the councils thought most appropriate."⁶⁴ Following the granting of self-government and a greater degree of freedom 'to determine the source of transfer' during the mid 19th century, the Australian colonies and their legislative councils based their new laws on local conditions, English law and other applicable sources from sister colonies such as India. Similarly, in the midst of an economic and financial crisis during the period 1865-1868 and following the reluctance and inability of the colonial bureaucracy to address the situation satisfactorily, the Natal legislature appointed a special Select Committee to consider changes to the constitution in order to provide for greater citizen representation and increased powers, for example the right to raise taxes. The bill to this effect was, however, opposed by the Imperial authorities.⁶⁵ It is clear that the colonies resisted any attempt by the Imperial Government to reverse the empowerment of the colonial legislature or to impose its views.

The five-person Select Committee on the Annexation of Ichaboe under the chairmanship of the Attorney-General, William Porter, in Cape Town on 5 July 1861 met in an atmosphere of expectation, divergent understandings and growing tensions. Both the future of Ichaboe and the question of guano exploitation rights within Cape territorial waters were at stake. The proceedings would also have a direct bearing on the definition of the proper relationship between the Imperial Government and the representative government of the Cape Colony following the award of self-government. At the same time this tussle revealed the extent to

⁶⁴ Carroll, "Historical trends in policy transfer in Australia": 4-6

⁶⁵ Lambert, "The responsible government question in Natal": 24

which economic interests created conflict between the Colonial Government and some of Cape Town's most important businessmen over the issue of guano rights. This complex link between intergovernmental differences and government-citizen contestation created a new dynamic, namely guano political relations, the dynamics of which will be discussed hereafter.

4.5. The Dynamics of Guano Political Relations

The dispute between Cape Town businessmen about guano rights at Ichaboe had its roots in the on-going disputes between the colonial authorities and its citizens about exploitation rights in the territorial waters of the Colony. As such, the work of the Select Committee was in effect also an exercise in further policy-making under changed political conditions. Despite the colonial authorities' strict adherence to its Guano Ordinance of 1845 and its consistent decline of applications for exploitation rights of both guano and eggs, interested business parties continued their lobbying campaign for long-term leases. Antonio Chiappini, a former member of the Anti Convict Committee, was particularly vocal in this regard and continued to petition the colonial authorities for nearly a decade.⁶⁶

Despite his knowledge of the regulations outlined by the Guano Ordinance, Chiappini directed several memorials to the Governor requesting the right to collect guano. A careful reading of his correspondence to the authorities revealed subtle sarcasm and a disrespectful tone. In a memorial dated 3 June 1850 he requested permission to remove guano from Dassen Island at his own cost in exchange for 80% of the profits and 20% of the proceeds for the colonial government.⁶⁷ This was clearly outrageous and would have been unacceptable under any circumstances, irrespective of the political situation. As expected, the offer was rejected and the terms of the existing ordinance confirmed as the only basis for dealing with guano rights and collection requests.⁶⁸ Chiappini then requested the colonial government to appoint either a commission of neutral persons with no ties to the existing trade to act as arbitrators for all the conflicting claims, or a guano agent to conduct a formal survey of all islands to determine if any guano was present. He also suggested that failure to act on his proposals

⁶⁶ Chiappini directed his first memorial to the authorities on the issue of guano rights on 24 December 1844 and continued to be vocal during the Select Committee hearings. See KAB: CO. 4020:151, A. Chiappini – Governor, 24/12/1844.

⁶⁷ KAB:CO. 4052:161; Memorial A. Chiappini – Governor, 8/6/1850

⁶⁸ KAB:C.O. 4052:161; Governor - A. Chiappini – Governor, 8/6/1850

might have been interpreted as the Cape colonial authorities' downright opposition to free enterprise.⁶⁹ The colonial government was however adamant in their commitment not to stray from their policy and formally rejected Chiappini's suggestion of a commission of investigation or the appointment of a guano agent.⁷⁰ This response was consistent with the conditions under which the Imperial Government originally approved the Guano Ordinance and its system of licences, namely to defray the expenses connected with the provision of loading and docking infrastructure at islands within the Cape's territorial waters. This frustrated people like Chiappini who for years not only had privileged relations with the colonial bureaucracy but during a period of "naked self-interest"⁷¹ had also been receiving and extending patronage and was therefore not willing to be excluded from the potential benefits to be derived from guano-mining. The battle for access therefore continued, led by the rich and prominent Cape society who rightly claimed the same rights and privileges as their England-based brethren who seemingly benefited from the annexation of Ichaboe. The Committee sittings also revealed a deep frustration of British citizens (businessmen) with both the Colonial and Imperial government, as well as the ambiguity of colonial-based British citizens who supported more political freedom but less economic control by the Imperial authority in colonial affairs.

Although all parties in control of Ichaboe conceded that their legal claim was based on a questionable right, they still regarded it as beyond dispute under their particular interpretation of contemporary international law.⁷² J.D.Thomson, guanopreneur and a Member of the Colonial Legislative Assembly, argued that the Imperial government should not dispossess those who had legitimately 'added value' to the island but rather extend political protection (British protection) at no cost. It was especially important for them to get ownership of both the soil and the guano on the islands.⁷³ Robert Granger, one of the Ichaboe shareholders, similarly argued that the British Imperial authority should be satisfied with doing its duty as a

⁶⁹ KAB:C.O. 4052:161; Memorial A. Chiappini – Governor, 10/6/1850; A. Chiappini – Governor, 10/6/1850

⁷⁰ KAB:C.O. 4052: 161: Governor – A. Chiappini & Co., 20/6/1850

⁷¹ D. Warren, "Property, profit and power: The rise of a landlord class in Cape Town in the 1840s" in *Studies in the History of Cape Town* no 6, ed. C Saunders, H Phillips, E van Heyningen. & V Bickford-Smith (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies UCT, 1988), 52

⁷² KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. - A.11 - '61: Testimony of J.D. Thomson, Member of the Legislative Council, 9/7/1861: 37

⁷³ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: : S.C. 11 - '61: Testimony of J.D. Thomson; 9/7/1861: 37

paternal government.⁷⁴ Everything else from this perspective was of lesser importance. Both attempted to stress the point that the valuable state of the island was solely due to their private initiative. Under these circumstances the colonial state's task was to acknowledge the rights of those in possession and formalise the existing demarcation of production areas on the island.⁷⁵ Furthermore, a demand was made for the official appointment of a Peace Officer from the ranks of the existing headmen, not for physical protection but to enforce regulations and rules of their own making.⁷⁶ The arguments of an elected member of the Legislative Assembly with a direct interest in the guano trade appeared to be at odds with his colleagues whose actions attempted to establish clearer boundaries between the respective powers of the Imperial and colonial authorities. This ambivalence, especially the insistence on "paternal government" and British protection, also indicated the long road that the Cape Colony and its citizens still had to travel to establish their own identity and constitutional development.

Based on the evidence obtained from key local guano stakeholders and their business or social networks, the Select Committee concurred with the actions of the Imperial authorities on 18 July 1861. It was recommended that the decision of the Imperial authorities to annex Ichaboe be endorsed as both expedient and necessary. It was also recommended that a public tender for the lease or sale of Ichaboe and eleven surrounding islands be advertised and that one-third of the annual rent be granted to the parties who were in possession. It was further recommended that compensation of £300 be granted to the opposition, Messrs. A. Murison & Co.⁷⁷ On 1 August 1861 the Colonial Parliament finally adopted a motion to recommend to the Governor its formal support for the annexation and administration of Ichaboe. In addition, the Committee recommended that a special mining dispensation of seven years rent-free exploitation be granted to the former Ichaboe monopolists and that upon termination of this period the right to mine the source be leased out on a competitive basis. Furthermore, it was resolved that the monopolists be required to assume full responsibility to maintain law and order and all other matters relating to the policing of their rights as well as for the payment of £500 (increased from the original proposal of £300) as compensation to A. Murison & Co.

⁷⁴ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: : S.C. 11 – 61: Testimony of Robert Granger, 11/7/1861: 58

⁷⁵ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: : S.C. 11 – 61: Testimony of J.D. Thomson, 9/7/1861: 35

⁷⁶ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: : S.C. 11 – '61: Testimony of A. De Pass, 11/7/1861: 68

⁷⁷ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: S.C. A.11 – '61: III

Parliament gave unsuccessful parties the right to appeal the final outcome of the Select Committee and parliamentary processes.⁷⁸ These actions were rooted in the long-standing grievance of Cape Town residents as far back as the early 1840s, namely that the former political regime (pre-representative government) had failed to adequately develop the resources of the colony.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the different elements of their settlement, which made provision for leases, rents, tax breaks and compensation amongst other things, represented an attempt to regulate an environment that would benefit local entrepreneurs. As such it conforms to Carroll's observation about the importance of the economic imperative behind most of the actions of colonial governments under representative government.⁸⁰

Having awarded exclusive rights to mine Ichaboe to the De Pass–Granger-Thomson Watson group, Murison & Co. petitioned the authorities to refrain from implementing the decision with regard to Ichaboe on 10 August 1861. They cited the obvious losses, such as retrenchment compensation payable to their workforce and costs related to customised shipping and freight loss that would logically follow the implementation of the proposed monopoly.⁸¹ Their objections were based on the fact that:

*“all monopolies are obnoxious and prejudicial, and in the present case, extremely so, your petitioners and other traders seeking to earn their living in a fair trade, which has hitherto been open to all the world, until the efforts made recently by the combination of a few individuals to grasp and keep to themselves the advantages of the whole of the guano trade.”*⁸²

Although these sentiments were consistent with the company's previous attempts to overthrow the Ichaboe monopoly, they displayed the internal ambiguities, shifts and contradictory agendas of the various parties. Not only did Murison & Co. maintain a close working relationship and monopoly with De Pass on the adjacent islands, they also conveniently downplayed their own failed attempt to seize the Ichaboe monopoly.

⁷⁸ COGH: H.A: C. 55 – 1861; *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly*: 479

⁷⁹ Warren, “Property, profit and power”: 55

⁸⁰ Carroll, “Historical trends in policy transfer in Australia” : 8

⁸¹ KAB: CO. 4120: M.61; A. Murison – Colonial Secretary, 6/8/1861

⁸² COGH: C.55 – '61: *Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (forthwith LC)

As a fledgling representative government out to prove its commitment to protect the interests of its citizens, the colonial legislature was compelled to consider the petition. Final decision-making was still the prerogative of the Colonial Governor. The Murison appeal however arrived too late for consideration by the House of Assembly and was referred to the Legislative Council.⁸³ By November 1861, having accessed all of the constitutional means to prevent their final exclusion from the Ichaboe monopoly, the Murison group grudgingly conceded defeat and communicated their intention to accept the compensation offered to settle their wage bill for the island personnel they had to retrench.⁸⁴ The matter also dragged on unresolved into 1862 while the Governor took additional information as well as the appeal from the Legislative Council into consideration (i.e. “not to take any final steps in relation to them (islands) until this Council has had an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the important matters relating hereto, with a view of protecting public interests.”)⁸⁵ After nearly a year, on 4 August 1862, the Governor awarded the lease of the island to the original Ichaboe monopolists for a period of seven years without any further consultation with the Colonial Parliament. Furthermore, a reward of £500 was to be paid to the Murison group for losses sustained. Once again, those closest to the Colonial Government triumphed over their fellow businessmen. The Governor’s action, which failed to consider the views of Parliament, created new tensions between the office of Governor and the Legislative Council. It therefore failed to assist in shaping a new relationship and to remove some of the long-standing tension between the different governing institutions when the political representatives of the Cape citizenry insisted on being consulted prior to the implementation of important policy matters. The Guano question therefore remained an arena of public contestation.

Since the final decision with regard to the Ichaboe lease failed to solicit the input of the Legislative Council as requested, Murison & Co. rejected the offer and declined to accept any money from the authorities. They also questioned the impartiality of the Select Committee and Parliament, specifically the involvement of D. Thomson, being both a member of Parliament and partner of the dominant group.⁸⁶ The Colonial Government had no problem

⁸³ KAB: CO. 4120: M.62; A. Murison – Colonial Secretary, 9/8/1861

⁸⁴ KAB: CO. 4120: M.83; A. Murison – Colonial Secretary, 9/11/1861

⁸⁵ COGH: LC. April 24 – August 7; *Votes and Proceedings*, 16/5/1862: 41

⁸⁶ KAB: CO. 4131: M.10: A. Murison – Colonial Secretary, 11/2/ 1863

with the non-disbursement of the settlement award.⁸⁷ This communicates a cynical view of the whole matter.

Awarding the new guano monopoly after consideration of a number of key factors was not wholly a matter of objective decision-making. Personal and political influence and patronage played a critical role in favouring the Ichaboe monopolists. The company of De Pass, Spence & Co. was particularly influential given their links to municipal politics and their status as an economic innovator. Its founder, Aaron de Pass, was an influential member of the former Anti-Convict Committee during the crises of the 1840s that nearly rendered Cape Town ungovernable. He also served on the Cape Town Municipality as a Municipal Commissioner during 1861. He was therefore part of the local political leadership that not only created the general seditious atmosphere twenty years earlier, but also actively participated in the aggressive agitation for increased power for the local government of political institutions. Furthermore, his company led the way in the development of important economic infrastructure, especially improving harbour facilities in Cape Town and Simon's Bay. In the run-up to the Ichaboe Select Committee process and the finalisation of the Committee's recommendations, the company provided the local maritime industry with its first two slipways in Simons Town (1859) and in Table Bay (1861). The inauguration of the latter event was deemed so important that the Colonial Legislature went into recess in order to allow its members to be present. In addition, the company erected the first ice manufacturing plant in the Cape Colony.⁸⁸ In reality, the Murison campaign had very little chance of succeeding. These relationships survived the Ichaboe settlement due to the fact that they also had historical business relationships. Following the formal annexation of Ichaboe, Governor George Grey ordered the annexation of the remaining islands on the Namib coast in August of 1861. The resource-rich group had therefore once again outmanoeuvred their competition.

4.6. Restructuring the Trade: From Special Dispensations to a System of Leases

Despite the establishment of a single Africa guano trade by virtue of the annexation of Ichaboe and the surrounding islands in mid 1861, there was still no single policy position or a formal guano administration. Whereas Ichaboe and the surrounding islands (in terms of the

⁸⁷ COGH: LC: April 24 – August 7, *Votes and Proceedings*; 4/8/1862: 181 - 182

⁸⁸ W.J. De Kock, ed., *Suid Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek* (Cape Town: Human & Rosseau, 1979), 231

new settlement) were leased to the De Pass–Granger–Thomson Watson group for a period of seven years, the situation with regard to the islands within the Cape territorial waters remained unchanged. Although the Angra Pequena islands were still exempt from the terms of the Guano Ordinance of 1845, the local guanopreneurs made no jurisdictional distinction between the northern and southern part of the African guano frontier. For them these islands were under the same jurisdiction and they expected a uniform approach to their exploitation.

In keeping with its established position, the Cape government remained unmoved by the plight of the local guano traders who continued their fight for free access to the resource within the colony's territorial waters. As per prescribed procedure, guano could still only be procured by the purchase of a guano license from the Collector of Customs. At the same time, very little was done to overhaul the system in order to eradicate some of its internal deficiencies. Firstly, there were problems with the over-subscription of guano licenses and persistent guano theft. Secondly, the Bird Island Agreement and the special dispensation that John Owen Smith of Algoa Bay continued to enjoy, particularly its exemption from the rules pertaining to the Guano Ordinance, also added new challenges.⁸⁹ This and certain of Smith's business practices irked the authorities and set a chain of events in motion that would eventually lead to the first formal restructuring of the local trade.

Despite its apparent simplicity, the guano license system remained significantly flawed. It was undermined by its own internal deficiencies. Given the seasonal nature of guano deposits and its dependence on migrating seabirds, the colonial authorities were not always able to accurately map the volume of guano. Nor were they able to effectively police the various islands as a result of a serious lack of human resources within the ranks of the customs authorities and other geographically dispersed delegated colonial officials responsible for managing the exploitation of the islands. As a result, the colonial administration continued to experience oversubscription and guano theft. Awarding leases in error and subleasing without government knowledge caused additional problems. Andrew Farquharr, Richard Barkley and Richard Fryer, lessees of Elephant Rock near Lambert's Bay, are cases in point. Fryer and Barkley held a guano licence for the area but when they erected stages to remove the same,

⁸⁹ Cape of Good Hope: Précis of Papers relative to the removal of guano from Bird Island, Algoa Bay, C.1 – '86

Farquharr accused them of theft and disturbing sealing operations and demanded clarification of their rights.⁹⁰ Upon investigation, it was found that the Farquharr tender was granted in error and was subsequently annulled.⁹¹ When this decision was appealed, the Colonial authorities back-pedalled and allowed Fryer limited time to remove guano to rectify the bureaucratic oversight before awarding a new tender.⁹² Similarly, illegal subleasing without government approval was aggravated by a clash in the sealing and guano seasons, poor climate conditions, and limited deposits. This also led to clashes between the sub-lessee and the official leaseholders, which further complicated the task of the colonial officials tasked with administering the mining of the guano islands.⁹³ Furthermore, the constant need to repay unused licenses or to grant remissions in cases where there was no more guano also created additional work. When companies such as De Pass, Spence & Co. (who collected guano from Paternoster and Jutten Islands in Saldanha Bay) were allegedly threatened by the crew of the John Woodall to “take forcible possession of the islands”, they indicated to Government that in the event of them losing their rights, they expected fair compensation.⁹⁴ The Collector of Customs formally rejected this expectation, stating unambiguously that no party was granted the right to superintendent guano collection and loading and that the customs authorities were under the impression that De Pass & Co. played such a role itself.⁹⁵ In addition, undeterred by fines, imprisonment, or the possible confiscation of their boats and other equipment, disgruntled Cape citizens continued to remove guano illegally and without the required licenses.

In order to remove these inherent inadequacies and to ensure profitability, it was necessary to reconsider the existing pseudo-guano administration and to formulate a long-term plan and uniform approach for its management. The introduction of a fully-fledged system of long-term leases (as in the case of Ichaboe) seemed to offer the best option. The first precedent in this regard was awarding a 21-year lease over Malgas Island to the company of De Pass, Spence & Co. on 1 January 1861 after a process of public bidding on the Commercial

⁹⁰ KAB:CO. 4052/C12, Memorial Andrew Farquhar - Governor, 5/5/1850

⁹¹ KAB:CO. 4052/C12, Colonial Office – A. Farquhar, 5/5/1850

⁹² KAB:CO. 4052/C12, Colonial Office – W. Field, 7/6/1850

⁹³ KAB; CO. 4056/P41, John Pybus – Sir Harry Smith, 26/8/1850

⁹⁴ KAB: CO. 456/ P.7; Memorial of A & E De Pass –John Montague, 11/10/1850

⁹⁵ KAB: CO. 456/ P.7, Collector of Customs – Governor, 12/3/1850

Exchange. In exchange for an annual rent of £570 they were allowed to collect guano, feathers and any other related and useful island products.⁹⁶ This action represents the first and the most significant deviation from its long articulated policy as manifested by the Guano Ordinance (1845) and undoubtedly was motivated by the urgent need for additional government income. The award to De Pass & Co., however, caused a great deal of unhappiness amongst those who had rallied for the introduction of such a system, but had been denied access to the two most significant guano locations. The time for a new and deregulated system of guano exploitation had therefore arrived, driven by individual entrepreneurial initiative, with the colonial government as policing authority. It also coincided with a significant financial crisis within the Cape Colony, which once again pitted the colonial bureaucracy (as the representatives of the Imperial Government), against the popular representatives of the people. This gave further impetus to the role of guano as a political factor.

4.7. Guano, Colonial Finance and Governance, 1861 - 1872

Soon after the implementation of representative government, the newly installed Colonial Legislature led by Sir John Molteno had to review the Cape Colony's financial systems, which included aspects such as the colonial budget, tax collection system as well as critical constitutional oversight structures such as a Public Accounts Committee to oversee public expenditure. By 1861 Rawson, the Colonial Secretary, announced the existence of a serious financial crisis and possible bankruptcy as a result of escalating public debt and a shortfall in government revenue, brought about by a defective tax collection system.⁹⁷ Before a comprehensive rescue plan could be formulated, Sir George Grey was recalled and replaced by Sir Phillip Wodehouse as Governor of the Cape Colony. This event marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Cape guano trade.

In addition to inheriting a huge financial deficit, at the start of his term of office Wodehouse was informed by his principals that he would receive a significantly reduced allocation of £20 000 for the government, administration, and defence of the Colony and its adjacent

⁹⁶ *Cape Argus*, "Guano", January 1, 1861

⁹⁷ P.A. Molteno, *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, vol. 1 (London: 1900), 79

dependent territories. This amount was exactly half of what his predecessor had received and was reduced further during the subsequent years of Wodehouse's term of office. By the third year of his term it had reached an all-time low of £10 000, one quarter of what had been awarded to his predecessors.⁹⁸ In order to remedy this situation, it was quite clear that a new means of strengthening the position of the colonial treasury had to be devised. As a newcomer Wodehouse was not necessarily familiar with all the nuances of Cape colonial politics, especially the determination of the elected public representatives to place their stamp on colonial affairs. Wodehouse and his administration introduced new legislation, specifically the Land Tax Bill and Land Boundaries Bill, aimed at widening the tax net and ensuring accurate land description and measurements for tax purposes. When the bills were tabled for discussion, the majority of colonial parliamentarians supported the argument by F.S. Watermeyer that the real problem was political rather than technocratic [as proposed by the new legislation] and therefore required a political solution.⁹⁹ As a result, both pieces of legislation were rejected based on an assessment that since government had failed to adequately spend the normal allocation, it could therefore not be entrusted with the greater responsibility that accompanied a system of comprehensive taxation. This left the Wodehouse government with very few alternatives with regard to finding a long-term solution for its persistent financial problem. To aggravate matters, Boer–Basotho hostilities in Bechuanaland subscribed to a scorched-earth policy, which included the destruction of huts and other possessions. This caused a total breakdown in the colonial hut tax system, which deprived the Colony of a vital source of finance for the administration of this particular area.¹⁰⁰ Under these circumstances, guano income inadvertently became the source of emergency funding for the financing of Bechuanaland's administration – a move that placed further pressure on the strained relationship between the Cape Colony and London.

During the first quarter of 1869, Governor Wodehouse directed a memorandum to the Imperial authorities requesting permission from his principals to use income obtained through guano sales and the rental of the guano islands for the administration of Bechuanaland.¹⁰¹ Much to Wodehouse's displeasure, he was accused of promoting colonial interests to the

⁹⁸ KAB: GH. 23/30:14: Wodehouse – Earl Granville, 15/4/1869

⁹⁹ Molteno, *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, 79

¹⁰⁰ KAB: G.H. 23/30: 13: P. Wodehouse – Lord Granville, 14/4/ 1869

¹⁰¹ KAB: GH 23/30:16, P.E. Wodehouse – Earl Granville, 15/4/1869

detriment of the imperial cause.¹⁰² Caught off-balance by the accusation, Wodehouse had to defend himself and explain his tactical and strategic approach. He also attempted to change the perception that he had failed to make progress with regard to the financial health of the Colony.¹⁰³

When the permission finally arrived in April 1869, it was accompanied by a range of conditions. For example, in case annexation failed, revenue from the guano islands would be paid to the Exchequer, and a special vote submitted to the British parliament. Fully realising the danger of such a procedure, Wodehouse submitted an appeal for a different approach to ensure that guano income would remain accessible for colonial purposes and there would be no confusion with regard to the origins and the intended use of such income.¹⁰⁴ When he finally succeeded in persuading his superiors only one condition remained, namely that prior to re-annexation all rents due to the Imperial government had to be paid over to the Exchequer.¹⁰⁵ The Imperial authorities realised the value of the Cape Town model of guano island management and by the mid 1870s they decided to apply it in Western Australia where sizeable resources were being exploited. They requested the Cape Government to furnish the Colonial Office with all the regulations regarding guano collection and the terms and conditions for the industry's regulation.¹⁰⁶ The comprehensive package of information regarding law and the practices of the local trade, provided by the Office of the Collector of Customs in Cape Town, was eventually dispatched in December 1876 to the benefit of the Imperial cause.¹⁰⁷ As far as the Wodehouse-administration was concerned, the permission to

¹⁰² KAB: GH 23/30:14; Wodehouse – Earl Granville, 15/4/1869

¹⁰³ KAB: GH 23 / 30:14; Wodehouse – Earl Granville, 15/4/ 1869 stated: “The expenditure of the Colonial funds is under the control of Parliament – and I have not had the slightest Imperial assistance. It will hardly be questioned that my position has been one of great difficulty, and that the want of funds has been the cause of most disagreeable embarrassment, incomprehensible to the mass of those accustomed to the ample resources of my predecessor” and “...now the effort I have made to extricate myself, or rather my successors from their helpless position, by keeping back some of the income which Her Majesty’s Government would have given over absolutely to the Colony, it is regarded with disfavour and suspicion”.

¹⁰⁴ KAB: GH 23/30:55; Wodehouse – Earl Granville; 31/8/1869. Wodehouse wrote: “...any such application will bear upon the face of it the appearance of setting aside British funds for the service of a Colonial Dependency – It will instantly excite the jealousy of the House of Commons; and it cannot be doubted that the Minister of the Day will have a strong inducement to keep the item out of the Estimates rather than enter into a troublesome explanation of the special source from which the Ways and Means will be provided, to which the House will have little inclination to listen.”

¹⁰⁵ KAB: GH 1/325: 89; Lord Granville – Sir P.E. Wodehouse, 8/11/1869

¹⁰⁶ KAB: GH 1/363:46; Lord Carnarvon – Sir Henry Barkly, 25/10/1876

¹⁰⁷ KAB:GH 23/30:153; Barkly – Carnarvon, 11/12/1876

use guano income for governance could not have come at a better time. They were now finally at the point where they could begin to transform guano income into a regular income and establish a uniform system, free from the drawbacks of special dispensations. The new arrangements were crucial for the future treatment of guano and other similar colonial income within the context of the Imperial budget and its allocation and accounting procedures. The new arrangements also assisted in refining the policy and institutional transfers and the accompanying relationship that had to accompany the movement towards responsible government.

For a short while, the political contest regarding the uses of guano income and Wodehouse's efforts to win the Imperial government over to his position shifted the focus away from mapping the future of both the colonial and northern islands. Once these differences were resolved, the focus shifted back and a decision had to be made, given the fact that the original leases over the Ichaboe-group had lapsed in 1868. Guano income from the existing leases such as Ichaboe already amounted to £800 per year whilst the smaller neighbouring island contributed a somewhat smaller amount of £31-5s-0d.¹⁰⁸ In comparison, the selling price of guano on the British market amounted to £12-10s-5d per metric ton,¹⁰⁹ meaning that with a formal, structured system, the colonial authorities could gain much more than what the original *ad hoc* leases brought in. The effects thereof were quite clear considering a guano yield of an estimated 79,8 metric tons obtained from a small island such as Elephants Rock at the mouth of the Elephants River on the Cape West Coast for the year 1871.¹¹⁰ At the above-mentioned selling price, the estimated income would have added a healthy sum of at least £1000 to the Colonial Treasury for that particular season.¹¹¹

When the colonial authorities finally decided to call for tenders for the lease of guano islands within territorial waters in 1867, there were more than enough interested entrepreneurs.¹¹² In

¹⁰⁸ Shaughnessy, *Historical population levels of seals and seabirds*, 21

¹⁰⁹ Matthew "Peru and the British guano market," (1970): 117

¹¹⁰ Shaughnessy, *Historical population levels of seals and seabirds*, 44

¹¹¹ Researcher's calculation based on a selling price of £12 per ton for the estimated 80 tons collected for the year 1871

¹¹² New entrants into the guano market included the companies of J. Roe and M.L. Bensusan (Elephants Rock at the mouth of the Elephants River), F. Barry (Seal Island – Mossel Bay) and M. Almeyda (Seal Island – False Bay).

terms of the new arrangements the islands were to be leased under the supervision of the Collector of Customs subject to specific conditions, namely to preserve the birds connected with the trade and that guano collection be restricted to the proper season.¹¹³ Despite the Colonial Government's original attempt at uniformity in the further exploitation of the Cape guano islands, they were forced to allow at least one exception to the rule. Given the continued presence of guano deposits on Bird Island (Algoa Bay) and government's own failure to accurately measure the volumes to properly manage their contractual agreement with J.O. Smith, the special dispensation could not be terminated immediately, even though it denied Government a legitimate source of income.¹¹⁴ Smith was still one of the most prominent citizens of the Eastern Province who continued to fulfil important functions within the colonial administrative network. As will be described in Chapter 5, this matter remained unresolved until Smith's death in 1871.

The Island of Ichaboe, controlled up to that point by Granger, De Pass and Thomson under the terms of the 1861 agreement, was somewhat different. The company of De Pass, Spence & Co. had secured the Malgas Island concession in early 1861 and, through skilful negotiation and the strategic use of its control over certain strategic infrastructure, secured an extension of their contract. In exchange for a lease of 26 years and 11 months, the company offered the Colonial Government ownership of its Cape Town slipway in Table Bay (valued at £7500) and an additional amount of £800 per annum for the lease of the island.¹¹⁵ Given the income-generating potential of the slipway and Cape Town's status as a maritime city and port, control over such a facility offered clear financial advantages. This offer was therefore a mutually beneficial offer that the cash-strapped colonial authorities could hardly refuse. Through this agreement, the first official guano monopolists of the African trade were formally installed. As guano island leaseholders, their formal relationship with the new Responsible Government (from 1872 onwards) continued to be affected by the new policy and institutional innovations of the recently installed political dispensation.

¹¹³ Shaughnessy, *Historical population levels of seals and seabirds*, 6

¹¹⁴ KAB: Department of Agriculture (forthwith AGR) 230/2153: Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works – Attorney General, 15/6/1886

¹¹⁵ KAB:GH 21/18 – Angra Pequena Joint Claims Commission - Evidence of J. Spence, 31/3/1885

4.8. Conclusion

The establishment of the first formal and government-awarded guano monopoly in Africa and the introduction of a system of guano island leases in the Cape Colony by the end of the 1860s resulted from the convergence of a number of events. Key among these were persistent policy problems, the threat of an aggressive American guano imperialism, the needs of British agriculture and the need of the colonial executive to access additional funding for public expenditure.

The continued exploitation of Ichaboe and her neighbouring islands (by Cape Town-based businessmen) continued to involve the Colonial authorities in an area where they had no formal political jurisdiction. Establishing control over offshore islands was complicated by the intense rivalry between local individuals and groups and the possibility of American interference. This created problems for the naval authorities, the Imperial Government, and the Cape Colony (the closest political authority). Armed intervention by the naval authorities in particular created a false impression that British sovereignty was being established. This forced the authorities in London to find an urgent solution. Their decision to annex Ichaboe and to place it as a dependency under the direct control of the Cape Colony proved problematic since it failed to involve the Cape authorities at a time when the relationship between the different spheres of government within the context of greater self-government was still being established. This kept the struggle for responsible government on the agenda and afforded guano a key role in the unfolding constitutional drama, which was further complicated by the changing strategic imperatives of the Colonial administration, especially with regard to the utilisation of guano income.

Faced with a vastly reduced budget, Governor Wodehouse gradually began to appropriate guano income for administrative purposes with the approval of the Imperial Government. This elicited further resistance from local businessmen who were excluded from long-term control over the guano source. Local businessmen were forced to accept monopoly control by a select group with strong government links and adequate resources. In order to maximise its income and minimise the administrative problems of a geographically dispersed resource, the authorities finally decided to implement a system of guano leases in the hope of streamlining

the industry. This arrangement, however, had unintended consequences since it created new supply issues that directly impacted the Cape farming community.

CHAPTER 5

‘TURNING (GUANO) TO PROPER ACCOUNT’¹ – FARMERS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FAIR GUANO ACCESS; 1872 – 1910

5.1. Introduction

During the first half century of its existence, certain guanopreneurs with their roots firmly in the United Kingdom and their businesses in the Cape Colony dominated the local guano trade. Over this period, the role of the Colonial Government in this trade changed from the issuing of collection licenses to the granting of fixed-term guano island leases to interested businessmen as discussed in the previous chapter.² Due to the export orientation of local guano traders, Cape farmers and their needs were inconsequential to the trade [and rarely considered]. This was in contrast with the situation in the American antebellum South where businessmen were ignored and treated as secondary to the planting culture.³ The position of Cape farmers was further compounded by a lack of unity within their own ranks (composed of Afrikaans/Dutch and English) as manifested by the existence of separate Boer or English farmer’s associations.⁴ In addition, mortgage debt, high labour costs and unpredictable agricultural yields resulting from the variation in soil fertility made certain types of agriculture less economically viable and even downright unattractive.⁵ Export activity, according to Gorman, tends to mobilise formerly marginalized sections of the population to enter the political system as competitors.⁶ This is particularly applicable to the situation in the Cape Colony where farmer-politicians with a direct interest in agricultural progress and guano fertilisation gradually became the voice of a larger collective who demanded a

¹This title is derived from the statements made by the Attorney General of the Cape Colony during the attempts in the 1880s to change the Bird Island (Algoa Bay) Agreement. See KAB:AGR 230/2153: Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works – Attorney General, 15/6/1886

²At the onset of the Cape guano trade the Colonial authorities charged entrepreneurs £1 per occasion for a license to remove guano from offshore island within the territorial waters of the Colony. From 1868 with termination of the system of guano licenses, interested parties could bid for a long-term guano island lease.

³L. Schwelkart, “Antebellum Southern Bankers: Origins and Mobility,” *Business and Economic History* 14, (1985): 79

⁴P. Van Breda, “Ontstaan van die eerste Landbou- en Boereverenigings in die Kaapkolonie tot 1883,” *Contree* 14 (1983): 21

⁵J. Wilson, “Rural Revolution – Wheat, Wool and Politics in the Overberg,” *Contree* 31 (April, 1992): 3

⁶Gorman, “The State, Elite, and Export in Nineteenth Century Peru”: 412

government who were sensitive to their needs. Following the establishment of new farmers associations to overcome the “sterility” of some of its predecessors and the vocal support of their public representatives in the colonial legislature from 1879 onwards, the situation started to change for Cape commercial farmers demanding cheap guano.⁷

The re-orientation of the guano trade from being an entrepreneurial-driven enterprise to a public service was complicated by a series of critical political events including the establishment of German business interests on the coast at Angra Pequena. This resulted in a full-scale diplomatic battle between Great Britain and Germany and the outbreak of the South African War (1899 – 1902) between Britain and the Boer Republics. The interplay between these events and the inevitability of shifting relationships fundamentally impacted on the political system.⁸

In this chapter, the interaction between traders, farmers, bureaucrats and colonial politicians will be explored to determine its effect on the further development of the Cape guano trade. It will be argued that the 1890s witnessed the last attempts of profit-driven entrepreneurs, such as the Executors of the estate of J.O. Smith and Captain Henry Jackson, to resist the final appropriation of guano by the colonial state. Notwithstanding his position as Government Guano Agent tasked with the management of the new guano management system, Jackson in particular acted as the archetypical guanopreneur by subverting the colonial administrative system and defying the colonial parliament by delaying price reductions beneficial to farmers in order to extract maximum commission from guano mining and sales. Thanks to sustained protest led by farmers and their public representatives, the system was fully bureaucratized and a full system of state control established. Despite the defeat of the guanopreneurs, the unity of farmers (Western and Eastern Province) was far more difficult to achieve. Only when the thinking of both groups and that of commercial-orientated public representatives converged, were they able to make progress towards a common agenda and to take appropriate decisions beneficial to the majority of farmers. Amongst these was the promulgation of legislation regulating minimum standards for guano and other fertilisers and

⁷Van Breda, “Ontstaan van die eerste Landbou- en Boereverenigings in die Kaapkolonie,”: 23

⁸Berg & Weaver, “Towards a Reinterpretation of Political Change in Peru,”: 70

the protection of guano-producing seabirds. By the time the Union of South Africa was established and the basic interests of farmers had been secured, politicians could turn their attention to the protection of other birds and animals as a moral imperative.

This discussion will begin with a short overview of some of the key developments in Cape agriculture (e.g. land reform, abolition of slavery and rural enclosure movement) since the beginning of the 19th century up to the introduction of responsible government. The transition from a private to a state-run enterprise advanced the commercialisation of landed resources, the farmers industry and eliminated the ‘waste and sloth’ of local farming.⁹ Not only was commercial farming in the nineteenth-century an inherently insecure occupation, it was also up against the dominance of merchants in the political economy of the Cape.¹⁰ This exploration is aimed at uncovering the links between certain mainstream agricultural developments and the events surrounding the consolidation of the trade with the reintegration of the Bird Island and Angra Pequena questions which preceded the restructuring of the trade under government control.

5.2. The Commercialisation of Cape Agriculture, c.1800 - 1872 : An Overview

Right from the start of the second period of British rule at the Cape, the optimal utilisation of the available land to increase the yield of grain (wheat, barley and oats) and other products occupied the minds of key government officials and agriculturists.¹¹ As early as 1813, Governor Caledon and his administration initiated a land reform programme, aimed at determining the intrinsic value of a particular portion of land and what resourceful people could do with it to boost productivity. At the heart of this exercise was an attempt to set a benchmark to determine taxes and rent and to reduce waste.¹² Although this scheme was aborted in 1822 as a result of farmer resistance, those with a poor record of agricultural productivity were systematically excluded from obtaining further land and even forced out of

⁹ J.C. Weaver, “Exploitation by Design: The Dismal Science, Land Reform, and the Cape Boers, 1805 – 22.” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29, no. 3 (September 2001): 7

¹⁰ W. Dooling, “The decline of the Cape gentry, 1838-c.1900,” *Journal of African History* 40 (1999): 215

¹¹ R. Ross, “Emancipations and the economy of the Cape Colony,”: 132

<https://www.openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/1887/4235/1/1246876_067.pdf> (September 20, 2008)

¹² Weaver, “Exploitation by Design”: 5

the agricultural sector. In this process the idea of matching land and capital for increased production became firmly established.

The emancipation of the slaves in 1834 followed shortly after the land reform programme and presented Cape agriculture with a new challenge. With the cultivation of slave-grown crops such as grain and wine, being both labour intensive and using traditional implements and practices, expansion of these sectors was minimal. The new situation necessitated a fundamental reconfiguration of the way in which agricultural labour and production was to be organised. Dooling suggests that Cape farmers in the main wheat-growing areas overcame the labour shortage and achieved higher production by using casual wage labour and embarking on a programme of mechanisation in the 1850s.¹³ Similarly, Ross suggested that in addition to the increased use of new agricultural technology, improved yields were also achieved by the increased use of guano fertiliser, which was purchased with the compensation paid for freed slaves.¹⁴ Van Breda noted a three-fold increase in wheat production in the Colony between the years 1838 – 1888 and even observed that a relatively poor area such as the Overberg District around Caledon managed to achieve an average increase of 0,6% in the yield and were able to secure a harvest of 224 000 muids of wheat by the end of the century.¹⁵ Although it is difficult to reconstruct the domestic use of guano for this period due to a lack of custom records,¹⁶ one can use verbal evidence from farmers to demonstrate that a local guano market existed for both chemical and natural fertilisers. The 1865 Cape population census also indicated that nearly 48 percent of the working population was active in agricultural production and that the mineral revolution created new markets for grain in the interior of South Africa.¹⁷

The development of a rural enclosure movement in the Cape Colony represents an equally important milestone on the road to establishing a fully capitalist agricultural sector. A system of open landholdings allowing freedom of movement for both humans and animals was a distinctive feature of life in the Cape Colony far into the 19th century. It was thus impossible

¹³ Dooling, "The decline of the Cape gentry": 233

¹⁴ Ross, "Emancipations and the Economy of the Cape Colony," :140

¹⁵ Wilson, "Rural Revolution.": 3

¹⁶ Van Sittert, "Historical reconstruction of guano production on the Namibian islands": 14

¹⁷ R. Ross, "The origins of Capitalist agriculture in the Cape Colony: A survey," in *Putting a Plough to the Ground*, ed. W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 56 - 57

to pursue intensive cultivation or to implement scientific farming methods aimed at maximising returns from land and livestock for commercial purposes. By the late 1860s, following the discovery of gold and diamonds and the establishment of a substantial market for agricultural produce, services and labour, some stock farmers and cultivators with ready access to water wanted fencing.¹⁸ The first fencing legislation was tabled in the Cape Parliament in 1872 as an aid to improved fertilisation of arable land by providing a safe area for animals to graze, thereby assisting in the natural process of giving back manure to the soil. Enclosing grazing land was deemed useful to eliminate the need for the physical collection and storage of manure.¹⁹ The first fencing legislation, however, met with strong resistance from a significant group of farmers who could not afford the cost associated with enclosure. Furthermore, since it also projected the power of those with control over agricultural resources and industry and their network of influence spatially, individual and group relations were fundamentally altered.²⁰ Its full implementation therefore had to be placed on hold.

These processes collectively contributed to the commercialisation and adoption of capitalist farming methods amongst Cape farmers. Their understanding of the interdependence or inter-linkage of new technology, fertiliser and fencing for commercial success was particularly important and provided an important impetus for further attempts by the colonial authorities to streamline and consolidate the local trade.

5.3. Towards a Consolidated Cape Guano Trade, c. 1872 - 1890

The new responsible government of the Cape Colony inherited the dual task of finalising the integration and consolidation of the Cape guano trade to benefit the local farming sector. Given the political background of the special dispensations associated with the exploitation of Bird Island (Algoa Bay) and Ichaboe Island as discussed in Chapter 3, this process had its own pitfalls. Whereas the Bird Island agreement could be attributed to strategic miscalculation on the part of colonial officials, the Ichaboe agreement was the result of the

¹⁸L. Van Sittert, "Holding The Line: The Rural Enclosure Movement in the Cape Colony, c. 1865 – 1910." *Journal of African History*, 43 (2002): 105

¹⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/9: A. 10-72: Report of the Select Committee on the Fences Bill: Testimony of Mr. Ziervogel, 28/6/1872: 24

²⁰L. Van Sittert, "Holding the line: The rural enclosure movement in the Cape Colony,": 96

workings of political and social influence and patronage within the colonial power network. There was also no guarantee that those who benefited from these arrangements would volunteer to give up their control of a highly sought-after commodity. This further impacted on the still evolving nature of guano administration under the new governing regime. First on the agenda was the Bird Island Agreement, leased and managed by J.O. Smith of Algoa Bay.

5.3.1. Bird Island – The Search for a ‘Judicious Compromise’

The review of the Bird Island Agreement coincided with the dismissal of the Molteno Ministry by the Cape Governor in February 1878 – an event that Lewsen dubbed the first crisis of responsible government.²¹ This constitutional issue came about as a result of serious differences between the Prime Minister, J.C. Molteno and the Colonial Governor Sir Bartle Frere over the Sixth Frontier War (1877-78) in the Eastern Province and also gave new impetus to the further unfolding of the guano trade.

In their first legislative act, the newly installed government of Gordon Sprigg imposed an excise duty on Cape spirits to relieve the financial pressures brought about by the war.²² Similarly, income from the guano trade was used in the 1840s and 1860s to advance infrastructural development in the Cape Colony and to finance the administration of Bechuanaland as explained in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. Incensed by this action wine farmers, who were the primary clients of the guano trade together with wheat farmers, immediately closed ranks and established the South African Farmers Protection Association (SAFPA) or *Boeren Bescherming Vereeniging (BBV)* in October 1878 to fight the new duty. This signalled the emergence of a much more activist farming community in the Cape. Although BBV was initially established to oppose the excise duty, it eventually embraced broader objectives such as protecting the political and economic interests of farmers, the advancement of the general farming interests and the promotion of farming entrepreneurship.²³ It also adopted a strategy of supporting suitable political representatives and opposing “legislation oppressive to the farming community.”²⁴ This, according to

²¹P. Lewsen, “The First Crisis in Responsible Government in the Cape Colony,” *Archives Yearbook for South African History* (forthwith AYB), Vol. II (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1942)

²²T.R.H. Davenport & C. Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 5th ed. (London: Longman, 2000), 106

²³ Davenport & Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 108

²⁴ Grundlingh, “The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope,”: 184

Tarmarkin, was a natural development since wine, wheat and sheep farming were all equally vulnerable to government taxation.²⁵

By the second attempt at revising the Bird Island Agreement in 1885, the BBV had gained political control over the parliamentary caucus of the Afrikaner Bond, a broad-based political formation established in 1880 to represent Afrikaner interests. As a political formation they favoured a protectionist economic policy to ensure greater competitiveness of Cape farmers against their foreign counterparts.²⁶ The review process therefore restarted against the backdrop of a greatly changed political situation.

Although J.O. Smith died in 1871, no immediate effort was made to terminate the Bird Island agreement. The colonial authorities had previously also failed to stop the transfer of his guano rights to his relatives upon his departure for England in 1861.²⁷ This was not surprising since the Bird Island product was generally regarded as being low quality compared to those from Ichaboe and Malgas Island. In addition, difficulties with the removal of guano from the islands added to the existing problems. Its collection was not only dependent on external human/economic factors such as the availability of labour, but also the state of the guano market. Other factors included the natural breeding and migration cycle of the birds. With the passing seasons and the shrinking and expansion of the guano market, new guano deposits were continually added to the remainder or 'old guano'. This resulted in a fluctuating deposit of the product on the island. Revising the original agreement therefore was not a simple matter since it was to remain valid and in force until such time as all of the original guano was removed. This stipulation was, however, inherently flawed.

In order not to prejudice the case of the colonial state, given the difficulty to prove that the terms of the original agreement were fulfilled, the Attorney General advised the colonial government to desist from taking any action for the time being. As the new Cape parliament and government were still being established and lacked party tactics and strategy, caution was

²⁵M. Tarmarkin, *Volk and Flock: Ecology, Identity and Politics among Cape Afrikaners in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Pretoria: Unisa, 2010), 92

²⁶Grundlingh, "The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope," 207

²⁷A. Porter, "John Owen Smith, 1804–1871," *Looking Back* 24 (1984): 95

advised.²⁸ The constitutional dispute also affected the ordinary business of government. All government business also had to take a backseat pending a new election and the reorganisation of government. No further action with regard to changing the status of Bird Island was therefore taken. The colonial authorities thus had to endure a situation in which they were prevented from actually reaping the potential benefits of guano.²⁹

In September 1886 the authorities gave formal notice to the Smith Executors of its intention to reclaim full administrative and political control over Bird Island with effect from 1 April 1887. In addition, in a notice dated 19 October 1886, all the access and exploitation rights of the original leaseholder were terminated.³⁰ This was followed by an instruction to the Surveyor-General to advertise new tenders for the award of a five-year guano lease over Bird Island.³¹

The Executors of Smith's Estate fiercely resisted the attempt to eject them from the trade. However, they made a tactical mistake when the colonial government offered to undertake a chemical analysis of all guano on the island and to sell suitable volumes for their joint account. Rather than treating the offer as an amicable compromise, they regarded it as a sign of weakness and attempted to extract further concessions. They tabled a tough counter proposal for the continuation of the original agreement including the abolition of the guano license system and full government control over guano collection and marketing.³² As expected, the Colonial Government rejected this offer when they sensed that a "judicious compromise" as proposed by the Assistant Civil Commissioner would meet with little success. They therefore proceeded with the process of re-establishing official control over the island.³³ Significantly, no member of organised agriculture in either the Eastern or Western

²⁸Grundlingh, "The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope": 171

²⁹KAB: AGR 230/ 2153: Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works – Attorney General, 15/6/1886

³⁰KAB: Public Works Department (PWD) 2/3/12/B.300: Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works – Trustees Estate of J.O. Smith, 19/10/1886

³¹KAB: PWD 2/3/12/B.300: Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works – Surveyor General; 10/11/1886

³²KAB: AGR 230/2153: Executors Estate of J.O. Smith – Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works, 30/4/1887

³³KAB: AGR 230/2153: Telegram of the Assistant Commissioner - Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works, 10/5/1887

Province or from the ranks of guano leaseholders came out in support of the Smith Executors. The reason for this was soon to become clear.

Under Resolution 2, on 2 July 1889 whilst the dispute still dragged on, the Cape Legislative Assembly resolved to place all guano islands under the direct control and management of the Department of Agriculture to benefit colonial farming.³⁴ This could be attributed to certain positive developments during the term of the Second Sprigg Ministry that lasted from 1886 to 1889. According to Grundlingh, this period of “exceeding calm” also witnessed a “remarkable fraternisation” between the English and Afrikaners that led to much improved relations. In addition, the Sprigg government implemented a new policy of positive government that put colonial interests first.³⁵ Given the importance of Guano affairs to the farming community, it therefore formally ceased to be a matter between private entrepreneurs and government alone. The voice and views of the farming community from that point onwards also had to be considered.

Upon the refusal of the executors of the Smith Estate to abandon their rights, the Cape colonial government took their case to the Cape Supreme Court. Although the Court forbade the authorities from arbitrarily alienating the rights of the defendant, it ruled that the existing agreement would end on 21 May 1895. As a concession, as from 1 July 1892 the Smith Estate was entitled to buy guano from government at £30 per annum, where after all claims to the guano on Bird Island would lapse.³⁶ Thanks to the specifics of this court verdict, especially setting a date for the final termination of the Bird Island agreement, it signalled the beginning of the end for local guanopreneurs. It also enabled the formal establishment of full

³⁴KAB: COGH: Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 2 July 1889: Resolution 2 reads as follows: “that in view of the increasing demands by farmers for the ‘manure’ called guano, this House is of the opinion that the guano islands should not be leased after the expiration of the several contracts or leases entered into, but that they should be placed under the direct control and management of the Agricultural Department, so as to provide purchasers with a good article at a reasonable price, and by this means encourage production, chiefly of grain, to a greater extent.”

³⁵Grundlingh, “The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope”: 213

³⁶Reports of Cases decided in the Supreme Court of the Cape of Good Hope, Vol. VII, no 1, The Colonial Government vs. Smith’s Executors, (Cape Town, December 3, 1889), 132. The Court in particular ruled that the 1845 Agreement “...merely called upon the defendants to remove the guano from the islands. There is no provision in the agreement, however, entitling the plaintiff to call upon the defendants to remove the guano. The plaintiff might have seen to the sale of the guano himself, and had the guano been sold, might have handed over one half of the proceeds to the defendants and then (own emphasis) claimed that the agreement was at an end.”

administrative and political control over all of the guano islands and rocks within and outside the territorial waters of the Cape Colony.

5.4. The Establishment of the Guano Agency

Although the Cape Legislative Assembly decision to establish full government control over the guano trade was taken by a majority decision, its implementation revealed deep-seated differences between key public representatives from the Eastern and Western Provinces. These differences were rooted in years of distrust and a long-standing fear that once in power, the Afrikaner majority would advance ethnic rather than the general economic interests of the Colony to the financial detriment of the British community.³⁷ There were, however, also internal differences within these groupings, especially from non-parliamentarians. The latter was firstly concerned about government entering a relatively unknown field, and secondly about the effect of this decision on the operations of independent businessmen in the guano trade. Critically, the authorities also had to find or develop an appropriate management model to organise the new undertaking and the necessary human resources to operate the system. Resolving these issues was critical for the success of this venture.

During the debate in the Assembly, questions about issues around operational efficiency, the effect of a government enterprise on private contractors and demands for free allocations, enjoyed centre stage. For MLA Jones, the only route to low guano prices was the achievement of high operational efficiency in exploitation and keeping the overhead costs as low as possible. In his assessment, the colonial administration lacked the ability to work the guano islands economically and he was therefore sceptical about its chances of success.³⁸ The better option therefore was to leave it in the hands of private entrepreneurs. Thos Louw on the other hand, and with due consideration to the established interests of private guano-sellers, feared that a government operation would cause “hardship” and financial ruin to guano contractors who had traditionally serviced the farming sector.³⁹ He thus supported the

³⁷T. Kirk, “The Cape economy and the expropriation of the Kat River Settlement, 1846 – 1853,” in *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, ed. Shula Marks & Anthony Atmore (New York: Longman), 239

³⁸KAB: AMP PUBLS: CCP. Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly (forthwith HA): Mr. Jones, MLA, 2/7/ 1889: 231

³⁹KAB: AMP PUBLS: CCP: HA: Thos Louw, MLA, 2/7/1889: 231

cause of these men and therefore argued for their accommodation rather than exclusion. Scherbrucker in turn cautioned that with the establishment of a government-controlled system, a new sense of entitlement might have developed amongst farmers, which in the future may have resulted in demands for free guano.⁴⁰

Despite these concerns, the Colonial Government put an administration together, which they believed would assist in achieving their objective of providing a more affordable and accessible product. Central to a profitable working of the islands was the need for trade-specific knowledge of the inner workings of the guano trade, especially its collection, shipping and marketing practices. The Department of Crown Lands & Public Works (DCLPW), under which the islands were placed for administrative purposes, was not only newly-formed but was also staffed by office-based professionals who lacked intimate knowledge of trade. This forced the authorities to recruit from the ranks of those who had actually worked and lived on the various islands. This lack of institutional expertise implicitly exposed the organisation to administrative manipulation and abuse. Based on a model proposed by J.H. Van Heerden in 1861, the Department created the position of Government Guano Agent to take full responsibility for the supervision and management of all aspects of guano collection on Dassen and Bird Island (Lambert's Bay) and Elephant's Rock at the mouth of the Elephant's River with effect from June 1890.⁴¹ Northwest Rock, Paternoster-, Marcus-, Jutten-, Skaap-, Meeuwen- and Foundling Islands as well as Jacob's Rock in Saldanha Bay and Duiker Klip (Hout Bay) and Seal Island (False Bay) were to follow on 30 June 1891.

Mr. H.H. Macnaughton, the Assistant Commissioner of the DCLPW, appointed Captain C.H. Jackson, a veteran of the trade as Guano Agent. Jackson, whom it appeared subtly lobbied for the position,⁴² was well aware of the benefits of controlling the guano resource. He therefore willingly gave up his business to accept the offer (albeit for an initial period of only two years) based on a verbal agreement and a set of very specific pre-conditions that differed

⁴⁰KAB: AMP PUBLS: CCP: HA: Col. Scherbrucker, MLA; 2/7/1889: 231

⁴¹COGH: SC. AMPT PUBLS CCP 1/2/1/9: A.11-'61: Appendix C to Proceedings: J.H Van Reenen to Governor, 25/6/1861: 75 -76

⁴²KAB: AMPT PUBLS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12- '97, Testimony of Captain C.H. Jackson, 9th June, 1897: 36

substantially from the rules guiding appointments in the colonial bureaucracy. Instead of receiving a salary, he was offered a commission on guano sales in addition to being given a free hand to organise the management of the islands based on commercial principles.⁴³ Additionally he could reclaim all salary expenses from the colonial state, inclusive of worker salaries, administrative costs and provisions incurred for the management of the trade. By his own admission, he accepted the position to derive “some income or benefit out of it.”⁴⁴ Service to farmers was therefore only a secondary concern. Based on this combination of factors, the new system started off with certain inherent weaknesses, which had the potential to gradually undermine the strategic agenda underlying its creation. As such, this employment contract and its associated stipulations became a topic of contestation between Jackson the colonial functionary acting as a guanopreneur, and the state for control over the resource.

In accordance with his mandate of providing a regular supply of guano to interested farmers, Jackson created the necessary infrastructure for the new administration. Given his freedom to act and his profit-orientation, he used this opportunity to embed certain profit-generating systems and mechanisms within the larger management system. To ensure a continuous supply of guano, the system of maintaining a regular island workforce was continued. In addition, a central guano depot with a capacity of 300 tons was established in Cape Town. At this facility, the different guano types were to be mixed, weighed and despatched after sales were concluded. Despite his attempts to reduce operational costs by insisting that buyers provided their own transport, he was overruled by his superiors and had to transport guano purchases by railway trucks at £8 less 5% discount net cash as per departmental arrangement. In addition, sale by analysis was strictly based on request.⁴⁵ These affected not only his operational budget but also impacted on his commission. To overcome some of the constraints of the internal market on his profit-making arrangements, Jackson deliberately cultivated markets in Lorenzo Marques, Transvaal and the Orange Free State. He also appointed his own marketing and monitoring agent in London to exploit the long-established

⁴³KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12- '97, Testimony of Captain C.H. Jackson, 1st June, 1897: 2

⁴⁴KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12- '97: Testimony of Capt. C.H. Jackson, June, 1 & 9, 1897:15, 38

⁴⁵KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/82: Ministerial Department of Crown Lands & Public Works: Memorandum on working of the Guano Islands (G.55 -'91), 21/5/1891

European and British market. This was contrary to the accepted practice of working through the General Agents in London or through officially appointed Crown Agents whose task it was to advise, mobilise support and act as a link between colony and investors.⁴⁶ Furthermore, exporting guano to neighbouring states and abroad over time also became a bone of contention given the healthy local demand for the product.

Although Jackson succeeded in putting in place a workable administrative structure, putting his own interests before that of the farming community for whom the new guano regime was meant to serve, soon caused friction with his principals. The demand for lower prices and equal treatment in provisioning by Eastern Province farmers was central in this regard.

5.5. Fair Access, Regional Interests and Defeating the Guanopreneur, 1890 - 1898

Once the Cape guano administration became operational, the local demand for guano escalated. Orders from individual farmers, institutions and organised groups were received from all regions of the Colony. In addition to the individual orders from farmers in the nearby Swartland⁴⁷ and Breede River regions⁴⁸ that were received by the central depot in Cape Town, early orders were received from the Knysna Political Association (KPA) in the Southern Cape and the Lower Albany Farmers Association (LAFA) from the equally distant Eastern Province. From the onset, the latter also insisted on paying the same price as applicants from the Western Province.⁴⁹ Given the long distance from Cape Town, the Knysna Divisional Council also proposed the establishment of a small guano depot in the Southern Cape region to service local farmers with payment guaranteed by the Council.⁵⁰ Given the fact that the new administration was still in its first collection season and lacked sufficient stock, it was fairly difficult to set prices that farmers could afford.⁵¹ Most of the early orders therefore had to be declined. In addition, high transport costs added more

⁴⁶A. Porter, "Britain, the Cape Colony, and Natal, 1870 – 1914: Capital, shipping and the Imperial connexion." *The Economic History Review* 34, no. 4 (November 1981): 558

⁴⁷ KAB: AGR153:667, Farmer from Abbotsdale – Secretary for Agriculture, 2/5/1892

⁴⁸ KAB: AGR153:667, S. Du Toit – A. Fischer, 2/5/1892

⁴⁹ KAB; AGR: 231: 2153, S.Lansdell – Secretary of Lands, Mines and Agriculture, 11/11/1892

⁵⁰ KAB: AGR: 231: 2153, W. Mason, Secretary of the Knysna Political Association – Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands & Public Works, 23/6/1891

⁵¹ KAB: AGR: 231: 2153, Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands & Public Works - W. Mason, Secretary of the Knysna Political Association, 9/7/1891

complications for those located far from Cape Town. The lowest fee for transporting large volumes of guano to Lower Albany for example came to 115s-10d.⁵² Given the poor state of roads, the railway department recommended shipping via Port Alfred and the Kowie River as the best option.⁵³ Both the opening and maintenance of a satellite depot and the provision of long-distance transport had serious cost implications, adding significantly to the overhead costs for mining and marketing of the product. It also negatively impacted on determining commissions at the end of the financial year. Jackson therefore opposed the proposal by the Divisional Council of Knysna⁵⁴ and suggested provisioning the Southern Cape region (and potentially also Lower Albany) from the islands along the coasts of Mossel Bay and Port Elizabeth.⁵⁵ In addition, he declined the LAFA request for equitable provision by shifting the responsibility for transport and reduced tariffs away from the Guano Agency and informed them that haulage pricing was the responsibility of the railway department.⁵⁶ Other than that, no further official action was taken to find an acceptable compromise or a more practical solution to the problems raised. These actions speak of indifference and a strong sense of partiality instead of a willingness to devise ways and means to be of greater service to the farming sector.

In addition to the logistics of guano supply, the issue of cost became a perennial issue. At the time of the establishment of the guano administration, the sales price of guano was set at £7.12s per ton. This was calculated using the average local price of £8, allowing a 5% discount for cash.⁵⁷ For most farmers, this was too expensive.⁵⁸ By June 1891 W. Basson MLA gave notice of his intention to request parliament to consider a price reduction. The Commissioner, McNaughton, however, responded negatively by indicating that since there was already an intention to sell guano by analysis, which would generate its own additional costs, a price reduction was not foreseen.⁵⁹ The Government Guano Agent was as a matter of principle strongly opposed to any price reduction and argued that the product was already

⁵²KAB: AGR: 231:141, Commissioner of Crown Lands & Public Works – Assistant General Manager of Railways, 29/11/1892

⁵³KAB: AGR: 231: 141, Assistant General Manager – Secretary to Public Works, 1/12/1892

⁵⁴KAB: AGR:231:2153, Capt. C.H. Jackson – Assistant Commissioner, 6/5/1893

⁵⁵KAB:AGR: 231:2153, Capt. C.H. Jackson – Assistant Commissioner, 9/7/1891

⁵⁶KAB: AGR: 231:2153, C.H. Jackson – Assistant Commissioner, 17/11/1892

⁵⁷KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – '97: Testimony of Capt. C.H. Jackson, 1/6/1897: 4 – 5

⁵⁸KAB: AGR153:667, S. Du Toit – A. Fischer, 2/5/1892

⁵⁹KAB: AGR: 231: 2153, McNaughton Report, 25/6/1891

sold at 50 cents lower than market value.⁶⁰ This over time became his standard response to any demand for a lowering of the guano price. One again this was related to Jackson's direct interest in high prices for commission purposes.

Notwithstanding the obvious flaws in the guano administration system, Jackson and his team recorded a net profit of £2973-12s-50d for the sale of guano, penguin eggs and seal skins by May 1891.⁶¹ Based on this performance, the colonial authorities offered Jackson a formal written contract on 21 March 1892. In terms of this new contract, commission on guano sales were calculated on a sliding scale on the following basis: 15% on sales up to £8000; 5% on sales between £8000- £15000; and 3% on sales between £15000 - £20 000. In addition, he could submit claims for office and other entrepreneurial expenses.⁶² This new contract came with a series of measures clearly aimed at benefiting Cape agriculture. Firstly, it was determined that credit and discounts of 5% on cash sales (rail freight included) had to be extended to local farmers. Secondly, the product was dispatched by rail to a station closest to the buyer. Thirdly, the cash sale price was fixed at £7-12s-5d per ton. Fourthly, in line with the European standard, the client could request a chemical analysis of his or her purchase. This significantly reduced his future commission and gradually undermined his ability to use cost-cutting measures as a means to improve his income. The new contract was based on an improved understanding of how the guano trade actually operated and was unashamedly pro-agriculture. In this way it bears a close resemblance to events during the first phase of the granting of the Peruvian concession earlier in the century. There was, however, still more than enough space for Jackson to continue to extract profit through his agency role.

The change in the administrative regime was not to Jackson's liking. He therefore opposed credit sales, provision of cheap or free transport, chemical analysis and fixed prices. He also favoured bulk guano sales without any differentiation in an effort to outperform the remaining leaseholders and to get rid of excess guano in storage in various points of retail

⁶⁰ KAB: AGR:231:2153, Capt. C.H. Jackson – Assistant Commissioner of Public Works, 21/12/1892

⁶¹ KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/82: G.55 – '91:3

⁶² KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – '97, Testimony of C. Currie, June 4, 1897: 26

within the Colony.⁶³ The colonial authorities however stood firm and insisted on total compliance with official orders.

Following an extremely wet season in 1892/3, which affected both guano volumes and quality, new demands were made. As had become customary, the first concerned a general reduction in the existing guano price and the second, most important one, an immediate termination of any exports.⁶⁴ The Colonial Government was, however, reluctant to consider another price reduction so soon. Although it was fortunate for Jackson from a commission perspective, farmers were left greatly dissatisfied and resolved to ensure a system geared towards their needs. As it turned out, their growing dissatisfaction was also directed against the manner in which Jackson ran the guano agency. This effectively turned the contestation between the guanopreneur on the one hand and the farmers on the other hand into a public affair.

The next phase of the struggle for an affordable product saw the emergence of protest action led by farmer-politicians - a development that took the struggle for fair access to a higher plane. Malmesbury farmers in conjunction with their public representatives protested at a meeting held in late 1892 and resolved to push parliament towards lowering the guano price to £6 per ton.⁶⁵ They also demanded credit sales, the appointment of official guano-sellers, the elimination of private sellers, use of convicts as guano labour as a cost-cutting measure and, significantly, the termination of the guano commission system.⁶⁶ Spearheading this protest in January 1893 from the Cape Colony's principal wheat-growing areas around Malmesbury and Paarl was a group of high-profile farmer-politicians, namely A. Louw (MLA for Malmesbury), D. De Waal (MLA for Cape Town), Z. De Villiers (MLA for Paarl), J. Van der Spuy (MLA for Koeberg) and S. Walters (Piketberg). This effectively divided the Legislative Assembly and its diverse group of public representatives along economic and regional interest lines. The government delegation led by Sir Pieter Faure was therefore left with few options. Since he was in no position to order an immediate price cut without the

⁶³KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/82; Memorandum on the working of the guano islands (G.55 – '92):1

⁶⁴KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/85: G.58 – '93

⁶⁵*De Zuid Afrikaan*, "De guano kwestie - een deputasie van Malmesbury en Omstreken," Januarie 17, 1893

⁶⁶*Ons Land*, "Guano", January 17, 1893

consent of parliament, he undertook to propose a price reduction to legislature in 1895 when the Ichaboe lease expired and the island returned to full government control. Louw, the MLA of Malmesbury, vowed to continue to fight for a price of £5 per ton, much to the annoyance of the Guano Agent. In typical entrepreneurial fashion, Jackson felt that such actions and statements “had no weight except that they mislead the more ignorant.”⁶⁷ There was, however, to be no respite from the actions of these progressive but also normally fiercely independent individuals, who through the persistent struggle of their compatriots, recognised that their destinies were inextricably intertwined. As a result they were persuaded to exchange their individual identity for a collective one.⁶⁸

The phenomenon of the activist parliamentarian or farmer-politicians was not a new development in Cape Colonial history. The organic unity displayed between farmers and their public representatives and the skilful use of both extra-parliamentary (e.g. petitions and delegations) and parliamentary means (e.g. special investigation commissions or Select Committee hearings) to pressurise the colonial government was also previously used to advance the farmers interests in the protests against the wine excise duty (1878), the rural enclosure movement (c. 1865 – 1910) and the Anti-Scab Movement (1894). In addition to adhering to a growing party political organisational discipline, public representatives of organisations such as the Farmers Protection Association (FPA), BBV, Afrikaner National Party (ANP) (est. 1889) and Afrikaner Bond were also constitutionally compelled to act against state legislation and policy that militated against the general farming interests. In the founding proposal to establish the Afrikaner Bond, it was explicitly stated that this particular organisation would be one “which guards politics and keep traitors out of Parliament and sees that the true friends of the Fatherland take their place.” Furthermore, they would promote commerce and industry and guard against the enrichment of speculators.⁶⁹ Similarly, the rules and regulations of the BBV stipulated that such members “will generally oppose all measures calculated to press unduly on the farming population.”⁷⁰ The ANP in its Programme of Principles declared emphatically that it stood for the promotion of agriculture and other

⁶⁷ KAB: AGR: 231:2153, Capt. C.H. Jackson – Laing, 19/2/1984

⁶⁸ Van Sittert, “Holding the line”: 99

⁶⁹ Grundlingh, “The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope.” Appendix A: Proposal for an Afrikaner Bond: 318

⁷⁰ Grundlingh, “The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope.” Appendix B: The Boeren Bescherminings Vereniging - Rules and Regulations: 319

economic sectors by all legitimate means.⁷¹ It is significant that these formations, especially the AB according to Tamarkin, became the ‘political Cinderella’ of Cape politics and the arbiter of political power without which no government could be formed or have survived.⁷² Against this background, Jackson faced a formidable opponent.

Shortly after the first protest, the colonial government was confronted by a new set of demands by Eastern Province farmers. In addition to the lowering of the guano price, they continued to demand the equitable distribution of the product to all farmers in the Colony. They also mandated their MLA, J. Trower, to raise the matter during the sitting of the House of Assembly on 4 July 1893 and to demand “that the government be requested to allow guano to be delivered at any railway station on the Colonial system of railways at *actual cost of carriage*” (author’s emphasis).⁷³ This convergence of thought and action for the first time raised the possibility of united farmer action based on a common agenda in the near future. The Guano Agency and its accompanying commission system run by a guanopreneur in the colonial government bureaucracy, was thus placed under further pressure.

Despite the encouraging signs of the emergence of a common farmer agenda, the struggle for fair guano access was far from over. At the heart of the problem was a combination of practical matters such as high transport costs, regional interests, parliamentary divisions, bureaucratic indecision and the resistance of the Guano Agent. All these factors not only prevented them from engaging in unhindered capital accumulation but also increased their inability to influence the value of their commodity.⁷⁴ When the matters aired by the farmers were raised in parliament, the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands reiterated the departments standard position, namely that the product was already being sold at 50% below market value and that the Eastern Province’s demand could not be acceded.⁷⁵ A number of politically irresponsible statements by Jackson did not help matters. He considered the Western Cape market as sufficient for the purposes of his mandate and he could not see any

⁷¹ Grundlingh, “The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope.” Appendix E: Programme of Principles of the Afrikaner National Party: 325

⁷² Tamarkin, *Volk and Flock*, 146

⁷³ KAB: AGR:231:2153, Secretary of Lands, Mines & Agriculture – Assistant Commissioner of Railways & Public Works, 5/6/1893

⁷⁴ W. Dooling. “In search of profitability”: 91

⁷⁵ KAB: AGR:231:2153, Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands & Public Works – Secretary of Lands, Mines & Agriculture, 5/6/1893

reason for further price reductions.⁷⁶ As a final insult to Trower and his constituency, Jackson also insisted that the existing guano supply was not even enough to satisfy the requirements of the Western Province farmers.⁷⁷ The resultant refusal to lower the rates for farmers in the Eastern Province left Cape farmers further divided and put further strain on the relationship between the Colonial Government and farmers and greatly increased the divide between the latter and the Guano Agent.

Although Jackson succeeded in establishing a functioning guano administration, problems concerning the price and quality of guano as well as the Guano Agent's treatment of farmers and colonial officials continued to emerge and strained relations further. Jackson's own inclination to treat the legitimate complaints of clients as "inconsequential" and the low guano quality as an issue "not worth mentioning" won him few friends.⁷⁸ This also applied to his off-hand statements in response to the demand for lower transport rates. He argued that haulage had nothing to do with the price of guano, "it was simply the fact of their [farmers] living so many miles from Cape Town."⁷⁹ Matters were certainly not helped by the tendency of certain sections of the colonial administration to side with the Guano Agent during these disputes. Such conduct did nothing to improve trust in the colonial authorities' promise of delivering a proper service to the farming community. It rather acted as a stimulant for more organised action by farmers interested in obtaining guano. The relationship between Jackson and his counterparts in other colonial departments was equally poor. Used to getting his own way, he had little regard for the work of others and the impact thereof on the end-user in the guano value-chain. In addition to bad faith towards him in the Department of Agriculture, he also alienated the Colonial Railways over the issue of appropriate times for the delivery of guano.⁸⁰ Although Jackson once again got his way, matters came to a head in December 1893.

The gradual reduction of the guano price and variations in the quality of the product due to wet winter seasons directly affected sales and implicitly impacted on Jackson's commission.

⁷⁶KAB: AGR:231:2153, Chief Traffic Manager – Secretary of Public Works, 30/8/1894

⁷⁷KAB: AGR:231:2153, Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands & Public Works – Secretary of Lands, Mines & Agriculture, 5/6/1893

⁷⁸KAB: AGR:231:2153, Secretary to Public Works – N. Janusch, 3/2/1893

⁷⁹KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – '97: Testimony of Capt. CH Jackson, 1/6/1897: 13

⁸⁰KAB: AGR:231:2153, Assistant General Manager – Secretary for Lands, Mines & Agriculture, 2/8/1893

Although the situation improved somewhat after June 1891 with the addition of the islands in Saldanha Bay, Hout Bay and False Bay, which brought the number of islands and rocks under government control to thirteen, growth in his direct benefits from the enterprise was slow. To reverse the situation and boost his own income, Jackson introduced a guano buyers list, seemingly as part of his administrative responsibilities to better organise his service to clients. As a result, farmers not on the list would have been forced to purchase either from third parties or from the guano agency at a price to be determined by Jackson or to use alternative fertilisers. Either of these options had cost implications. When the public was officially informed of the closure of the list with effect from 1 January 1894 and that guano would be sold as cargoes arrived, matters reached boiling point.⁸¹ Since this measure discriminated against all farmers, irrespective of ethnic, ideological or geographical origin and threatened to reverse the gains they had made, this served as an impetus for their mobilisation. Farmers also correctly identified the implications of a closed list, namely possible price manipulation by some middlemen and others, including the Guano Agent. They therefore protested their dissatisfaction with the short notice and poor advertising of the new measure in the outlying areas that preceded the closure of the list to the colonial government. A particular cause of concern was uncertainty about government's plans with regard to late applications. In response to this campaign, fronted by farmer-politicians, the colonial government extended the application period to 15 January, ordered the issuing of new notices throughout the Colony, and prohibited the use of private guano intermediaries.⁸² This effectively pushed back Jackson's agenda to further demonstrate the value of united action for the achievement of shared objectives. Despite winning this concession, farmers still had to overcome the larger issue of parochial regional and self-interest.

5.6. From Protest and Commissions to the Guano Islands Division

As the concessions won by the various delegations generally only benefited Western Province farmers, Eastern Province parliamentary representatives began to question formal measures and actions that placed their constituency at a distinct disadvantage. Captain E.Y. Brabant in particular questioned the discount sale of guano to Western farmers, which he

⁸¹ KAB: AGR: 231:2153, C.H. Jackson – Office of the Commissioner of Public Works, 8/12/1893

⁸² KAB: AGR: 231:2153, Report of N. Janusch – Secretary for Public Works, 25/12/1893

regarded as a blatantly unfair form of cross-subsidisation⁸³ and tantamount to getting a present from Government.⁸⁴ He demanded that the authorities at least consider reducing transport charges in order to accommodate eastern farmers.⁸⁵ Brabant further denounced the export of guano to the Transvaal and Orange Free State as foreign states and particularly questioned the fact that these states received the product at the same rate as Colonial farmers.⁸⁶ As far as he was concerned Guano had to be reserved for the exclusive use of Cape farmers. Continued divisions within the ranks of parliamentarians, however, delayed the final resolution of the matter and the status quo remained and continued to benefit the Guano Agent at least until the beginning of 1895, six months prior to the expiration of the Ichaboe lease.

By January 1895, under pressure from the unrelenting agitation of farmer-representatives and their organisations, the colonial authorities publicised their intention of honouring their 1893 promise of granting yet another price reduction. In terms of Government Notice no. 45, the price of ordinary guano was to be reduced to £6-10s per ton of 2000 pounds or 13 shillings per bag of 200 pounds and that of rock guano to £6-17s per ton of 2000 pounds or 13s-9d per bag of 200 pounds.⁸⁷ This attack on the guano commission system signalled the last stand of the guanopreneurs. The Guano Agent, consistent with his previous position, did not support this measure and refused to implement it. This resulted in another protest to parliament and the DCLPW in March 1895 in defiance of a government order. They also accused Jackson of deliberately manipulating the guano supply. Governor Gordon Sprigg conceded to the farmers' request and ordered a price reduction backdated to 1 January 1895. A refund to buyers who formerly bought stocks at the old price, a reduction in the waiting period⁸⁸ as well as the immediate execution and despatch of all orders to their agreed destinations was also ordered. The repayment of the first batch of remissions cost Jackson £4 384-16s, which directly affected his former and future commission.⁸⁹ To prevent possible manipulation of

⁸³ *Cape Times*, "Guano", 14/6/1894

⁸⁴ KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – '97: Testimony of Capt. CH Jackson, 1/6/1897: 7

⁸⁵ KAB: AMP PUBS: CCP: HA: E.Y. Brabant, MLA; Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 13/6/1895: 263

⁸⁶ KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – '97: Testimony of Capt. CH Jackson, 1/6/1897: 19

⁸⁷ KAB: AGR: 231:2153, Under Secretary for Agriculture – Assistant Treasurer, 5/2/1895

⁸⁸ KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53:SC. A.30 – '99: Testimony of C.H. Jackson :54-55

⁸⁹ KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/90: Memorandum on the working of the guano islands (G.66 –'94): 1-2

this process, all subsequent remissions were to be handled through the offices of the various Civil Commissioners.⁹⁰ These actions set a new precedent since this moves significantly beyond mere tinkering of the system that Jackson constructed.

Jackson resented the undermining of his powers and the reduction of his commission and refused to fully implement the new measures. In an act of open defiance he continued to sell at the old price of £7-1s-5d and calculated his commission on the same basis. When questioned, he explained: “I went in with the idea of deriving some income or benefit out of it. I would not have gone into the undertaking otherwise.”⁹¹ He also accused the Colonial Government of a breach of contract since they excluded Ichaboe from his contract.⁹² These events caused a lot of public resentment amongst farmers who continued to insist on nothing less than the full enforcement of Sprigg’s order.

As has become customary, farmer-politicians assisted by their constituents pressurised parliament to appoint a commission to investigate the management of the guano administration system in general and the position of Guano Agent in particular. This was particularly urgent given the diversity of opinions that preceded the appointment of the commission. Chief amongst these were a fear that the Colony may lose a lucrative industry, especially since some of the disaffected farmers during the dispute resorted to purchasing artificial fertilisers from the emerging chemical fertiliser market as an alternative to the natural product.⁹³ J.M. Peacock (MPL) in particular, argued that there were certain advantages in exporting all the guano to England and importing chemical fertiliser instead.⁹⁴ This was, however, no real option for the majority of farmers who already struggled to pay cash for their purchases and who throughout lobbied for the granting of credit. It also became a vicious cycle since the Commissioner for Public Works deemed it too risky since they were dealing with trust money.⁹⁵ Parliamentarians D.P. Van den Heever and F.J. Van Eeden argued that the colonial authorities needed to sell guano as cheaply as possible as a means to

⁹⁰ KAB: AGR: 231:2153, Treasury to Under Secretary for Agriculture, 1/3/1895

⁹¹ KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – ’97: Testimony of Captain C. H. Jackson, 9/6/1897: 38

⁹² KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – ’97: Testimony of C.H. Jackson, 1/6/1897:14-15

⁹³ KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A.30 – ’99,: Testimony of Paulus Eksteen, 21/9/ 1899: 20

⁹⁴ KAB: AMP PUBS: CCP: Debates and Proceedings of the Legislative Council (forthwith LC): J.M. Peacock, MLC, 23/6/1896: 192

⁹⁵ Commissioner for Public Works; Debates and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 23/6/1896: 193

develop the country⁹⁶ or risked being labelled as non-progressive and obstructionist.⁹⁷ Based on this diversity of views, it was clear that the end of the guano agency was in sight. It was thus important for the Select Committee to prioritise the needs of Cape agriculture. To stress their commitment to the cause, the colonial authorities terminated the existing contract with Jackson with effect from June 1896. The age of the guanopreneur therefore officially came to an end. All that remained to be resolved was the challenge of overcoming the still divisive issue of regional interests.

The Commission of Investigation under the Chairmanship of Thos Louw which started their work on 28 May 1897 included parliamentarians from both the Eastern and Western Provinces of the Colony. This was extremely significant since the balancing of the regional interests of both groups has been a long-standing point of dispute and a source of division within the ranks of Cape farmers. After taking evidence, the majority of the members of the Commission recommended maintaining the existing administrative system and taking official steps to ensure the delivery of guano at the same price at all of its ports.⁹⁸ This recommendation was potentially an important victory for farmers in the Eastern Province. The committee could not reach unanimity over other critical aspects of the local trade. Representatives Frost and Brabant, although partial to the interests of the eastern farming sector, were vocal supporters of the principles of free trade and tabled a minority report calling for a total free market system with sales on the open market with no government intervention and, alternatively, for commission based on the original price.⁹⁹ Louw and Marais, important spokespersons for western farming interests, opposed Frost and Brabant in a minority report of their own and recommended that a uniform selling price be implemented; commission be based on a net price of £6-10s-5d; that an amended commission or fixed salary be paid to the Guano Agent; and that the industry without exception be converted into a fully state-run operation.

⁹⁶KAB: AMP PUBLS: CCP: LC: D.P. Van den Heever, MLC; 23/6/1896: 194

⁹⁷KAB: AMP PUBLS: CCP: LC: F.J. Van Eeden, MLC; 23/6/1896: 194

⁹⁸KAB:AMPT PUBLS CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – '97:vi

⁹⁹KAB: AMPT PUBLS CCP 2/2/1/76: SC.10 –'98: 10

Following the recommendations of the Commission, the guano islands were placed under the Guano Island Division (GID), a new sub-department of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) with effect from 1 July 1898. Despite the adverse findings of the Commission about the general conduct of Jackson, they still offered him the new position of Superintendent of Government Guano Islands. This was ironic since his former assistant, Captain John Spence whom he appointed during his former tenure as Guano Agent, was equally experienced in the management of the system. While Jackson's re-appointment may be interpreted as an admission that the existing system was the most workable, it strongly pointed to the existence of strong political support amongst parliamentarians. Whilst farmer-politicians such as Marais, De Vos and Hofmeyer supported the unrestricted provision of farmers with a product that was affordable and of a high quality so as to advance grain farming as previously indicated, the sentiments of people such as Jones, Louw and Schermbrucker, were closer to that of Jackson since they supported the sale of guano on the open market and the pro-active prevention of a sense of entitlement amongst farmers. Another critical voice was that of A. Wilmot MLA who had consistently argued that all farmers and not only those involved in grain farming had to benefit from a beneficial guano price regime.¹⁰⁰ Jackson's relationship with his new department and the farming sector would determine the further development of the local trade, especially the question of the extension of credit on guano sales.

5.7. The Obstructionist Superintendent of Government Guano Islands, 1898 - 1904

Jackson's new employment contract as the Superintendent of the Guano Islands Division (GID) differed significantly from those applicable to his former position as Government Guano Agent. Although his position was fully bureaucratised (e.g. he had to obtain prior permission from the Secretary of Agriculture before any expenditure was incurred),¹⁰¹ he still maintained certain discretionary powers (e.g. the acceptance of different forms of payments such as postal orders, mail orders, cash or acknowledgement of debts).¹⁰² As a service to the local farming community, the colonial administration originally made provision for the extension of credit to those purchasers who had registered such a need. Under the new

¹⁰⁰KAB: COGH: Proceedings of the Legislative Council, June 23, 1896: 194

¹⁰¹KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A.30 – '99: Testimony of C. Currey, 19 September 1899: 4-5

¹⁰²KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A.30 – '99: Under Secretary for Agriculture – Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, 26/5/ 1899; Annexure (E) to Report

dispensation this discretion was never exercised. Instead, following an increase in the number of dishonoured cheques, cash sales became the norm because they were less of an administrative problem.¹⁰³ Despite its administrative benefits, this change did not enjoy universal support since a significant number of buyers also preferred payment by cheque. Those that needed credit were equally frustrated. This resulted in a new stand-off between the Office of the Superintendent and the farming sector. In the wake of his continued refusal to consider using alternative methods of payment, farmers once again appealed to their representatives in the colonial parliament, demanding a change in the system.

In addition to frustrating the farming sector, Jackson both openly and subtly undermined the general administrative system since he resented the bureaucratisation of his position. Nowhere was this resistance more visible than in his refusal to manage the administration of the guano service in accordance with the prescribed rules. In addition to an unfriendly attitude towards customers interested in buying guano on the prescribed terms, he on different occasions deliberately refused requests to certify particular transaction documentation such as accounts or the required approvals prior to concluding particular transactions that had to be submitted to the Auditor General.¹⁰⁴ In another act of open defiance, he also ignored the explicit rule that prohibited the export of guano without prior permission from the Agent General by selling cargo to Bechuanaland and Rhodesia.¹⁰⁵ This was particularly cynical given the growing local agitation for the maintenance of a guano reserve and lower prices. Given this combination of factors, Jackson was suspended and his service terminated on 30 June.

Following the aforementioned events and since guano was a key commodity for Cape farmers, parliament was compelled to order an investigation into the operations of the guano administrative system. Particular attention was given to lowering the guano price, administration expenditure, customer service and the position of Superintendent since Jackson's dismissal.¹⁰⁶ The Committee, however, did not succeed in investigating these

¹⁰³KAB: AMP PUBS: CCP: HA: Honourable Heroldt, MLA.;, 19/9/1899: 493

¹⁰⁴KAB: AMP PUBS: CCP: HA: Honourable Beyers, MLA.;, 12/9/1899: 440

¹⁰⁵KAB; AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A.30 – '99: Testimony of K. Anderson, September 26, 1899: 37

¹⁰⁶KAB: AMP PUBS: CCP: HA: Honourable D.J. Marais, MLA; 12/9/1899: 439

matters fully due to the looming war between Britain and the Transvaal and Free State colonies. Hearings were suspended in order to submit a report to the legislature before the last sitting. The Committee found that service management left much to be desired; there was total non-compliance with regard to the adherence to the standard audit regulations; and there were serious weaknesses in the marketing and sales system that used an overseas-based private agent. One of the key recommendations was therefore to replace the London Agent with a government-appointed agent.¹⁰⁷ The outbreak of the Anglo Boer War (or South African War, 1899-1902) delayed the implementation of most of its key recommendations. Placing the guano island division in new hands was problematic since Jackson had possessed critical administrative knowledge and experience. This forced the colonial authorities to re-appoint Jackson despite the severe criticism relating to the management of the trade up to that point. As a result, he continued as Superintendent until he passed away in 1904. The farmers' frustration with regard to their central needs therefore continued and had to wait until after the South African War (1899 – 1902) to be addressed.

5.8. War, Depots, and Guano Quality Standards, 1899 - 1910

As expected, the South African War placed new strain on the guano trade and further complicated the process of bringing the product within easy reach of its local clientele. The maintenance of an adequate reserve could also not be realised immediately as a result of limited storage facilities in Cape Town at the central depot and the priority given to the war effort. Instead, the authorities were compelled to keep the reserve guano on the islands ready for shipping. In addition because wagons, storage space and labour had to be hired, factors such as high transport, storage and labour costs combined to make it nearly impossible for the colonial government to achieve its goal of providing an affordable product to colonial farmers. The military authorities that commandeered all small sea craft for the transport of soldiers and provisions also disrupted transport by sea. In addition, new restrictions to regulate coastal shipping and to control access to the most important harbours further disrupted the trade. Similarly, overland transport was constrained by both the blockage of rail tracks by both the warring parties and a general shortage of sufficient rail carriages and trucks. On the labour front, the guano trade was no exception and suffered serious staff

¹⁰⁷KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: Report of the Select Committee (S.C.) on the guano islands (A.30 -'99)

shortages because the military authorities paid higher salaries.¹⁰⁸ Collectively, these constraints caused long delays in product delivery and heightened frustrations amongst its customers. The war itself also further widened the gap between the Eastern and Western Province farmers.

Following the war, the colonial authorities instituted a system of guano depots located at selected railway stations in the heart of the Cape's wheat growing areas of the Overberg and Swartland districts to aid the farming sector. Depots were established at towns such as Malmesbury, Kalbaskraal, Mooresburg, Piketberg (Swartland), Worcester, Caledon (Overberg). To supply the wheat and vine growers in the northwestern part of the Colony and the wine-growing areas outside of Cape Town, single stores were opened in the Boland (Paarl) and the Elephant's River Valley (Clanwilliam). In terms of this system Station Masters were assigned the responsibility of supervising the sale and dispatch of guano. In return, they were paid an additional allowance to compensate for the extra tasks assigned. To ensure uniformity throughout the system, all guano orders had to be placed at the various depots before being transmitted to the central depot in Cape Town from where the correct load was despatched by railway carriage to the destination the order originated from. The buyer therefore had the convenience of taking possession of the order from the station closest to their home or farm. To overcome delays and to ensure the delivery of the product to the farmer within the shortest possible time, the decentralised depots gradually took over the seller's role from the central depot. This measure went a long way to effectively address some of the longstanding grievances of farmers in the Western Province but continued to discriminate against those in the Eastern Province. As such, the guano management system did not really contribute towards restoring relations in the post-war reconstruction era. Furthermore, the issue of pricing and Jackson's opposition to the guano depot system remained contentious issues.

Consistent with his past behaviour, Jackson opposed the new depot system. He particularly questioned its effectiveness and, given the seasonal nature of the demand for guano and a

¹⁰⁸KAB: AMPT PUBS:CCP 1/2/1/121: Report of the Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, 1902; (G.17 – 1903)

planned expansion of storage space at the Cape Town store, he argued that the depots were an unnecessary expenditure that would soon become obsolete.¹⁰⁹ These plans, however, were not realised by the time of his death in 1904 when John Spence was appointed as the new Superintendent. Guano depots therefore remained an integral part of the Cape's agricultural landscape and the debate about its usefulness and relevance for the promotion of local agriculture, in turn, advanced the cause of farmers in general. The most significant decision that emanated from this and the continuous agitation of Cape farmers was the Colonial Government's decision on 1 January 1906 to reduce the guano price to £5 per ton. Another significant decision was to provide free rail transport of the product to any station within the boundaries of the Colony.¹¹⁰ This decision meant that for the first time all Cape farmers were treated equally, irrespective of geographical location, and went a long way towards restoring relationships. Simultaneously, the authorities decided to institute a new Commission of Inquiry into the guano trade and the depot system in 1907 to map their long-term plans for the sector.

The repeated appointment of commissions of inquiry created the impression of a government lacking a coherent strategy. However, a close analysis of the debates within the confines of the colonial legislature suggests that the Cape colonists used the commissions as a tool in an attempt to achieve political compromise between different interest groups within the ranks of colonial parliamentarians. As previously alluded to, various public representatives were also farmers in their own right and therefore had a direct interest in the further development of the local guano trade. On the other hand, their fellow parliamentarians involved in other retail and commercial activities were logically defenders of their class rights. As a result, the two groups engaged in long debates about the twin issues of lower prices and workability of state control over the trade.

The differences between those who favoured government control and price regulation and those advocating the establishment of a free market must, however, not be overstated as they

¹⁰⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS:CCP 1/2/1/126 : Report of the Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, 1903 (G.50 – 1904)

¹¹⁰KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/142: Report of the Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, 1907 (G.33. –1907)

also displayed a robust unity of purpose with regard to other equally serious matters. These included matters such as the need for uniform guano standards and equal treatment of all agricultural areas and sectors. Most of the price reductions awarded over the years mainly benefited the farmers around Cape Town and not the whole of the Colony as intended. This situation was only rectified following prolonged and sustained pressure and support from public representatives committed to serving their constituents, and forming issue-alliances and the necessary workable compromises. The issue of product standards was an outstanding matter that was to be investigated further.

Against this background, the Colonial Government's new Commission of Inquiry under the chairmanship of James Searle started their work on 24 September 1906. As previously mentioned, they were tasked with investigating the general administration and management of the guano trade including the future of depots, the feasibility of yet another price reduction, the need for product standards and the extent of chemical fertiliser use within the Colony. Of particular importance was the investigation of the effect of the personnel structure and administrative deficiencies on the price structure of guano.¹¹¹ The Commission found that that most of the administrative deficiencies with regard to staffing, provisioning and compliance with the state procedures identified by previous Commissions continued to exist under the tenure of Spence and therefore directly affected the product price. Their investigation also revealed that chemical fertilisers had been gaining popularity and could displace natural fertilisers such as guano within the foreseeable future. Proposals were thus made to ensure a uniform guano standard beneficial to most soil types and to issue certificates of analysis to assist farmers in making informed decisions on the expected benefits under the right conditions.¹¹² The Commission also recommended closing certain guano depots with the exception of those located close to guano islands or rocks in the Western and Eastern Province, which would remain functional on a temporary basis. This report and its recommendations provided the colonial government with the first scientific basis on which to formally structure and manage a sustainable Cape guano trade. The real test was to be found in its formal implementation.

¹¹¹KAB: COGH: Testimony of J.N. Jack, Guano Island Commission, September 26, 1906: 43-50

¹¹²KAB: COGH: Testimony of J.N. Jack, Guano Island Commission, September 26, 1906: 44

Early in 1907 and following directly from the Commission's work a member of the colonial legislature, Ryan, formally tabled a motion proposing that Act 5 of 1890 (*Sale of Food and Drugs and Seeds Act*) be amended to also provide for the regulation and sale of guano and other fertilisers within the boundaries of the Cape Colony.¹¹³ Based on the established needs of Cape agriculture, the House published a draft bill to give effect to Ryan's motion on 5 July 1907. This bill provided for the appointment of qualified persons as chemical analysts, trademarks and registration of product types, guarantees with regard to chemical composition and purity, regulation, contamination, prevention of price manipulation, regular analyses, and compulsory provision of samples to the authorities, raids and penalties for breaches as well as annual reporting to parliament.¹¹⁴ The stipulations of the bill clearly indicated that the colonial authorities had listened to the voices of the farming community and had learned the administrative lessons of the preceding 64 years. The bill was passed and was finally promulgated on 17 September 1907 as the *Act to Regulate the Sale of Fertilisers, Farm Foods, Seeds and Pest Remedies* (Act 20 of 1907) to herald a new era in the Cape guano trade. Of particular interest was the fact that the act made provision for a maximum prison sentence of 6 months with or without hard labour for false representations and non-compliance in the areas specified. Given the harshness of imprisonment under colonial rule and the prospect of hard labour, a meagre diet and capital punishment meant that this provision acted as a real deterrent. In terms of the Act the offending party was also compelled to compensate the plaintiff by paying all costs connected with a particular transaction, including postal and rail costs.¹¹⁵

Setting quality standards for the guano trade was, however, not enough since its availability was still dependent on continued production by certain seabirds. It was therefore also important for the Cape authorities to protect both the birds and their environment. These actions had major implications for both guano birds and nature conservation.

¹¹³KAB: COGH: Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1907: 83

¹¹⁴KAB: Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, July 5, 1907:53- 56

¹¹⁵KAB: Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, September 17, 1907: 891

5.9. Sea Bird Protection, Economic Bounty and “Preventing a Silent Wilderness”

The Cape Colony had a long interaction with and dependence on wild and domesticated animals for either food or power, to the extent that the rhythms of its social life were attuned to its relationship with animals.¹¹⁶ A broader sensitivity for the protection of the environment was, however, largely absent in the early 19th century South Africa.¹¹⁷ Van Sittert summarised the attitude of the Cape colonial elite during this time as one of environmental indifference and antipathy, manifested by the preference for exotic plants and avoidance of indigenous species.¹¹⁸ It is therefore no surprise that indigenous wild animals (including seabirds) were regarded as economic bounty, whose slaughter and exploitation were morally acceptable.¹¹⁹

The Guano Ordinance (Ordinance 4 of 1845) made payment for guano-collection mandatory and omitted any reference to the protection of seabirds, which, according to Cushman, were the most valuable birds in the 19th century world.¹²⁰ Other than declaring guano to be the property of the British monarch, it failed to explicitly declare seabirds as subjects entitled to royal favour and protection. At that point, the trade was all about mining an economic resource such as guano in the case of seabirds or feathers in the millinery trade.

Since Great Britain had never owned any guano islands that were explicitly mined to service the fertiliser industry,¹²¹ the official protection of seabirds for commercial reasons was never an issue of governance. Like other birds, seabirds were therefore regarded as legitimate objects for target shooting, a leisure past-time practised by the well-to-do in the Victorian world. In 1868, after a particularly bad season of slaughtering on the Yorkshire coast, a group

¹¹⁶W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment 1770 – 1950*, (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 7

¹¹⁷J. Carruthers, “Changing Perspectives on Wildlife in Southern Africa, C.1840 to C.1914,” *Society and Animals*, 13, no 3 (2005): 92

¹¹⁸L. Van Sittert, “From “mere weeds” and “bosjes” to a Cape floral kingdom: the re-imagining of indigenous flora at the Cape, c. 1890 – 1939”, *Kronos* 28 (November, 2002): 104

¹¹⁹ Carruthers, “Changing Perspectives on Wildlife”: 187

¹²⁰G.T. Cushman, “The most valuable birds in the world: International conservation Science and the Revival of Peru’s guano industry, 1909 – 1968, *Environmental History* 10, no. 3 (2005) <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/10.3/cushman.html>>; (December 12, 2007)

¹²¹Those Britons interested in providing products to the fertiliser market and working on home soil however found the mining of coprolite a viable alternative. See the article by Bernard O’Connor. “The Origins and Development of the British Coprolite Industry” in *Mining History*, 14, no. 5 (Summer, 2001)

of interested people under the leadership of the Reverend Henry Frederick Barnes - Lawrence, Vicar of the Priory Church of Bridlington, established the *Association for the Protection of Sea-Birds*, a broad alliance of local landowners, prominent clergyman and a number of Members of Parliament.¹²² On 26 February 1869, one of its members in the House of Commons, Christopher Sykes M.P, tabled a *Bill for the Preservation of Sea Birds* in order to give further impetus to their declared commitment. On this occasion and in support of the new legislation Sykes made two claims. Firstly, that his actions enjoyed the support of all classes of his constituents and secondly, that he was acting in the national interest (on behalf of the “thoughtless pleasure seekers” as he put it) in order to prevent the English coast from being turned into a ‘silent wilderness’.¹²³ The significance of Sykes’ actions, more than the veracity of his statements with regard to broad-based support, is the issue here. This act is significant as the first measure ever promulgated in Britain to facilitate the protection of seabirds. The motivation behind its formulation– “preventing a silent wilderness”- clearly displayed what Carruthers has called a “broader environmental sensitivity” which in turn is a pre-condition for a long-term commitment to nature conservation.¹²⁴

Although local guanopreneurs participated with the same enthusiasm and greed in stripping the islands during the rush phase of the trade, like their South American counterparts centuries earlier, they soon came to realise the value of protecting the birds and the need for the careful management of their island environment. General apathy with regard to the protection of the environment amongst this particular grouping therefore soon gave way to new conservation awareness when there was a resurgence of the trade during the late 1840s. Beinart, however, cautioned that this awareness must not be confused with protection for moral reasons. Within the idiom of mid-Victorian thinking, it would be more appropriate to refer to this approach as a realisation of the need to use the existing natural resources more wisely.¹²⁵

¹²²University of Hull Archives, “Pressure Group Archives Subject Guide: Association for the Protection of Sea Birds,” < <http://www.hull.ac.uk/arc/collection/pressuregrouparchives/apsb>; > (June 15, 2009)

¹²³House of Commons Debates (forthwith HCD), 26 February 1969, volume 194, columns 404 – 406; <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1869/feb/26/leave>>; (June 15, 2009)

¹²⁴Carruthers, “Changing Perspectives on Wildlife,”: 192

¹²⁵Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa*, 64

When Cape Town-based merchants such as De Pass, Spence & Co., Thomson Watson & Co. and Granger & Co. took control of the trade, a new approach to the exploitation of Ichaboe was adopted. In order to safeguard the resource and to prevent its further degradation, they agreed to a three-way division of the island and the implementation of a “proper season” of guano collection as well as treating the island as a nursery.¹²⁶ In addition they adopted a system of avoidance (for when the birds returned in May or June) by restricting their activities and noise to the northern side of the island whilst leaving the south side undisturbed. They even went as far as curbing the collection of penguin eggs. Once the breeding season was over, the island labour force was tasked with clearing away stones and carcasses. The protection of seabirds was thus clearly a matter of managing an economic resource for long-term prosperity.

The first indications of a greater sensitivity towards the treatment of animals in the Cape Colony became evident in the early 1880s when the colonial authorities promulgated legislation focussing on animals. The first notable piece of legislation that signalled a new direction in animal-human relations in the Cape Colony was the Police Offences Act (Act No. 27 of 1882). According to this act, discharging firearms in the vicinity of animals, their wanton irritation as well as setting dogs on other animals was prohibited. In terms of Section 5 of the Act, a maximum penalty of £2 or 30 days imprisonment could be imposed on transgressors.¹²⁷ This was followed by the promulgation of Proclamation 316 of 1891 to outlaw the wanton killing and disturbance of gannets, cormorants and penguins and which was to form part of the stipulations of the Game Act (Act 36 of 1886).¹²⁸ Transgressions were punishable by a minimum of 6 months imprisonment with the option of a fine. Although this Proclamation was only valid until 15 November 1894, it made a significant contribution towards protecting the primary guano producers. After 1894, the protection of certain classes of seabirds was further extended under the stipulations of the Fish Protection Act (Act No. 15 of 1893). This act prohibited unauthorised landing on the islands for the purposes of sealing and egg collecting. It also placed a ban on the use of firearms, nets and boats for these

¹²⁶KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/:SC. A.11 – ’61: Testimony of Capt. Sinclair, July 9, 1861: 18

¹²⁷KAB: COGH: Government Gazette: Police Offences Act (Act 27 of 1882)

¹²⁸KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/82: Memorandum on the Working of the guano islands (G.55 – ’92)

purposes.¹²⁹ In December 1893 the authorities published Proclamation No. 499 aimed specifically at the guano industry. This legislation laid down rules and regulations for the protection of seals and seabirds.¹³⁰ At the dawn of Union, Proclamation No. 498 of 1909 provided for new conditions for landing on the bird and seal islands, killing animals and handling unauthorised killing and disturbance of seals and birds.¹³¹

From the adoption of legislation aimed at protecting seabirds, it was just a short distance to the protection of birds in general as demonstrated by the promulgation of the Bird Protection Act (Act No. 42 of 1899). The Cape Parliament passed further legislation aimed at protecting a variety of animals including exotic animals, flowers and a variety of wild birds ranging from pigeons¹³² to the fiscal shrike.¹³³ The protection of the latter to a certain extent inaugurated the final shift towards protection as a moral rather than an economic imperative in the Cape Colony.

As the Cape Colony moved closer to political unification, it also became involved in diplomatic processes related to nature conservation at large. One of the more significant events that had long-term results was the *London Convention for the Preservation of Wild Birds, Fish and Animals* signed on the 19th May 1910. This convention resolved that the parliaments of all British maritime colonies should introduce legislation to give effect to the provisions of the London Convention.¹³⁴ Furthermore, four months prior to the adoption of the resolution to unify the different South African Colonies into one political entity, the United States Embassy in London invited the colonies to a discussion on a proposed *World Conference for the Conservation of Natural Resources* in the Hague. Discussions considered “the common interest of the free countries in the conservation of their natural resources”¹³⁵ and investigated ways to restore the same wherever practicable.¹³⁶ With the unification of the Cape, Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal colonies in 1910 the new political entity,

¹²⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/90: Memorandum on the working of the guano islands (G.66 – ‘94)

¹³⁰KAB: COGH: Government Gazette: Proclamation no. 499: Rules and Regulations for the Protection of Seals and Seabirds, December 27, 1893

¹³¹KAB: COGH: Government Gazette: Proclamation No. 498 of 1909, 30/11/1909

¹³²KAB: COGH: Act no. 22 of 1907: Protection of Wild Birds Act as amended

¹³³KAB: Municipality of Cape Town: 3/CT: 4/1/1/51: Under Secretary of Agriculture – Town Clerk of Cape Town, 26/09/1903

¹³⁴AGR 452/3298: Convention for the Preservation of Wild Birds, Fish and Animals

¹³⁵GH 1/501:69; Department of State, Washington; 18/03/1909

¹³⁶GH 1/501:69; Department of State, Washington; 19/02/1909

“South Africa”, inherited a keen awareness of the need to conserve and restore her natural resources. Under Article 85 (X) of the South Africa Act, the protection of fish and game became a provincial matter. In addition, it formally became part of the fishing industry.

5.10. Conclusion

The reorientation of the Cape guano trade to serve the interests of local capitalist-orientated farming was the result of deliberate political action by farmer-politicians acting in conjunction with their constituency in the face of stiff resistance by guanopreneurs. Cape farmers initially lacked a sophisticated understanding of both plant and fertiliser science and continued the time-honoured practice of fertilising their lands using kraal manure. As they acquired greater insight and understanding and became acquainted with the efficacy of both natural and chemical fertilisers, they began to demand access to cheap guano. Due to the relative weakness of the existing farmers’ organisations in both the Eastern and Western Province of the Colony and the export-orientation of the local guano trade, market forces however dominated. For more than four decades this left farmers at the mercy of private suppliers, most of whom held long-term leases over the guano islands and were therefore able to charge high prices. The situation only started to change when the individual voices of concerned agriculturalists were replaced by the collective voice of new political and economic interest organisations such as the South African Farmers Protection Association/*Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging*, the Lower Albany Farmers Association and the Knysna Political Organization. When some of these organisations merged with others with a clear political mandate and their representatives were elected into public office (e.g. *Afrikaner Bond & Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging*), the tide began to turn for the Cape farming community. This led to the first act on the road towards a state-managed industry, namely the adoption of Resolution 2 of 1889 by the colonial parliament which placed control of all the guano islands back in the hands of the colonial state.

Establishing a government-controlled industry, however, proved equally difficult. Lacking administrators with sufficient in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of the trade, the authorities took the right decision to employ industry veterans to structure its operations. However, they failed to ensure that the appointment of its chief administrator, the Cape Guano Agent, conformed to the standard rules and regulations applicable to the colonial

administration. As a result Captain Jackson, the designated appointee and a veteran of the trade and businessman in his own right, succeeded in negotiating an employment deal that differed entirely from that of his counterparts in other colonial departments. In addition to a free hand in organising the affairs of the Guano Agency, he was offered a commission and could deduct all expenses incurred in this process. Acting as a guanopreneur rather than a state official, Jackson effectively turned the Agency and the Guano Islands Division into his own private business and resisted any attempts to effect lower prices, provide affordable transport and equitable distribution to all regions of the Colony of a highly sought-after agricultural product. To compound matters further, the department and his political principals failed to effectively oversee both his administrative and political role – much to the detriment of the farming community. Jackson could therefore refuse discounts, price reductions, credit and methods of payment. He treated clients in an off-hand manner and answered only to himself. This angered both organised farming and their political representatives and provided a new impetus to their struggle for fair and equitable access.

As a result of political pressure on their political representatives, the position of Guano Agent was abolished and a new department led by a Superintendent of Government Guano Islands was created that was fully bureaucratised and conformed to the standard rules of the colonial service. The fight between Jackson and his employers, like that of J.O. Smith and De Pass, therefore literally became the last stand of the guanopreneurs against the full appropriation of guano income by the colonial state. The death of Jackson in 1904 and his replacement by Captain Spence in terms of the new dispensation effectively brought this phase of the struggle to its end. The institution of lower prices, a system of decentralised depots, statutory quality standards and the legislative protection of seabirds following the death of Jackson therefore represent the final steps in prioritising the interests of Cape farmers.

CHAPTER 6

A 'SALTY' AND PRECARIOUS ATMOSPHERE – GUANO LABOUR RELATIONS DURING THE CAPE AND ICHABOE GUANO TRADE, 1843 – 1910

6.1. Introduction

The profits of contractors, merchants and the state amassed during the 19th century guano trade was dependent on the extraction of the physical labour of large numbers of men of different nationalities. Indeed, it represents the first crucial acts of the industry.¹ The changing nature of labour relations within the guano trade was a critically important aspect of the development of the trade itself. Previous studies have pointed out the role of the trade in the formulations of new labour identities such as 'guanopreneurs,' 'coolies', and 'kanakas'(native Hawaiians). In essence, most of these are both designative and pejorative terms. Firstly, they describe a low status class of worker and secondly, they are racial terms referring to certain groups of workers, either non-white or from Asian origins. The term 'coolie' in particular over time also acquired a transnational character.² This has prompted Balachandran to describe 'coolie' as essentially indicative of "a social relationship rather than merely a figure, person or term, even perhaps as the characteristic relationship between labour and capital outside a relatively small part of the west".³ Given the power relationships and labour practices prevalent in the trade, this has also prompted Phillips to describe the trade as 'a new form of slavery.'⁴ The struggle of the labour force (both sea and non-sea labour) against the dictates of the various labour regimes can therefore be viewed from three perspectives. Firstly, it is essentially viewed as a struggle against 'coolification'; secondly, as

¹W.M. Mathew, "A primitive export sector": 51.

²M. Jung, "Outlawing "Coolies": Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation." *American Quarterly* 57, no. 33 (September, 2005)

³G. Balachandran, "Producing Coolies,(Un)making Workers: A (post) Colonial Parable for the Contemporary Present." <http://hei.unige.ch/sections/hp/Documents/Balachandran_producing%20Coolies.pdf> (November 2, 2009)

⁴Phillips, "British slavery after abolition: the Pacific trade": 13

an attempt at the unmaking of the free worker⁵ and finally, as a fight to restore the masculinity of the men involved.⁶ As such, worker resistance also referred to acts aimed at mitigating or denying claims made on labourers as a class of subordinates as well as to advance their own claims *vis-à-vis* those superordinate classes.⁷

This chapter argues that private businessmen and government functionaries involved in the Cape and Ichaboe guano trade established an exploitative and coercive labour regime motivated by profit considerations and characterised by the use of practices transferred from a variety of sectors, including mining and the broader fishing sector. These included practices such as deferred wages, rationing and rigid contract enforcement. This chapter will show, however, that guano diggers did not accept these practices passively. Indeed, they actively resisted their exploitation and marginalisation based on their own developing worldview and growing understanding of their rights, particularly their rights as British citizens. In this struggle, they made skilful use of both public forms of protests such as mutinies and everyday forms of resistance such as desertion, short-term strikes, theft and media exposés. Their actions will be contextualised within the larger transnational maritime sector. In addition, it will be shown how their struggle coincided with that of the colonial farmers (described in the previous chapter) and collectively led to the full bureaucratisation of the guano trade and the monopolisation of the trade for the benefit of the colonial agriculture.

Although the Cape trade shared commonalities with the international trade, it also exhibited local idiosyncrasies. The nature and organisation of the Cape and Ichaboe trade and associated labour regime were fundamentally influenced by the location and natural features of the offshore islands on which exploitation was centred, the nature of guano labour itself and its cost structure.

⁵Balachandran, "Producing Coolies,(Un)making Workers": 1

⁶J.D. Glasco, "The sailor feels Him-self a man." *International Labor and Working-class History* 66 (Fall, 2004)

⁷J.C. Scott, "Resistance without Protest and without Organization: Peasant Opposition to the Islamic Zukat and the Christian Tithes," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no. 3 (July, 1987): 419

6.2. Cost Structure, Guano Collection and the Nature of the Work Environment

Guano mining is essentially a speculative activity since it deals with collecting and trading a finite product of varying quality, depending on its location. Its potency and price were determined by the correct combination of phosphate, ammonia and other chemical elements essential for the promotion of plant growth. The most effective way for guanopreneurs to mine a low-grade and finite product was to work the islands or portions thereof as individual “business” units and to position themselves as individual small producers. This method of operation was similar in approach to the *modus operandi* adopted by 19th century investors in scattered low-grade gold deposit mining since it required a small capital outlay which was also a much more practical way of cutting costs and ensuring profitability.⁸

The mining of guano on offshore islands in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans during the 19th century has been described as an essentially primitive industry based on an assessment of its primary extraction techniques, size, remuneration and its general labour practices.⁹ As a natural product with no further need for processing, the physical collection of the guano chunks was the primary task of guano workers. They had the aid of basic tools such as crowbars, spades and wheel-barrows. They also bagged and loaded it on board ship. Working offshore with inadequate or even absent mooring facilities and equally hazardous loading equipment meant that labour crews were engaged in an extremely dangerous work. In order to aid their loading, the guano diggers constructed numerous improvisations such as a swinging platform and a primitive railway system similar to those used on the Peruvian islands and Isle de Mona in the Caribbean.¹⁰ The use of primitive and improvised technology further heightened the sense of danger that came to be associated with the task. Island crews were frequently also dependent on favourable weather conditions to effectively execute their task. Guano-collection was therefore often a slow, long-winded and frustrating process.¹¹ To top it all, diggers were burdened by the omnipresent and extremely unpleasant stench of the

⁸C. Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900 – 1933* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), 21

⁹Mathew, “A primitive export sector”: 35

¹⁰E.F. Frank, “History of the Guano Mining Industry, Isla De Mona, Puerto Rico.” *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* 60, no. 2 (August, 1998)

¹¹Ex Member, “The African guano trade”: 623

centuries-old excrement. Due to guano's high ammonia content, workers suffered from constant bleeding of the eyes and nostrils as a result of direct exposure to the dust. Nose-bleeding was also one of the tell-tale signs of scurvy,¹² meaning its occurrence could easily been mistaken for the onset of the dreaded disease.

Contemporary witnesses described the Namib coast where the first phase of the African guano trade started in 1843 as a 'healthy' (unpolluted) but harsh living and working environment, "one monotonous unvaried scene of bleak barren rocks, or arid sand hills, not a particle of vegetation anywhere appearing to relieve the prospect."¹³ The islands themselves were described as "bleak, barren, and unpromising beyond description" with the "desolation of the scene being completed by the angry surf which with ceaseless and depressing rhythms rolls in upon the shore."¹⁴ The Captain of the *Nautilus* who visited Angra Pequena during the late eighteenth century remarked "it is much to be lamented that so fine a harbour, as Pequena should be formed by such a barren, unfruitful soil, apparently doomed to everlasting sterility".¹⁵ This left one in no doubt about the general state of the environment of these exploitation zones. Earlier efforts from a range of visitors to drill for fresh water both at Angra Pequena and the mainland up to the 1840s produced only salt and brackish water.¹⁶ Working and living under such desolate conditions meant that survival under such circumstances depended entirely on the availability of a boat and an adequate supply of fresh drinking water. These items thus became priceless commodities and key tools of extraction in the continuous exploitation of the various islands.

Although the Cape colonial islands were relatively closer to Cape Town and civilisation, they were still located in a relatively underdeveloped territory that lacked basic mooring facilities and an adequate fresh water supply. Low and irregular rainfall and a lack of watering places on the islands meant that water had to be imported in wooden casks from Cape Town. The transportation and preservation of the water supply to the islands, however, posed its own

¹²C. Gordon, "Scurvy and Anson's Voyage round the World: 1740 – 1744 An analysis of the Royal Navy's Worst Outbreak," *The American Neptune* XLIV no. 3 (Summer, 1984):157

¹³Ex Member, "The African guano trade": 641

¹⁴W.S. Fletcher, "The African Guano Islands," *The Cape Illustrated Magazine*, September, 1897, 21

¹⁵J. Kinahan, "The historical archeology of nineteenth century fisheries at Sandwich Harbour on the Namib coast." *Cimbebasia* 13 (1991): 39

¹⁶Ex Member, "The African guano trade": 648

challenges. En route to the islands on a leaky ship and in the process of being conveyed by raft to the mainland, it became spoiled.¹⁷ Furthermore, after being in the casks for an extended period, it became undrinkable. Although workers eventually became used to the stinky smell, they generally detested it. Most were therefore in favour of replacing the wooden casks with either cement or iron tanks. In the period immediately preceding the era of government control, the crews designed a system of sun condensators to augment their limited supply and to overcome their immediate supply problem. The innovation was however only partly effective given the problem of regular foggy weather and strong winds, meaning that they could not produce enough to provide for all their needs on a continuous basis.¹⁸ Under emergency conditions, Guano crews on the different islands were effectively left with no other option but to boil seawater for a sufficient potable supply.¹⁹ Given the rocky surface of most of the islands, sinking wells was never an option. This heightened the sense of precariousness that characterised the African guano work environment from the outset.

Another key challenge was the regular provisioning of the offshore islands. Given the harsh and generally semi-arid nature of the Namib coast and the general lack of resources to sustain human life on most of the islands, most of the necessities such as fresh food and water had to be imported from Cape Town. This long-distance arrangement presented its own particular challenges. According to calculations made by Robert Granger, one of the former guano island leaseholders, the estimated cost for maintaining a workforce on the islands varied between £60 - £70 per year (salaries and provisions included).²⁰ This included the provision of basic foodstuffs such as salted meat, biscuits, flour, Indian meal, beans, peas, barley, Chinese tea, coffee, sugar, lime juice, vinegar as well as fresh and preserved vegetables (potatoes, cabbage, carrots etc.) and meat. Fresh vegetables and limejuice, which were considered critical for the prevention of scorbutic, were also sourced from Cape Town. Its availability was therefore also subject to the vagaries of the prevailing weather and sea conditions and the general conditions aboard ship. Food storage in particular was affected and

¹⁷ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt Burr, 22/7/1897

¹⁸ KAB: AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Kaiser, 30/7/1897

¹⁹ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of C. Miller, 22/7/1897

²⁰ KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – '61: Testimony of R. Granger: 65

proved to be problematic as there was nothing that anybody could have done to prevent fresh bread from turning mouldy or becoming filled with maggots or meat becoming rotten.²¹

The isolation of the island existence was further aggravated by the lack of access to reliable medical care to relieve the negative results of both the climatic conditions along the coast and the aches and pains of actual physical labour. The constant damp weather and dew along the desert coast of South West Africa added to the misery by causing colds and sore throats as well as rheumatism and agues (a fever or shivering fit).²² Where medicine was available on board ship, it was generally transported as part of the general stores, which were inadequately stored in wooden chests.²³ As a result, it was susceptible to spoilage from leaky hulls and infestation by rats and vermin.²⁴ Furthermore, there were generally no manuals at hand for the proper dispensing of medicine, nor were there any surgical instruments in case of emergencies or a regular supply of fresh water for cleaning wounds and sores.²⁵ Bandages to cover and dress wounds were in short supply. Crews were forced to use any available materials including pieces of their own clothing or old flour bags for this purpose.²⁶ Despite the ever-present possibility of collapsing guano heaps and the problem of broken bones, splints were hardly ever available. As an emergency measure, the pieces of a kerosene case had to serve the purpose.²⁷ The general condition of both the surgeon's mess and sick berth (especially the lack of recuperation space on some ships), were further cause of concern. Life on a damp and dirty ship, coupled with a lack of healthy food, fresh water and the general non-availability and ineffectiveness of anti-scorbutic and other medicines for a range of heterogeneous diseases exacerbated the existing hazards.²⁸ In addition, hard physical labour and concomitant illness, physical and emotional stress and prolonged lack of fresh food predisposed the ship's crew to bouts of scurvy.²⁹ At the most, shipping crews had to rely on

²¹ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of M. Pietersen, 22/7/1897

²² Kinahan, "The historical archeology of nineteenth century fisheries": 35

²³ KAB: AGR 667:0000; Guano Island Commission of 1897: Evidence of Captain Burr, 21/7/1897

²⁴ Gordon, "Scurvy and Anson's Voyage round the World": 159

²⁵ KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 2/2/1/76: Report and Papers of the Commission of Inquiry into the management of the Government Guano Islands, July – August 1897 (C.10 – '98), Testimony of A. John Gregory – Medical Report: 22

²⁶ KAB: AGR 667:0000; Guano Island Commission of 1897: Evidence of J. Fletcher

²⁷ KAB: AGR 667:0000; Guano Island Commission of 1897: Evidence of Captain Burr, 21/7/1897

²⁸ D.P. Thomas, "Sailors, scurvy and science," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 90 (January, 1997): 51

²⁹ Gordon, "Scurvy and Anson's Voyage round the World": 155

limited and dubious medical services from individuals such as an Irishman who practiced medicine from a cave in Saldanha Bay at a tariff of £5-0-0 per ship.³⁰ The situation was, however, far worse along the Namib coast with no medical services nearby. Guano crews were, therefore, generally dependent on a medicine chest containing the bare necessities. As late as the 1890s, it was common to find nothing more than a little castor oil and some salts in kits of this nature.³¹ Given its geographical distance from civilisation and its associated hazards, guano employment can therefore rightly be described as precarious, characterised by starvation, long work hours, fatigue, poor nutrition and disease.³²

6.3. Guano Speculation and the Ad Hoc Labour Regime, 1843 – 1845

The foundation of the first labour regime of the African guano trade was laid by the shipmasters that participated in the Ichaboe Rush during the period 1843 – 1845. Their actions and involvement in what was effectively a speculative venture laid the foundation for a coercive labour relations regime and its associated practices that dominated the management of local trade for nearly sixty years up to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. From the outset and for a major part of the era beyond the rush phase, sailors on the sea were the primary source of labour for the collection and loading of guano. Their ranks were supplemented by additional groups of non-seamen who worked under the supervision of supercargoes to speed up the loading of specially chartered ships. This situation closely mirrored the situation in Peru during the early to late 1820s where sailors initially also constituted the bulk of the labour force before being replaced by imported Chinese workers and the establishment of a system of coolie or temporary contract labour.

Sailors on European ships or of European descent were recruited in a variety of ways and their conditions of employment were regulated by law and enforced by the courts. Typically, as had been the case in most international ports, seamen were recruited from the ranks of

³⁰Burman & Levin, *The Saldanha Bay Story*, 95

³¹KAB:AGR 667:0000, Guano Island Commission of 1897: Evidence of J. Ployer, 30/7/1897

³²M. Quinlan, “We’ve been down this road before: Evidence on the Health Consequences of Precarious Employment in Industrial Societies, 1840 – 1920,” (paper delivered at the Inaugural Conference of the Academic Association of Historians in Australian and New Zealand Business Schools (AAHANZBS), University of Sydney, December 14-15, 2009), 2

deserters or the unemployed and wanted to escape from society in general.³³ All that the shipmaster had to do was to give notice of his need for new recruits. Therefore, it wasn't surprising that some individuals ended up working on the guano islands after responding to the shouts of recruiters while "standing about the jetty with some mate".³⁴ Due to the fact that a fair number of recruits were out of work and "hard-up", they were generally not in a position to negotiate a reasonable wage.³⁵ Most were also shipped wearing only the clothes they had on. At the same time, the recruiters divulged very little information about the exact nature of the labour requirements of guano collection or about the expected living conditions on the islands. This strategic silence was also common to the mining industry.³⁶ The guano industry took it one step further by failing to disclose any information about life or resources on the islands or the adjoining mainland. In accordance with their general contracts or articles of agreement, shipping crews were supposed to load and discharge all cargo if required - an "odious task".³⁷ Furthermore, it was expected that seamen demonstrated an unquestioned obedience to the shipmaster. These mechanisms effectively made seamen cheap labour, shipmasters "masters next to God"³⁸ and the ship a workplace that alienated and disempowered.³⁹

6.4. "Masters Next to God"

On top of offering dangerous working conditions and meagre remuneration, some shipmasters treated their crews dishonestly and thought nothing of deferring their payments or even resorting to non-payment. Although they exchanged promissory notes as surety for the work to be done, most of these agreements were never honoured to the great disadvantage of the sailor or 'digger'.⁴⁰ This was, however, not surprising within the context of the 19th century maritime industry (or the mining industry for that matter) which guano collection inadvertently became part of. According to Witt, the various maritime laws, unwritten

³³ KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A. 11 - '61: Testimony of Sheperd, 5

³⁴ KAB:AGR 667:0000, Guano Island Commission of 1897- Evidence: Testimony of Charles Miller, 22/7/ 1897

³⁵ KAB:AGR 667:0000, Guano Island Commission of 1897- Evidence: Testimony of T.H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

³⁶ Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 98

³⁷ J. Fingard. "The Decline of the sailor as a ship labourer in the 19th century timber ports." *Labour / Le Travail* 2, 1977: 42

³⁸ Witt, "Master next to God?"- The merchant captain": 237

³⁹ A. Parnaby. "The many motivations of Jack Tar", Review Essay, available from <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lt/62/parnaby.html> > 2008, (April 21,2010)

⁴⁰ Craig, "The African guano trade":48

practices and accepted traditions prevalent in the shipping trade empowered shipmasters to the extent that they virtually became “masters next to God” and were thus able to act at will. This was further aggravated by the fact that the guano rush took place in the midst of a shipping recession, with a large number of European sailors out of work. Those sailors that were lucky to be employed therefore found themselves at the mercy of their shipmasters and at the receiving end of ill-disguised attempts to turn them into cheap and irregularly paid labour or ‘coolies’. To add insult to injury, contracted labourers hired by certain shipping companies working under the supervision of supercargoes to fast-track collection and loading of freight were better remunerated as day workers (at a rate of 3s-5d).⁴¹

These incidents, especially the deferment of wages, collectively represented a serious attack on the ability of seamen to negotiate as free workers and prompted them to act. The strategy of wage deferment has been used successfully by speculative entrepreneurs in the mining industry for reasons of profitability and in the hope of reducing the risk of desertion by withholding the workers’ wages or in the hope of a financial windfall from the enterprise.⁴² Whatever the motivation behind its use, some sailors revolted and refused to work. Others chose the route of desertion and became free agents. Contracted to some of the supercargoes they worked as day workers at a much improved wage rate. The latter action is ironic since the average guano digger generally detested the negative aspects of the job. It is, however, consistent with the experience in Canadian timber ports where sailors actually deserted their ships to join the ranks of the shore labourers in order to utilise the higher paid opportunities offered by shore cargo handling. This action also conforms to the observation by Fingard that when it suited them, “work that sailors loathed as articulated seamen, they found quite palatable in small doses as hired labour.”⁴³ It also set the stage for a range of other similar actions such as the full-scale mutiny and the establishment of a ‘guano workers republic’ on the island of Ichaboe in March/April 1844 and an uprising at Malgas Island during 1845.

The act of establishing a republic, even if only a guano one, represents an extreme act of symbolic or ideological resistance against the attempt to relegate guano labour indefinitely to

⁴¹Craig, “The African guano trade”:45

⁴²Van Onselen, “Chibaro: African Mine Labour”: 100

⁴³Fingard, “The Decline of the sailor as a ship labourer”: 38 - 39

an inferior economic and ritual position.⁴⁴ By deliberately constituting themselves as a political community and forcefully asserting their rights as citizens of their own (guano island) community, the rebelling seaman displayed what Scott has termed “a discovery of class-consciousness”.⁴⁵ Thus far from merely attempting to re-appropriate the product of their labour, it was firstly a clear expression of their particular world view;⁴⁶ secondly a radical critique of the existing arrangements⁴⁷ and thirdly, actions aimed at reclaiming their status as men of worth and free labourers. Furthermore, actions such as these where sailors fight both a war for economic redress above (and off) deck but also a interclass war with their social and political leaders based on political equality of all, represents a new and different vision of manhood, namely one where there is no special privilege for the ruling classes.⁴⁸ British sailors in particular had for a long time been engaged in a struggle to elevate their own social status as humans and to claim their rights as British citizens. The prevalent attitude of seamen as “inhabitants of the imperial periphery” according to Land meant they were not considered “worthy of the guarantees associated with metropolitan freedom (‘British liberty’).”⁴⁹ In the same vein, they argued that irrespective of where they thus found themselves, they were not only entitled to be treated like true Britons with full rights but, should also not be governed like (Black) slaves. From this perspective, by deferring wages and paying on a lower scale employers were in reality infringing on their civil rights and citizenship and, by implication, undermining their humanity and status as free workers.

Despite the legitimacy of their actions, the rebelling seamen were still contracted maritime labour subjected to particular maritime laws. As far as the members of the Committee Of Shipmasters & Others were concerned, the sailors-turned-guanopreneurs and guano republicans were engaged in acts of guano theft.⁵⁰ Similarly, their defiance of the colonial juridical authority at Saldanha Bay during the mutiny on Malgas Island during the course of

⁴⁴J.C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (New Haven & London:Yale University Press, 1985), 235

⁴⁵Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 297

⁴⁶L. Van Sittert. *Labour, Capital and the State in the St. Helena Bay Fisheries c. 1856- c.1956*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis,(University of Cape Town, 1992), 57

⁴⁷ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 339

⁴⁸J.D. Glasco. “The Seaman Feels Him-self a Man.” *International Labor and Working – Class History* 66 (Fall, 2004): 47

⁴⁹I. Land, “Customs of the Sea: Flogging, Empire, and the ‘True British Seaman’ 1770 – 1870,” *Interventions* 3, no. 4 (August, 2001): 169 - 185

⁵⁰Ex Member, “The African guano trade”: 636

1845 could also not be tolerated. In order to deal effectively with the acts of desertion, which in many cases also involved theft, ship captains turned to the Cape Colonial authorities for assistance. According to various reports in the *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*, deserters from some of the guano ships were either sentenced to short periods of imprisonment and a spare diet of rice and water or discharged from duty. In cases where there were additional charges such as theft of a boat, additional punishment was imposed. Those that refused to work on board were sentenced to either one month imprisonment or a restricted diet or had the indignity and displeasure of being placed back on board ship when it was ready to leave port.⁵¹ In addition, the accused individuals were also dispatched to appear in Court before the Resident Magistrate.⁵² It is interesting to note that most of the penalties meted out showed very little variation and were not particularly harsh. This may have to do with the fact that experienced and skilled seamen were a real asset and not easy to replace. Further reports also indicated that offences such as drunkenness and insolent behaviour such as using foul, abusive and threatening language with a ship's officer were stamped out with the assistance of the law machinery of the Cape Colony. It was common for ship's officers to leave recalcitrant seamen in an open boat out in the unpredictable ocean or use physical punishment as a means to break the spirit of resistance and to obtain submissiveness.⁵³ In certain instances, deserters were shipped to St. Helena Island and forced to pay their own passage.⁵⁴ This action was heavy, given the fact that the ordinary seamen had very little spare money and were mostly indebted to the shipmaster. According to Scott, the use of penalties such as restricted diets, arrest, payment of own passage or discharge served as boundary markers to contain open protest and defiance and collectively constituted a regime of routine repression aimed at sowing fear rather than spreading terror.⁵⁵ Seamen therefore might be inconvenienced by these measures, which are preferable to naked terror or capital punishment. Furthermore, the physical presence of the naval authorities at both Ichaboe and Malgas Island assisted in restoring order and enabling their final stripping. As the rush phase of the African guano trade ended during the late 1840s, it was clear that guano labour, though

⁵¹ *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*, March 28, 1845

⁵² *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*, April 25, 1845

⁵³ L. Green, *Panther Head* (Cape Town: Stanley Paul & Co, 1955), 229

⁵⁴ Ex Member, "The African guano trade": 625

⁵⁵ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 277

cheap, was far from docile. European workers in particular were well aware of their rights and had a clear view of their place in the broader scheme of things. These became critical factors in the further evolution of the guano labour regime under the leasehold and government system.

6.5. Guano Harvesting and the Seasonal Labour Regime; 1847 – 1890

Those entrepreneurs acquainted with the cyclical or seasonal nature of the guano trade continued to monitor the state of the resource on the various African islands in the aftermath of the guano rushes. Those with experience of the Peruvian trade in particular were also aware that an adequate supply of guano would eventually become available for harvesting again. An important requirement, however, was the need to protect the guano-producing birds from human disturbance and destruction. Central to this was the need to restrict access to the islands and prevent any potential rivals from getting their hands on the resource. Such an approach and a system of seasonal harvesting had implications for the further exploitation of the African guano islands and its associated labour regime.

With the first signs of a freshly replenished guano resource, the Liverpool firm of Gibson, Linton & Co. monopolised Ichaboe in 1847. To safeguard their interests, they appointed a supervisor/foreman for the collection and loading crew on the island.⁵⁶ He supervised loading and the general activities of the manual labour crew and maintained the general peace on the island. Since the company was engaged in a speculative venture, it continued in the same vein as its predecessors by handling guano as a finite and once-off resource to be stripped within the shortest possible time. The practice of using seamen as diggers was therefore maintained. As a result of a combination of factors as outlined in Chapter 3, by 1850 control over Ichaboe, the prime source of African guano, had passed into the hands of Cape businessmen such as Robert Granger, Aaron and Elias de Pass, and Seawright & Co.

Having no better system for the exploitation of the island, the new monopolists adopted the same system of guano-digging by using a workforce of seasonal manual labourers under the

⁵⁶KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – '61: Testimony of T. Boyce: 9

supervision of a European Headman. In addition to supervision of work operations, the Headman typically was tasked with receiving and controlling the island stores, maintaining a daily logbook, recruiting additional local labour, communicating with Head Office and overseeing the general well-being of his charges. In this regard he was authorised to procure fresh provisions such as meat from the mainland and to distribute it amongst the islands.⁵⁷ Those appointed as Headmen were generally chosen from the ranks of the most experienced seamen available. Nevertheless, Anthony Chimato and Anthony Roderick (Possession Island) and John Nivallo (Halifax Island) were illiterate and had to appoint assistants or writers/clerks to help them with key tasks such as maintaining logbooks and inventories and issuing and recording of provisions from the general store.⁵⁸ Instead of a fixed wage, Headmen worked on a commission basis and earned an additional gratuity based on the loading speed of the workforce under their supervision.⁵⁹ In addition, they could earn between six pence (6d) and one shilling per ton, depending on the agreement with the monopoly holder.⁶⁰ This was further supplemented by a concession that allowed them to engage in sealing for their own account in their spare time.⁶¹

To ensure an adequate labour supply, as previously indicated, men were recruited in Cape Town from the ranks of deserters, the unemployed and those who wanted to escape from colonial society. Among the ranks, a later government commission found carpenters, a former barrister, electrical worker⁶² and a former worker in the Harbour Engineers Office,⁶³ indicating the diverse nature of the guano digging population. Even prisoners with the option of a fine were recruited from the Roeland Street Prison by paying their fine in exchange for a 12 month guano contract.⁶⁴ Contemporary reports painted a picture of a recruiting system essentially geared towards securing as cheap a labour force as possible as long as they were physically fit.

⁵⁷KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 - Evidence: Evidence of J.E. Sayer, 30/7/1897

⁵⁸KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 - Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 22/7/1897

⁵⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – '61: Testimony of J. Spence: 25

⁶⁰KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – '61: Testimony of J. Sheperd: 7

⁶¹KAB: AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 - Evidence: Testimony of J. Ployer, 30/7/1897

⁶²KAB: AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897: Evidence of W. Fieldman, 30/7/1897

⁶³KAB: AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897: Evidence of T.H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

⁶⁴Green, *Panther Head*, 23

Working as the day labourers, guano scrapers earned an average wage of £2 per month.⁶⁵ They could earn an extra three pence (3d) per ton depending on the loading speed. Furthermore, the remuneration package of the labour force was supplemented by water and food rations.⁶⁶ As a general rule, a remuneration system of monthly “half pay notes” was used whereby half of the wages due to workers were left in Cape Town and the rest could be used to order goods and other conveniences, which were transported to the islands duty-free.⁶⁷ The worker was therefore able to leave the islands having secured some savings from his labour. The ‘half-pay’ system was, however, also a valuable control mechanism to ensure a regular labour supply. By withholding a portion of their wages, deserters faced losing a significant amount in accumulated earnings. This prospect thus served as an important deterrent for desertion and effectively forced guano labourers to see their contract out.

The system of deferred wages was supplemented by extending credit to the workforce. Collectively, it also strengthened the labour control system constructed by the major leaseholders. Most of the men who joined the guano service had very few worldly possessions. The employer also provided nothing more than food and accommodation. Basic items such as basins, towels, soap, matches and blankets as well as non-food products such as tobacco had to be procured by workers themselves from the ship’s or company’s store.⁶⁸ This left them open to exploitation by the employer, their supervisors (Headmen) and suppliers from elsewhere. De Pass, Spence & Co., one of the major guano leaseholders, ran a store on the mainland near Angra Pequena. This provided the only possible alternative for provisioning in the case of non-delivery by any of the others companies. The company guarded this monopoly jealously and publicly declared that they regarded this particular service as their personal domain.⁶⁹ It was thus standard practice for them to charge visiting ships one shilling for every ton of guano provided before they could be provisioned.⁷⁰ De Pass defended himself against critics by claiming that he provided a necessary service to abandoned seaman left to their own devices. With no alternative, his critics had to maintain

⁶⁵KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – ’61: Testimony of B. Sinclair: 19

⁶⁶KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – ’61: Testimony of B. Sinclair: 25

⁶⁷KAB: AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Kaiser, 30/7/1897

⁶⁸KAB: AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 22/7/1897

⁶⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – ’61: Testimony of R. Granger: 64

⁷⁰KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/1/9: SC. A.11 – ’61: Testimony of A. De Pass: 65

their relationship with the De Pass firm. Far removed from other alternative suppliers, workers were left with very little choice. It literally became an issue of paying up or having your ablutions with nothing but a salt water guano bath or the yolk of penguin eggs instead of soap.⁷¹ This led George Fry, a guano digger on Possession Island, to lament: “we almost live in a salt atmosphere here; we have to wash ourself & our clothes in salt water, and eat salt provisions.”⁷²

Realising the worth of alcohol and tobacco in controlling the workforce, the employer permitted a very limited and strictly rationed amount of alcohol controlled by the Headman on the islands. The employers also provided a dedicated and appropriate amount for this purpose whereas a regular supply of tobacco could be procured from either the ship’s storeroom or from the De Pass establishment on the mainland.⁷³ This was particularly necessary as a means to provide relief from the isolated existence and unpleasant living and working conditions on the offshore islands. Since alcohol was in short supply and with no real recreational activities, reading matter or games to relieve their boredom, it was therefore not surprising that some workers resorted to drinking friar’s balsam, paregoric and other medical remedies with an alcoholic basis.⁷⁴ Overall, according to guano digger J.H. Mitchell, the islands were a “wretched placed for men to live at.”⁷⁵

Guano labour force resistance to their working conditions was effectively thwarted by the guano island leaseholder’s use of a combination of measures and factors, especially the personal circumstances of workers and a combination of civil law (contracts) and criminal law (“prosecution for vagrancy and deviance from a orderly life on and off the job”).⁷⁶ As previously mentioned, like their sailor counterparts, seasonal labourers had no better economic opportunities or options and were generally not in a position to negotiate a reasonable wage.⁷⁷ Most also had nowhere else to go or “nowhere within reach of their

⁷¹KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of T.H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

⁷²KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of G. Fry 30/7/1897

⁷³KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 22/7/1897

⁷⁴Anonymous, *Chambers Journal*, (1897): 358

⁷⁵KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J.H. Mitchell, 30/7/1897

⁷⁶F. Cooper, “The state and agricultural labour: Zanzibar after slavery” in *Working Papers in Southern African Studies* 3, ed. D.C. Hindson (Braamfontein: Ravan Press), 2-3

⁷⁷KAB:AGR 667:0000, Guano Island Commission of 1897- Evidence: Testimony of T.H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

limited or non-existent capital resources that could offer better prospects of work than they already had.”⁷⁸ Those that were recruited with the assistance of crimps and other middlemen/intermediaries as stock-in-trade labour⁷⁹ were just as stuck, given their debts to their sponsors. Furthermore, the Masters and Servants Act adopted in 1873 by the first Responsible Government outlawed ‘careless work’, bad language or ‘neglect’ and absence from work and made provision for short periods of imprisonment and fines in case of defiance of the employers order.⁸⁰ The guano labourers seemingly found themselves in what Bittermann in a different context has labelled as an “inescapable conundrum”.⁸¹

Through the skilful use of these mechanisms, the Ichaboe monopolists and Colonial leaseholders succeeded in establishing a workable though low-cost infrastructure and management system for the continuous and effective exploitation of guano. This served them well for more than 40 years until the system was taken over by the Colonial Government in 1890. In comparison to the rush era, the leaseholder years were characterised by a more subtle but equally effective system of systematic control through deferred wages, credit, provisioning control and more flexibility in labour management. As a result guano workers were more inclined to endure the hardship of their workplace and living environment. By the end of the 1880s, however, the inherent deficiencies of this system slowly began to show and under the influence of a new extractive regime, were unable to contain the growing unhappiness of the seasonal guano labour force. These events form the subject of the discussion in the next section.

6.6. Costs, Commissions, and the Colonial Guano Management System, 1890 – 1910

Following Legislative Council Resolution 2 of 2 July 1889, the Department of Crown Lands & Public Works (DCLPW) appointed Captain C.H. Jackson on a commission-basis as Government Guano to handle the operational responsibility of managing the Cape guano

⁷⁸ V. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press), 96.

⁷⁹ S. Newton-King, “The labour market of the Cape Colony, 1807 – 28” in *Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa*, ed. S Marks, & A Atmore, (New York: Longman), 182

⁸⁰ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 94

⁸¹ R. Bitterman, “The hierarchy of the soil: Land and labour in a 19th century Cape Breton community” *Acadiensis* XVIII no. 1 (March, 1988): 43

trade. This model was essentially aimed at reducing operational costs by eliminating all possible intermediaries from the process in order to provide an affordable product for Cape farmers as outlined in the previous chapter. At the same time, given the nature of his contract Jackson essentially became a labour intermediary for the colonial authorities. The commission aspect in particular had major implications for the manner in which the labour regime was structured. As will become clear further in this discussion, the pursuit of minimum input and maximum output as well as Jackson's conditions of appointment and his own vested interests had definite implications for the associated labour regime established under the colonial guano dispensation.

Based on his contract, Jackson was responsible for ensuring a functional guano exploitation regime. The model that he preferred and actually constructed was a hierarchy organised as illustrated by Diagram 1 below. To assist him in his task, he appointed Captain J. Spence, another veteran of the guano trade as the Assistant Guano Agent responsible for the direct administrative supervision of the scraping of the rocks and islands along the Namib Coast. Jackson himself took responsibility for the management of the central guano depot in Cape Town, assisted by a store man and various assistants. At this facility, the different guano types were to be mixed, weighed and despatched to the various destinations as per sales contract. To ensure a continuous supply of guano to the central store, the established practice of maintaining a regular work force on the islands was continued. This group was serviced by the department's supply ship, the *Sea Bird*, whose captain was to interact with and supervise the island headmen and to report any incidents of misconduct.⁸² Furthermore, Jackson was directly responsible for the appointment of all supervisory personnel (Headmen and Assistant-Headmen) and manual labourers responsible for the actual scraping and collection of the product in addition to handling the guano island budget and its associated expenditure (salaries, provisions etc.).

⁸² KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

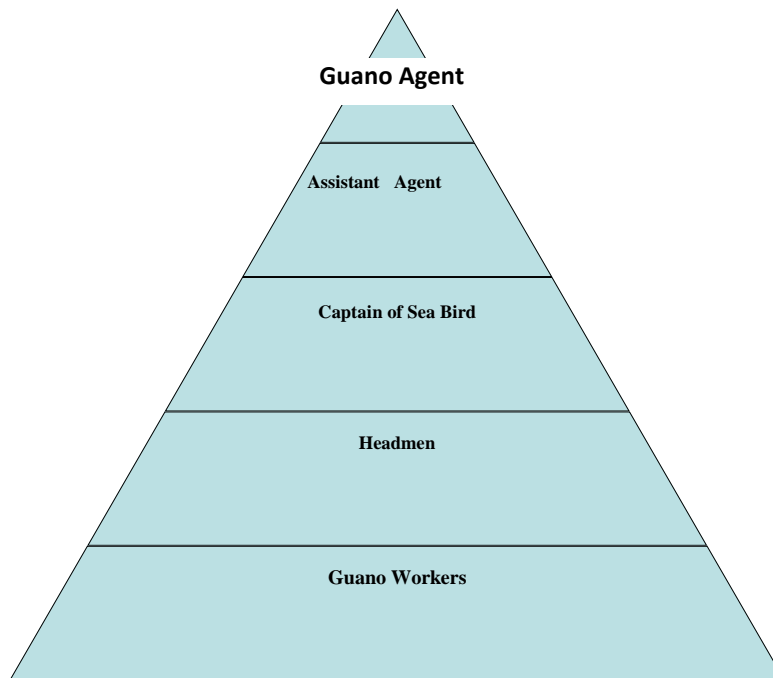


Diagram 1: Guano Agency Hierarchy

To satisfy their labour needs, the Guano Agent, his Assistant and the shipmaster of the government vessel “Sea Bird” recruited manual workers from the ranks of the unemployed in Cape Town and from the ranks of the labour force of the former leaseholders.⁸³ In most cases the same recruitment practices of their predecessors were followed, precisely because of their effectiveness and cost-cutting features. However, contractual and payment arrangements differed significantly and appeared to have been formulated to effect further savings at the administrative level. From the outset workers were also recruited from the indigenous people on the Namibian mainland to perform manual labour on the islands.⁸⁴ Females in particular were tasked with the removal of stones from the guano – a repetitive task at best.⁸⁵ These female labourers were not only good and diligent workers, but also exploitable. In the words of John Ployer, the Headman of Pomona Island, Hottentot labour was “remarkably cheap labour” given their large numbers on the mainland.⁸⁶ As reward for their labour they were

⁸³KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 - '97: Testimony of Jackson: 6

⁸⁴KAB: Government House (G.H.) 35/ 32: Imperial German Consul General – Sir Alfred Milner, 24/9/1897

⁸⁵KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897

⁸⁶KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J.Ployer, 30/7/1897

paid anything, ranging from rice and coffee⁸⁷ to a cash wage of 5 shillings per month.⁸⁸ Their recruitment did not only make economic sense, it also fitted the cost-cutting and output maximisation agenda of the Guano Agent perfectly. However, a serious political incident erupted between the Cape authorities and their German counterparts in control of the Angra Pequena mainland, drawing attention to the actual labour practices of the guano diggers and their supervisors.

During the era of private control over the island's diggers and headmen were typically contracted for short work periods,⁸⁹ whereas the new system was generally based on contractual periods of at least twelve months. This coincided with both the breeding season of the birds and the collection season that followed. In some cases, longer term, open-ended contracts were concluded with seasoned seamen who were involved extensively with the trade and who preferred an island to an urban existence.⁹⁰ These men were essential for the setting up and maintenance of a long-term industry and the protection of the guano-producing seabirds. Whereas headmen were contracted for a fixed wage of £4, ordinary working men were paid an amount of £2 per month. This stipulation almost immediately generated a cost saving as it was much cheaper than the commission-based system formerly applicable to the employment of headmen. Headmen were also not allowed any bargaining space regarding salaries.⁹¹ Similarly, Captain Durr of the "Sea Bird" offered 63 local male and female indigenous inhabitants at Lüderitzbucht a 12 month guano labour agreement on 19th February 1896.⁹² In return for their labour, they were promised a salary, maintenance and shelter.⁹³ However, two months before the end of their contracts, they were dismissed and returned to the mainland without any payment or a permit from the Germans who were in control of the area.⁹⁴ Upon discovering this, the Germans issued a note of protest to the Cape government and demanded compensation of between £350 (minimum) and £870 on behalf of

⁸⁷KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of T. Dyke, 22/7/1897

⁸⁸KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897

⁸⁹KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of W.J.E. Sayer, 30/7/1897

⁹⁰KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 22/7/1897

⁹¹KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897. Rodericks or Roderiques the Headman of Possession Island, who except for a promise of improvement, had his demand for a wage of £9 turned down.

⁹²KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A.30 – '99: Testimony of W.H. Tooke: 34

⁹³KAB:GH. 35/ 32: Imperial German Consul General – Sir Alfred Milner, 24/9/1897

⁹⁴KAB:GH. 35/32: Imperial German Consul General – Milner, 22/7/1898

the victims based on a service period of 12 months, maintenance and loss of income (wages).⁹⁵ In the interest of sound interstate relationships, both parties compromised and settled on a final amount of £350.⁹⁶ When confronted about the salary matter and the lack of evidence that salaries were indeed paid over to staff, he cynically pointed out that “we cannot get receipts from every coolie...”⁹⁷

The ordinary European and Coloured guano workers on the Namib coast were just as vulnerable to exploitation as the indigenous workforce. With the new labour regime, the ordinary sailor had to endure a salary reduction from £2.10.0 to £2 and therefore suffered monetary loss.⁹⁸ Furthermore, both supervisors and workers lost the right to collect sealskins for their own account. This loss was particularly painful since this additional income afforded them a semblance of independence from their official wage under the previous regime. The new administration also put an end to the system of “half pay notes” and the practice of allowing men to use half of their salary to procure basic necessities which were shipped duty-free to the islands. In future, all islands and its employees were to be fully provisioned from Cape Town. This effectively meant that workers did not need to be paid on a monthly basis and forced diggers to procure non-edible provisions such as clothing and tobacco on credit from the stores of the *Sea Bird*. Prices on items available through this source were generally higher and therefore workmen incurred sizeable debts, which complicated the process of terminating a service contract over the longer term. Even tobacco, one of the preferred products that seamen and a wide range of employers used as an incentive to stabilise the workforce and increase productivity,⁹⁹ was not exempted. Its price increased sharply from 2 shillings and 6 pence (2s-6d) to 4 shillings.¹⁰⁰ As the employer paid for all food and accommodation, salaries were to be repaid upon termination of service and once all expenses connected with credit purchases from the *Sea Bird* were deducted.¹⁰¹ These arrangements,

⁹⁵KAB:GH. 35/32: Imperial German Consul General – High Commissioner & Governor, 18/1/ 1898

⁹⁶KAB:GH. 35/32: Minute: Prime Minister, 4/2/1898; G.H. 35/32: Imperial German Consul General – Governor & High Commissioner, 8/2/1898

⁹⁷KAB: AMPT PUBS 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A.30 – ‘99, Testimony of C.H. Jackson: 63

⁹⁸KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of G. Haggerstrom, 30/7/1897

⁹⁹Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 172

¹⁰⁰KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Roderick, 30/7/1897

¹⁰¹KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J.H. Mitchell, 30/7/1897

especially the price of items from the ship's store, outraged the workmen and were described by guano digger Alfred Kaiser as "a disgrace in the nineteenth century."¹⁰² European sailors in particular, had a fair sense of what constituted fair pricing and were thus fully aware of the extent of the exploitation they were subjected to by the Captain of the *Sea Bird* and De Pass at his shore-based store. Like their predecessors during the rush phase, they expressed their views based on a particular understanding of their rights and the world. As such, it served as an important indicator of the unhappiness that have pervaded the guano workforce.

New recruits were often shipped with minimum clothing and without any form of bedding. They had to be content with makeshift beds on water barrels and limited ablution facilities in the forecastle of the ship that transported them to the islands.¹⁰³ Some also slept in the lifeboats, the ship's hold, on the deck, and "even on top of one another."¹⁰⁴ En route the recruits endured extremely wet conditions since "instead of the hatch opening aft, to keep clear of the spray, it opens forward, so that when the vessel dives into a head sea, the spray comes into the forecastle."¹⁰⁵ In addition, constant leaks forced the men to sleep in oilskins for the duration of the journey.¹⁰⁶ Travelling conditions with slave-like features were therefore not a good introduction to life as a guano digger. This particular feature of the local trade also gave credence to Phillip's suggestion of the guano trade as a new form of slavery.

The total disregard displayed by the Guano Agent concerning the treatment of the indigenous labour force also manifested itself in his approach to and handling of the island supply system. As previously indicated, provisions had to be transported from Cape Town to the islands to enable the continued extraction of guano. As such, its unhindered and regular supply was a critical element in the production and labour control process. Fresh food and water were particularly high in demand due to the life-threatening implications of any break in the supply chain. However, Jackson at times displayed an illogical commitment to cost reduction that seriously compromised the whole guano industry. Given the expensive nature

¹⁰²KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Kaiser, 30/7/1897

¹⁰³KAB: AMPT PUBS 2/2/1/76: C.10- '98: 6

¹⁰⁴KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897–Evidence: Testimony of G.Haggerstrom, 30/7/1897

¹⁰⁵KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

¹⁰⁶ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of M. Pietersen, 22/7/1897

of salted meat (both pork and beef) as well as the high incidents of wastage from contamination,¹⁰⁷ all headmen were instructed to refrain from purchasing any provisions such as meat from the mainland. They were also not allowed to land on the mainland for any reason whatsoever. Any deviations or unauthorised expenditure in this regard would not only be for their own account— even in the case of scurvy amongst the work force – but would also be punishable.¹⁰⁸ In addition, a ban was placed on the collection of penguin eggs and killing penguins for food. This resulted in a situation aptly described by guano digger Joseph Fletcher of Possession Island, as one where “the meat was not extra good. It was altogether disgraceful for an Englishman.”¹⁰⁹ At the same time, however, the arrangement of having a dedicated cook at an additional cost was abandoned, leaving the tasks to the men themselves and not surprisingly, “a pretty mess was made of it.”¹¹⁰ This also had serious health implications since overcooking also considerably reduces food’s anti-scorbutic properties.¹¹¹

The system of deferred payment and the retention of a portion of the workers’ wages by the employer, did not help matters at all as this denied workers the opportunity to procure meat on the mainland and from the nearby trading store in order to have access to properly cooked meals. These restrictions were also extended to drug foods such as tea, coffee and alcohol. Not only was alcohol banned from the islands, but Chinese tea was replaced by bush tea (according to the available evidence, not rooibos tea) which was much disliked by the diggers. T.L. Graham described the latter as a “nauseas beverage with nothing to recommend it but its cheapness.”¹¹² The total ban of alcohol, an occasional glass or cup of which could have brought more than a little cheer to the men,¹¹³ led Gustav Haggerstrom, the Headman of Sinclair and Plumpudding Islands, to remark that “now the men have to live here like convicts.”¹¹⁴ It was therefore not surprising that by 1897 after weeks of the non-delivery of general provisions (including fresh meat and vegetables) that most men on the islands along

¹⁰⁷ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. F. Jameson, 30/7/1897

¹⁰⁸ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897

¹⁰⁹ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Fletcher, 22/7/1897

¹¹⁰ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of T.H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

¹¹¹ Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 53

¹¹² KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 2/2/1/76: C.10 – ‘98: Testimony of T.L. Graham: 8

¹¹³ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of T.H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

¹¹⁴ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Ployer, 30/7/1897

the Namibian coast suffered from scurvy and various other ailments such as dysentery and boils.

Closer inspection of remarks and expressions used by guano diggers to describe their situation (general living accommodation, food, the system of payment or the provisioning system) clearly indicated an acute awareness of the standards of treatment and certain basic human, worker and citizens rights. Although most were well acquainted with the harshness of life in the fore-castle, they generally detested life in the wooden huts provided for them as basic living quarters on the islands. The majority of these establishments also dated back to the early years and were erected when the trade was still controlled by private interests. By the time of the takeover by the colonial authorities in 1890, they were in a dilapidated state. Captain Burr was “simply horrified beyond belief: you could hardly believe that white men could put up in such a horrible shanty.” It was also just “disgraceful and not fit for a human being.”¹¹⁵ In Anthony Chimato’s view the accommodation was not even “fit for a nigger to live in.”¹¹⁶ Indeed, convicts appeared to live better. Guano personnel had already declared the condition of meat as an affront to any “British citizen” and the ship’s store system had been condemned as a “nineteenth century disgrace,” leaving the situation looking dismal. The final insult came when men wanting to claim their accumulated earnings were confronted with a payment system that expected of them to sign a blank claim form with no amount stipulated. The amount of earnings to be paid out was only added afterwards. This practice was not only foreign but “the likes of it would not be allowed in a shipping office in England.”¹¹⁷ Unbeknown to island personnel, these problems were part of a far greater administrative problem. Particularly problematic was Jackson’s habit of declining to submit any detailed salary accounts or calculations of staff salaries to the Department of Agriculture.¹¹⁸ The Department, ignorant as it was of the finer workings of the guano extraction system, save for the reports from its top official, failed to question the ever-increasing wage bill.¹¹⁹ It therefore became complicit in the maintenance of what had effectively become a coercive and exploitative labour system. Workers detested this exploitation and the direct attempt to

¹¹⁵KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

¹¹⁶KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 30/7/1897

¹¹⁷KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Fletcher, 22/7/1897

¹¹⁸KAB:AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/2/1/53: SC. A30 – ’99: Testimony of C.H. Jackson: 1

¹¹⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/2/1/48: S.C. A.12 – ’97: Testimony of C. Currey: 34

devalue their labour and to undermine their status as human beings, free workers and British citizens and therefore entitled to fair reward for labour rendered. This also confirmed Isaac Land's contention that British seamen from the 18th to the 19th century were eager to re-establish their worth in the eyes of the greater British society based on the argument that "no one who possessed the sensibility of a British man should be governed like a Black slave."¹²⁰ This response was consistent with the earlier sentiments expressed by sailors during the guano rush phase and during the system of private leaseholders. As free citizens they were able to freely negotiate a labour contract and enjoyed the protection afforded by both the common and maritime law. As a common citizen, the European worker also enjoyed the same rights and responsibilities as the ship's captain beyond the workplace. They were therefore able to evaluate whether they, as workers, were treated according to both the codified and un-codified standards of treatment that they expected.

In order to keep the system and the trade functional and to maintain their labour force, the guano administration resorted to intimidation. Contracts were especially strictly enforced. Those that threatened to leave early and not to return to the island conditions were threatened with six months imprisonment at the Breakwater prison in Cape Town.¹²¹ This was primarily aimed at preventing dissatisfied workers from spreading negative market intelligence. The authorities wished to suppress information on wages, irregularity of payment, ill-treatment in the workplace, workplace hazards and the state of provisioning.¹²² Dissatisfied workers were, however, stuck on the islands and had no other option but to work out their contracts and to wait for the *Sea Bird* to return from Cape Town. The number of complaints therefore increased daily. In order obtain maximum productivity and to curb "idleness" a workday from daybreak to sundown (or from six o'clock in the morning until six at night) was implemented. Although provision was made for a breakfast of half an hour and an hour for dinner, there was no provision for a lunch-break.¹²³ In addition, repeated requests for a clock were ignored and denied diggers the right of accurately determining the length of their workday.¹²⁴ There was also no provision for a legally enforceable compulsory rest day.

¹²⁰Land, "Customs of the Sea": 169 - 185

¹²¹KAB: AGR: 667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of T. H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

¹²²Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 234

¹²³KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of T. H. Dyke, 22/7/1897

¹²⁴KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

Through the strict application of these measures and the compliance with the headmen over the first five to seven years (1890 – 1896), the guano administration was able to collect a total of nearly 26000 tons, enough to justify the continued existence of the enterprise.¹²⁵ By the end of the 1896 harvest and based on a close scrutiny of the expenditure items listed as “*Commissions*” in the various annual reports submitted to parliament, the Guano Agent and his Assistant jointly earned commissions of over £9000 as outlined in Diagram 2 below. In comparison, the total income for the remainder of the labour force, in particular those working on the islands which the first annual report listed as 220 in number, for the same period amounted to just over £19000. As in all hierarchical situations, those at the top of the guano administration hierarchy earned the lion’s share of the income derived from guano collection without having to endure any of the discomforts and hazards associated with the trade. It therefore came as no surprise that by March 1997 members of the guano workforce once again decided to publicly expose the malpractices prevalent in their trade. This campaign and its aftermath form the basis of the discussion in the next section.

YEAR	ANNUAL GUANO AGENT COMMISSION	ANNUAL ISLAND WORKFORCE WAGES
	AMOUNTS IN POUND STERLING	
1893 ¹²⁶	£1,012-2s-3d	£2,528-10s-5d
1894 ¹²⁷	£1,545-9s-3d	£2,425- 3s-1d
1895 ¹²⁸	£1,615-8s-1d	£4,360- 6s-7d
1896 ¹²⁹	£2,035-14s-4d	£5,592-18s-7d
1897 ¹³⁰	£2,486-15s-0d	£4,233-6s-0d
TOTAL	£8,693-48s-11d	£19,138-43s-20d

TABLE 2: Comparative Income: Guano Agent Commission vs. Island Workforce Wages

¹²⁵This figure is derived from a calculation of the totals reported in annual reports to the Colonial Legislature for the period 1890 – 1896.

¹²⁶KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/90: Ministerial Department of Public Works: Memorandum on Working of the Guano Islands: Annual Report for the Season 1893 – 1894 [G.66 – 1894]

¹²⁷KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/94: Department of Agriculture: Report on the Government Guano Islands for the Season 1894 – 1895 [G.71 – ‘95]

¹²⁸KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/98: Department of Agriculture: Report on the Government Guano Islands for the Season 1895 – 1896 by the Government Agent in Charge [G.80 – ‘96]

¹²⁹KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/102: Department of Agriculture: Report on the Government Guano Islands for the Year 1896, by the Government Agent in Charge [G.67 – ‘97]

¹³⁰KAB: AMPT PUBS CCP 1/2/1/106: Department of Agriculture: Report on the Government Guano Islands for the Year 1897, by the Government Agent in Charge [G.75 – ‘98]

6.7. Worker Resistance and Reaction to the Guano Labour System

The changes initiated by the Guano Agent to effect savings and to establish an industry along business lines invariably led to an exit of some of the most experienced men from the islands. These men almost immediately found employment with the nearby *Cape Cross Guano Company* on the mainland. In addition to good provisions, these deserters were offered a minimum monthly salary of £5, which was an immediate improvement on what the Guano Agent offered.¹³¹ Others simply returned to Cape Town. One of the high-profile cases was the Headman of Mercury Island, Anthony Hansen who (according to his crew) left because “trouble and the labour of collecting guano had driven the man mad.”¹³² Furthermore, a significant number of the old hands departed the islands and left the new enterprise with only a small group of the veterans of the islands.¹³³ This trend continued throughout the period of state control so that by the outbreak of the South African War in 1899, an acute labour shortage was beginning to be felt as potential recruits preferred to join the labour and fighting units on both sides of the conflict.¹³⁴ Those diggers that could not leave frequently resorted to loafing and excuses of an inability to work the usual way.¹³⁵ This motivated the further recruitment of “Hottentot” labour from the mainland with the aid of a German, G.J. Hesselmann, at the price of 20 shillings per labourer.¹³⁶ The inability of both categories of guano workers to negotiate better terms or to avoid so-called low wage zones like the guano islands is directly related to the fact that most recruits had little or no savings or other resources prior to their signing-up and were mostly ‘hard-up’ with very little other employment alternatives as previously indicated.¹³⁷ As a result, they had to temporarily settle as a guano digger for a period while waiting for better employment prospects. For the colonial authorities, however, the cost reductions achieved through the actions of the Guano Agent on the administrative level came at a price. The labour system in particular was left extremely vulnerable and dependent on an uncertain labour supply.

¹³¹KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897

¹³²KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

¹³³KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of P. Nelson, 30/7/1897

¹³⁴KAB:AMPT PUBS: CCP 1/2/2/1/48: SC. A.12 – ’97: Testimony of Jackson: 6

¹³⁵KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of F.P. Jameson, 30/7/1897

¹³⁶KAB: AGR 1/511: D18: Inspection of Guano Islands: W.P. Truter – Colonial Secretary’s Office, 19 October 1905

¹³⁷ Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 229

The system of reporting through the Headman and captain of the supply ship *Sea Bird*, also failed the guano island workforce. As previously outlined, each of the headmen was tasked with the regular maintenance of a logbook detailing all daily occurrences. Given the high incidents of illiteracy amongst headmen, in some cases the records did either not exist or were incomplete and had to be maintained on the headman's behalf by a designated writer or scribe. Such records were also regularly taken to Cape Town for inspection, supposedly for the purposes of remedial action.¹³⁸ Most headmen who wanted to communicate their concerns, needs and wants directly to the authorities and wanted to visit Cape Town were dissuaded from doing so by Captain Burr of the *Sea Bird* who undertook to relay it on their behalf.¹³⁹ By his own admission, Burr failed to report in full on his observations, never "exactly" submitting any written complaint to the authorities and just generally only "mentioned" his observations and the men's complaints.¹⁴⁰ This is directly related to his own role in the exploitation of guano workers through sales from the ship's store. In most cases where a written report was indeed produced by the headman or his scribe and despatched to Cape Town, no response was received, nor did the Guano Agent even bother to personally visit the islands under his jurisdiction. To crown it all, some of his supervisory personnel such as John Ployer of Pomona Island claimed that they had neither met nor conversed with their superior.¹⁴¹ When Rodericks eventually registered some complaints with him, they were apparently met with insults and dismissed.¹⁴² The fact that Rodericks returned to his job despite the treatment meted out to him must therefore be regarded as a form of pragmatic resignation.¹⁴³ These actions clearly displayed the features of the guano trade as a typical labour repressive system. In such a system, functionaries as 'general overlords,' displayed a heightened sense of their own superiority, power, importance and entitlement to deference to compensate for their normally relatively low status in society.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

¹³⁹ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of M. Pietersen, 22/7/1897

¹⁴⁰ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

¹⁴¹ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Ployer, 30/7/1897

¹⁴² KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897

¹⁴³ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 325

¹⁴⁴ Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 138

The deference expected by the Office of the Guano Agent and his supervisors was, however, systematically eroded by its failure in providing provisions for the islands. As a result, the guano labour force gradually began to articulate the withdrawal of their deference to their superiors and forced headmen into a situation of false compliance with the stipulated regulations. This was particularly evident in the gap between the official records as represented by the island logbook and actual events on the islands that were never reported. During late 1896 to early 1897, for three months the guano island administration failed to deliver provisions to the islands in Angra Pequena. Faced with growing incidences of scurvy, the act of complying with the bans on visiting the mainland, killing penguins and collecting eggs as well as interaction with the Germans became suicidal. These rules were thus regularly disregarded by men facing a desperate situation, much to the frustration of the headmen tasked with ensuring compliance with the standing order. This led John Nivallo, the Halifax headman to comment: “I am supposed to be the headman, and they must do what I order. If they don’t do what I tell them, I might just as well not be headman at all.”¹⁴⁵ This won individual Headmen the respect of their subordinates. On the other hand, some headmen enjoyed little or no respect within the ranks of the labour force. Remarks by T.H. Dyke were confirmed by similar sentiments expressed by Capt. Burr about the headman of Halifax Island being an absolutely “ignorant man” and indicated the growing emergence of a lack of deference to authority.

In an attempt to maintain the respect of their men, a few of the Headmen made themselves guilty of false compliance with the established rules by not fully reporting all incidents and measures undertaken. These actions were motivated by the need to make decisions based on an assessment of the local conditions faced by the guano workforce. Misunderstanding these dynamics, Captain F.P. Jameson, a member of the Commission of Investigation into the working of the guano islands, erroneously observed that in reality there was not much supervision at islands in the bay of Angra Pequena.¹⁴⁶ According to German guano digger Peter Foch who worked on Halifax Island, on occasion one of his compatriots, John Kay, wrote a letter to their countrymen on the mainland wanting to buy milk, meat and vegetables

¹⁴⁵ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Nivallo, 21/7/1897

¹⁴⁶ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. F.P. Jameson, 30/7/1897

on his own account. The Germans, having heard about the men's predicament, brought fresh provisions as a gift.¹⁴⁷ Another means of supplementing the fresh food supply was by maintaining own livestock. During a visit W.P. Truter, one of the Colonial government's inspectors, found several pigs on Ichaboe which were fed from official stores. Upon its discovery, this was conveniently and strategically blamed on the captain of the *Sea Bird*.¹⁴⁸ Contrary to the rules, at other times the men also killed and ate sea birds. As far as could be ascertained, very few of these incidents were ever officially reported by the headmen. Given the glaring deficiencies and weaknesses in the system of record keeping, it was also not surprising that prior to this discovery such practices were conveniently omitted from the official record. Anthony Chimato went to Cape Town in October 1896 to formally complain about the failures of the provisioning system. The Guano Agent summarily dismissed him for being 'quarrelsome' and a 'regular nuisance' with a "long tongue". In his stead, Anthony Rodericks was appointed in Chimato's place and Jackson thereby unambiguously signalled his determination not to allow any dissent.¹⁴⁹ This action contributed to the removal of the last shred of deference and the accusation and distancing of the supervisory staff from the Guano Agent encapsulated in the statement of John Ployer, the headman of Pomona Island, who declared: "it is not the government's fault, it is Captain Jackson's fault. They put all the blame on him as he is the manager. It is not the Headman's fault."¹⁵⁰ The assignment of such blame, according to Scott in a different context, also has to do with the fact that Jackson, somebody who was intimately acquainted with the finer workings of the trade and "within moral reach", should have acted differently with more consideration to the needs of those who worked the islands.¹⁵¹ The grounds were thus prepared for a different form of resistance, i.e. open protest action.

The constant grumblings, loafing and threats of work stoppages by the guano labour force, finally crystallised by late 1896 and early 1897 in a series of strikes on various islands. Prior to this series of events the provisioning system suffered a complete breakdown for unknown

¹⁴⁷KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of P. Fochs, 21/7/1897

¹⁴⁸KAB: AGR 1/511: D18: Inspection of Guano Islands by W.P. Truter: W.P. Truter – Colonial Secretary, October 30, 1905

¹⁴⁹KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 30/7/1897

¹⁵⁰KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Ployer, 30/7/1897

¹⁵¹ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 161

reasons and left the work force with insufficient fresh supplies for between two weeks¹⁵² to seven months.¹⁵³ Although there was still food available, its quality was suspect and there was an inadequate supply of fresh meat, vegetables, lime juice and vinegar to counter or prevent the onset of scurvy. The situation also varied between the different islands. Despite the employment of various survival strategies, such as grounding rice to meal in order to bake bread, catching fish from the lagoon and extreme measures such as frying a gemsbok skin,¹⁵⁴ the majority of the workforce was struck down with scurvy. Halifax Island only received three tins of preserved onions and three small tins of vegetables as last provisions and had eight workers down with scurvy.¹⁵⁵ On Possession Island, which received one bag of potatoes, three bags of onions and 32 cans of preserved meat in seven months, six out of fourteen men were down with scurvy, with one to look after the sick, another one responsible for the maintenance of the sun condenser, leaving only three persons remaining to do the work.¹⁵⁶ In addition, most of the staff on Sinclair Island, Hollamsbird, Mercury and Ichaboe were affected by scurvy, dysentery and other illnesses. This situation effectively left the northern guano collection operations in disarray. When both Burr and Jackson proved unsympathetic, the workmen embarked on a series of 24-hour strikes involving all of the islands, protesting their working and living conditions. On one hand this strike was essentially a defensive weapon aimed at restoring the supply system to its former standard. On the other hand it was also an offensive weapon and a response to what van Onselen has called the “less visible attacks on the value of their labour”,¹⁵⁷ especially their conditions of service which, according to Burr, created a situation where “these men are reduced to penury and poverty before they even do start.”¹⁵⁸

Burr observed that prior to the strikes in March/April 1897, as a rule white diggers were foremost in articulating grievances around wages and provisioning. The islands on which the majority of these workers were congregated also experienced the bulk of the labour problems.

¹⁵²KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

¹⁵³ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 30/7/1897

¹⁵⁴ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Chimato, 30/7/1897

¹⁵⁵ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of J. Nivallo, 21/7/1897

¹⁵⁶ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of A. Rodericks, 30/7/1897

¹⁵⁷ Van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour*, 220

¹⁵⁸ KAB:AGR:667:0000 – Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence: Testimony of Capt. Burr, 22/7/1897

This gave a distinct racial dimension to the events. Prior to the 1890s and the existence of the Masters and Servants Act of 1873, strike action was illegal in the Colony.¹⁵⁹ This did not, however, defuse or eliminate worker militancy and action during that period. Skilled foreign workers in Cape Town were familiar with trade unionism and the benefits of collective labour action and began to change this situation. In 1876 British typesetters in the service of politician and publishers Saul Solomon & Company went on strike in response to an attempt at introducing cheap female labour into the company. The railway workers at the Salt River works, led by a cosmopolitan leadership consisting of an Englishman, two West Indians and a West Indian Frenchman, followed suit in March 1884 following a wage reduction.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, Black guano workers on Navassa Island in the American Pacific resisted and killed six white supervisors of the Navassa Phosphate Company in Baltimore following longstanding abuse and neglect.¹⁶¹ The action of the guano workers on the Ichaboe group of islands therefore built on an existing tradition of labour organisation and collective action to secure and safeguard their rights both locally and abroad. The tactic of short work stoppages combined with the use of the colonial press highlighted their plight and the contrast of the guano labour regime with accepted British practices. These tactics were precisely chosen to attract maximum public attention without threatening the dominant norms, laws, customs and political loyalty. They were also presented as a public act of compliance and conformity as well as, by implication, an effort to protect the “British way of doing things.” It was, however, also a pragmatic form of resistance given the isolation of the islands and the distance from Cape Town, the seat of British authority in southern Africa and its provisioning. This resulted in formal government intervention through the appointment of a special investigative commission to scrutinise the complete working of the islands. The damning findings against Jackson resulted in the abolishment of the position of Government Guano Agent as a commission-earning entity and the administration of the guano islands was

¹⁵⁹ The strike by Mfengu Beach labourers in 1846 preceded the Masters and Servants Act by 27 years and is regarded as possibly the first or earliest instance of worker mobilisation in South Africa. See Gary Baines, “The Port Elizabeth Disturbances of 1920”, *Reality: A Journal of Liberal and Radical Opinion*, vol. 18, no. 5, September 1986 and E.J. Inggs “Mfengu beach labour and Port Elizabeth harbour development, 1835 – 1870”, *Contree* 21 (January, 1987)

¹⁶⁰ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, 96 & 108

¹⁶¹ A.C. Hathaway, “Servant Church: Preaching and Teaching Servant Theology to African-American Leaders in Union Baptist Church of Baltimore,” *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable*, (Regent University, August 2006)

<http://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference_proceedings/servant_leadership_roundtable/2006/pdf/Hathaway.pdf>(June 15, 2007)

placed under the formal control of the Department of Agriculture. The guano labour regime therefore concluded its evolution from being an ad hoc operation using sailors, to a formal state-run operation characterised and governed by formal regulations and practices consistent with those in use in the Mother Country.

6.8. Conclusion

The Namibian part of the Cape guano trade displayed features that Phillips in another context dubbed as “a new form of slavery.” At the heart of the problem was the fact that when they took over the business Colonial authorities failed to appoint a career official with industry-specific knowledge and respect for the public mandate to manage the offshore industry. Due to his profit-orientation, the Cape Guano Agent placed his interests above that of the colonial state, the farming community and that of the individual guano-digger. The Colonial Government in turn emerged from this episode with little to commend itself as both politicians and administrators tasked with safeguarding colonial interests failed to properly exercise their supervisory function. Due to their belated actions, hesitancy and failure to act timeously and proactively, the colonial authorities literally became a slave to Jackson’s “guano experience” – an experience that cares for profit and little about the integrity of the system and people. Thanks to the intervention of the colonial parliament, in the end the authorities succeeded in redeeming themselves.

Although private leaseholders managed their labour system somewhat better by allowing workers to supplement their wages by sealing and fishing and ensuring a regular system of provisioning, they were the designers of the highly exploitative system. The hallmarks of the guano trade were buying from the ships stores, using a system of half-pay notes, cash advances, rationing and deferred payments as well as a range of other practices, which were simply taken over from the fishing and mining industry by the Guano Agent. These practices leave one in no doubt about their part in the construction of the system. Jackson’s programme of “economising” in order to ensure an acceptable profit or commission was merely an extreme form and continuation of the practice of the wholesale appropriation of guano income by the guanopreneurs.

Thanks to an advanced worldview, aware of their rights as Europeans and world citizens able and willing to stand up for their rights, guano labourers never accepted their exploitation and acted in their own interests. Through both subtle and overt forms of resistance, they attempted to frustrate the system that aimed to exploit them. Whilst they had to submit to their employers under duress during the rush phase of the trade due to naval military intervention, the shoe was on the other foot by the turn of the century when guano labourers in the employ of the colonial state succeeded in reversing their situation with the assistance of the colonial media. In this regard, they had the example of co-workers in both the guano and other industries to follow in their struggle to be valued as co-producers of economic and monetary value. This awareness and willingness to physically engage their employers drove the evolution of guano labour from an ad hoc to a formally structured regime. The experience of labour exploitation on the guano islands is indeed a shared one that unites guano workers from South America to the northwest coast of Africa. It is therefore possible to use both the events locally and those elsewhere to make a final judgement about guano contribution to the institution of a new form of slavery, albeit for a very short time.

CHAPTER 7

THE CAPE GUANO TRADE – CONCLUSIONS

The Cape guano trade is undoubtedly of historiographical significance. As the second most important source of fertiliser after Peru, a fair number of its practices and policies, especially its precedent-setting guano legislation and policy, contributed to the further evolution of the international trade and the advancement of capitalist agriculture across the Western world. The Cape Guano Ordinance of 1845 in particular provided the basis and framework for both the *American Guano Islands Act* (1856) and the *Queensland Coasts Islands Act* in Australia. This effectively integrated the African islands of Ichaboe and Malgas, as well as other islands along the western and eastern coastline, with their counterparts such as the Chincha and Lobos Islands group on the South American coast and from there into the Pacific Ocean. In the end, a contiguous guano frontier as described by Firth was created. Unwittingly, the Cape Guano Ordinance also provided an additional impetus and provided the African trade with a character role in the evolution of what came to be known as aggressive American guano imperialism and “aberrationist” and frontier extension-behaviour as described by O’ Donnell, Skaggs, Benton and others.

As indicated earlier in this study, Newbury also expressed a need for a record of the guano trade in parts of the world other than Peru, in order to allow historians to make comparisons, draw conclusions and to make a full assessment of the historical significance of the international guano trade for world history. This reconstruction of the African guano past attempted to draw together the disparate strings and collect the fragments of the past that lie scattered all over the historical landscape and to compile it in a coherent whole to serve as a lens into an important time and place in world history. It thus provides sufficient evidence to serve as a basis for the comparison of the guano trade in different parts of the world.

This study has a unique focus on the social, economic and political aspects of the trade, especially the battle between nations, governments, interests groups, business associates, ethnic groups and even families to appropriate and commodify the excrement of various seabirds. It also contributes towards the better understanding of the link between humans and animals and marks a moment that went beyond what Anderson described as the ontological,

vitality and materiality presence of the latter in human affairs. It provides a physical record and instance where the animal product and body have become the arena for the display and interplay of human action and emotions and therefore contributes to a greater understanding of the complementarities of both social and environmental history.

It has been common in the international historiography to refer to the Peruvian guano trade as the so-called “guano age.” It suggested that the trade from the Chincha and Lobos islands was the one and only trade and that its operations alone had an impact on international affairs. This study effectively challenges the notion of the existence of one over-arching guano age and its equation with only the Peruvian trade to the exclusion of all others. Based on the findings of the current study, it is more accurate to make a distinction between the existence of a series of individual and country-specific guano eras that collectively constituted a definitive Guano Age and a Guano Age specifically Peruvian in nature. This global age with its diverse and common regional and transnational features lasted a little more than a half-century during which time it occupied the economic centre-stage. It would therefore be more appropriate to designate the whole of the 19th century as the International Guano Age with due consideration that aspects therefore continue to resonate right into our present age.

As indicated, the guano trade also made a critical contribution to our greater understanding of frontiers and the factors behind their shifting. With the Peruvian offshore islands as the sole known source of supply during the early days, the trade effectively started as a production or commercial rather than a settlement frontier. When the resource was nationalised by the Peruvians and its proceeds secured for political purposes, the frontier became a political one. Central to this process was a shift in the knowledge domain when, with the advancement in the science of plant growth and fertiliser technology, the commercial potential of guano was discovered. This shift in the frontiers of knowledge directly led to a second shift, namely the commoditisation of guano, when it exchanged its historical and cultural role as the primary means through which the (Peruvian) nation was reborn to become an article of trade. This suggested that the different meanings that various communities over time attached to the product are key factors in the understanding of the process of shifting frontiers. These shifts lie at the heart of the launch of the Ichaboe and Cape trade. Shifts in the production location that moved the frontier from South America, via Africa to Oceania, however, also came about

as result of the finite nature of the product. Once the resource became depleted in one location, it was only natural for guanopreneurs to move somewhere else, meaning that relative scarcity also plays a role in whether frontiers shifted or not.

On the social level, the Cape guano trade fundamentally impacted on the relationships between a wide range of individuals, groups and races due to consistent attempts by various parties to obtain monopoly control. Swart suggested that in the encounter between humans and animals, a process of redefinition based on power relations frequently takes place and that new identities are adopted based on the original encounters. Those private individuals or groups who had exercised monopoly control over most of the guano islands had variously been described as guanopreneurs and “cultivators of guano.” At the lower end of the hierarchy was the ‘Coolie’, digger or Malay who provided the labour needed to keep the trade afloat. The current study confirmed guano mining as a highly coercive enterprise with questionable labour practices. As a high-cost low-output industry, guanopreneurs had no real space for waste and idleness. Efficiency was the driving force behind the exploitation of the resource. Labour, irrespective of its origins, was ruthlessly extracted with very little regard for citizenship, national values or human dignity. Due to the fact that every area of work had the potential of becoming a serious cost–driver, meticulous planning and implementation and the ‘coolification’ of the workforce became the preferred way of working. The labour regimes of the Government Guano Agent and Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands in particular, were highly exploitative and characterised by a total disregard for human life and dignity. These regimes therefore conform to some historians’ characterisation of guano labour trade as a new form of slavery. At the same time, the study revealed the agency of guano workers under extreme conditions. Fighting to protect their own interests and the fruits of their labour, they engaged in both informal and formal acts of resistance. In this regard they creatively used memorials, complaints, public newspapers and strikes to defend their rights. This resulted in the trade being converted to a state enterprise by 1890.

Previous research formally located the roots of Afrikaner nationalism in the agricultural sector. Guano also contributed in this regard. The decision of the Cape Colony in 1889 to formally transform the guano trade into a state-controlled enterprise, complemented by formal quality control measures, price fixing and a subsidised transport system, was motivated by the

concern of farmer-politicians for the growth and development of Cape agriculture and followed a long period of sustained agitation. Any form of price control, which was regarded as an unnecessary constraint on the development of free trade, was opposed. This was coupled with a concern about the inequitable distribution of the benefits that followed price reductions since farmers in the Eastern Province were consistently denied the benefits of cheap guano. These differences effectively prevented the unification of farming interests and unnecessarily prolonged their fight for fair access to their preferred fertiliser. Despite their separation, but due to their unrelenting pressure, farmers as a collective succeeded in securing credit sales, a system of regional guano depots, regular price reductions and more affordable public transportation of their purchases. The consistent agitation of Afrikaner politicians, supported by regular deputations who represented both their own individual interests and that of their constituency within the wheat-growing and other farming areas of the Western Province, raised both the profile of themselves and that of the organisations that they represented. Due to their involvement with a diversity of agricultural enterprises such as sheep and wine and the fact that farmers were oftentimes involved in all or at least two of these industries, it now is possible to add guano as an important factor in the rise of Afrikaner political consciousness and political organisation.

In addition to having to deal with aggressive American guano imperialism, the promulgation of legislation connected with the guano trade, such as the Guano Ordinance, served as a policy precedent for the exploitation of the product in other parts of the British Imperial world. The Cape Colony provided the government of Western Australia with both the regulation and governance model to structure the handling of mining activities along its coast and in the Pacific Ocean. Locally, the trade in the Colony also coincided with a period of intense contestation between Britain and her colonies about greater powers of self-government and the right to formulate independent policy. This study, although not a study into the history of constitutional development in the Cape Colony, however, illuminated and added to our further understanding of developments in this regard. It also provided new perspectives on the tension between the Imperial and Colonial governments around the issue of policy transfer subsequent to awarding representative and responsible government. In addition, it served as a lens into the local-imperial tensions experienced during this prolonged

process of policy transfer and the development and consolidation of a system of political parties and the evolution of parliamentary institutions and practices during the early period of constitutional development of the country. It also clearly revealed the need for new research and perspectives on the self-government movement in South African history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Archival Material (Cape Town Archives Depot)

Central Archives Division (CAD)

CAD, 2/1/1/63.

Colonial Office (CO)

Memorials Received

Volumes

4020; 4022; 4026; 4027; 4031; 4052; 4053; 4056; 4063; 4067; 4074; 4077; 4091; 4105;
4107; 4120; 4121 ; 4131; 4134; 4136; 4141; 4142; 4145; 4146; 4151; 4155; 4156; 4164;
4167; 4172; 4218; 4227; 4308

Treasury and Audit Office

Volumes:

525 Treasury and Audit Office.
539 Treasury and Audit Office.
564 Treasury and Audit Office.

Government House (GH)

Volume

1/161 Papers Received from Secretary of State, London: General
Despatches (1844).
1/167 Papers Received from Secretary of State, London: General
Despatches (1845).
1/171 Papers Received from Secretary of State, London: General
Despatches (1845).
1/184 Papers Received from Secretary of State, London: General
Despatches (1847).
1/325 Papers Received from Secretary of State, London: General
Despatches (1869).

- 1/363 Papers Received from Secretary of State, London: General Despatches (1876).
- 1/467 Papers Received from the Secretary of State, London: General Despatches: London Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa (1900).
- 23/12 Papers despatch to Secretary of State, London: General Despatches (1845).
- 23/15 Papers despatch to Secretary of State, London: General Despatches (1845).
- 23/17 Papers despatch to Secretary of State, London: General Despatches (1847).
- 23/30 Papers despatch to Secretary of State, London: General Despatches (1869).
- 23/33 Papers despatch to Secretary of State, London: General Despatches (1876).
- 23/38 General Despatches (1883).
- 23/39 General Despatches (1888).
- 23/114 General Despatches (1908).
- 23/133 General Despatches (1910).
- 35/32 General Despatches (1897 – 1898).
- 35/251 Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in Africa: Game Laws of the Cape Colony (1907 – 1910).

Department of Agriculture (AGR)

Volume:

- 147/616 Analysis of Fertilisers – Guano (1893).
- 153/667 Guano Applications for (1892 – 1893).

- 203/1445 Seal and Guano Islands: Management of Under Fish Protection Act (1893).
- 221/1881 Guano Analysis of – For Public Works Department (1894-1895).
- 227/2057 Guano – Alleged Theft of (1893 – 1895).
- 229/2151 Guano Stores: Offer of Site for (1895).
- 230/2153 Guano Islands (1876 – 1895).
- 231/2153 Guano Supply – Miscellaneous (1891 -1895).
- 231/2153 Price of Guano – Reduction of Prices (1891 – 1896).
- 231/2153 Depots for Supply of Guano (1891 -1895).
- 231/2153 Enquiries re. Guano (1892 -1895).
- 231/2153 Applications for Guano (1893 – 1894).
- 232/2153 Guano Islands – Commission Captain Jackson & Spence (1891 – 1895).
- 232/2153 Guano Islands – Occupation and Lease of Schaapen and Meeuwen Island (1892 – 1894).
- 232/2153 Lease of Guano Island – Removal of Guano and Eggs (1887 -1895).
- 232/2153 Guano Accounts (1892 – 1895).
- 233/2153 Guano Analysis (1891 – 1894).
- 233/2153 Siding to Guano Stores – Dock Road (1892).
- 233/2153 Guano Islands – Miscellaneous (1890).
- 233/2153 Guano – Storage & Accommodation (1894 – 1895).
- 233/2153 Supplies for Government Guano Islands (1894).
- 233/2153 Guano for Imperial Institute (1896).
- 389/2151 Guano Islands (1896 – 1905) .
- 390/2153 Guano Islands (1897 – 1910).
- 391/2153 Guano Islands (1895 – 1900).
- 391/2153 Guano Islands (1898 – 1904).
- 391/2153 Guano Islands (1892 -1900).
- 394/2153 Guano Islands (1898 – 1903).
- 452/3298 Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds and Fish in South Africa (1899 – 1900).
- 667/0000 Guano Island Commission of 1897 – Evidence (1897).

668/A21	Government Guano Islands – Staff Matters (1907 – 1910).
669/A21	Guano (1905 – 1910).
670/A24	Guano (1907 – 1911).
671/A26	Guano Island Commission (1906 – 1907).
672/A.27	Government Guano Islands (1906 – 1910).
675/D7	Sales of Guano in England (1905 -1906).
1/510/D.6	Notification of Reduction in Price of Guano (1905 – 1907).
1/510/D.7	Purchase of Provisions, Stores etc. For the service of the Government Guano Islands (1905 – 1906).
1/510/D.10	Guano Depots (1905 – 1906).
1/511/D.18:	Report upon Inspection of the Ichaboe Guano Island (1905).

Guano Island Service (GIS)

Volume

11/R.1	Inspection of and Reports on Islands by Government Guano Inspector (1908 – 1922).
11/R.2	Enquiries and Inspections re. Working of Guano Islands by Officers outside the Guano Division (1905 – 1909).
11/W.1	Commission (1907) appointed to Enquire into the Working of the Guano Islands (1906 – 1907).
14/W.5	Administration of Guano Islands – General (1903 – 1923).

Lands of the Cape Colony (LND)

Volume:

1/228/L.71	Guano Leases: Yzerklip Rock, St. Croix Island, Schaapen – and Meeuw Islands, Bird Island, Dassen Island, Duiker Klip, Malgas Island (1887 – 1892).
1/247/L.384	Lease of Mr. Spence’s Portion of Penguin Island.
1/390/L.71	Lease of St. Croix Island, Port Elizabeth (1893 – 1895).
1/398/L.384	Guano Islands – Lease of to De Pass and Company and Others (1894 - 1897).

2/1/L.71 Taking over of Guano Islands in Lamberts Bay and Dassen Island (1889 – 1890).

Public Works Department (PWD)

Volume:

1/2/308/B330 Dassen and Bird Islands: Guano Deposit (1894 – 1899).
2/1/52/30A Cape Town Guano Offices, Bree Street: Foreshore Reclamation(1896 - 1899).
2/1/52/30B Cape Town Offices and Store, Strand Street (1899).
2/2/42/B.33/1 Cape Town: Government Guano Stores (1905 -1909).
2/2/42/B.33/5 Cape Town – Government Guano Stores: Superintendent’s Office (1905 – 1906).
2/3/12/B.300 Transfer of the Administration of the Guano Islands to the Department of Agriculture (1895 – 1897).

Cape Town Municipality (3/CT)

Volume

4/2/1/1/15:2361/7 Guano Store (1905).
4/1/1/72:D.117/1 Public Health: Government Guano Store, Mechau Street (1905 – 1906).

Cape Supreme Court (CSC)

Volume

2/6/1/24 Illiquid Cases.

B. Official Publications of the Cape Colony (AMPT PUBS CCP)

British Parliamentary Papers (BPP); Correspondence regarding expansion by Colonial Powers: Angra Pequena , vol. 18.

British Parliamentary Papers (BPP); Correspondence regarding expansion by Colonial Powers Angra Pequena (South Africa and Native Affairs), (1971).

Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, March 21, Government Notice, November 5, 1844.

Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, No. 2048, March 21, 1845.

Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, July 5, 1907.

Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, September 17, 1907.

Cape of Good Hope : Guano Island Commission, September 24, 1906.

Cape of Good Hope: Memorandum on the working of the guano islands (G.55 – '91).

Cape of Good Hope : Memorandum on the Working of the guano islands (G.55 – '92).

Cape of Good Hope: Memorandum on the working of the guano islands (G.58 – '93).

Cape of Good Hope: Memorandum on the working of the guano islands (G.66 – '94).

Cape of Good Hope: Précis of Papers relative to the removal of guano from Bird Island, Algoa Bay, C. 1 – '86.

Cape of Good Hope: Report of Select Committee on the Annexation of Ichaboe (SC.), July 1861 (A.11 – '61).

Cape of Good Hope: Report of the Select Committee (SC). on the guano islands, (A.3 – '95).

Cape of Good Hope: Report of the Select Committee (SC.) on the guano islands (A.12 – '97).

Cape of Good Hope :Report on the Government Guano Islands, Year 1897, (G.75 – '98).

Cape of Good Hope: Report and Papers of the Commission of Inquiry into the management of the Government Guano Islands, July – August 1897, (C.10 –'98).

Cape of Good Hope: Report of the Select Committee (SC.) on the guano islands (A.30 -'99).

Cape of Good Hope :Report of the Superintendant of the Government Guano Islands, Year 1902; (G.17 – 1903).

Cape of Good Hope: Report of the Superintendant of the Government Guano Islands, Year 1903 (G.50 – 1904).

Cape of Good Hope :Report of the Superintendent of the Government Guano Islands, Year 1907 (G.33. –1907).

Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly (HA.), 1861.

Cape of Good Hope : Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1889.

Cape of Good Hope :Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1895.

Cape of Good Hope : Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1907.

Cape of Good Hope: Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council (LC.), 1862.

Cape of Good Hope : Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1896.

C. Other / Foreign Official Publications

Guano Islands Act, Thirty Fourth Congress, Session 1, Chapter CLXIV, available from <http://memory.loc.gov/ll/sl/011/0100/01410119.gif> (Accessed September 25, 2007).

National Research Council. *Lost Crops of the Inca: Little known Plants of the Andes with Promise for Worldwide Cultivation*: Report of an Ad Hoc Panel of the Advisory Committee on Technology Innovation Board on Science and Technology for International Development; Washington D.C., National Academy Press, 1989.

Queensland Coast Islands Act, 1879, available from
<<http://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item.asp?sdID=52>>, (Accessed December 6, 2007).

Stanbury, M. “*Historic Sites in Shark Bay*”, *Report No. 199 Prepared for the Shark Bay Study Group 1986*, – Department of Maritime Archeology, Western Australia Maritime Museum, (1986).

Victoriae Reginae, (1842), (Act 18 of 1842), *Act for the better preservation of the Ports, Harbours, Havens, Roadsteads, Channels, Navigable Creeks and Rivers [in Her Majesty’s Province of South Australia] and for the better regulation of Ships and their Crews in the same*”; Province of South Australia.

D. Republic of South Africa: Official Publications

Republic of South Africa. *National Marine Day / Nasionale Mariene Dag*, 3/12/93, Pretoria, Department of Environmental Affairs, 1993.

E. Journals

Archipelago Bat Guano, “Home Page.” <http://archipelagobatguano.com/6.shtml> (Accessed December 1, 2007).

Adelman, J. & S. Aron, S. “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History.” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999):814-841;<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/104.3/ah000814.html>> (Accessed December 19, 2007).

Anderson, K. "White natures: Sydney's Royal Agricultural Show in post-humanist perspective." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28 (2003): 422 – 441.

Anderson, W. "Excremental Colonialism: Public health and the poetics of pollution." *Critical Inquiry* 21 (Spring,1995): 640-669.

Arluke, A. "Bringing animals into social scientific research." *Society & Animals* 1(1)1993: 5-7; <URL: <<http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa1.1/shapiro.html>> (Accessed May 15, 2007).

Asdal, K. "The problematic nature of nature: The post-constructivist challenge to environmental history." *History & Theory* 42 (December, 2003): 60 – 74.

Axelson, E. "A summary of the history of human settlement at Saldanha Bay." *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*. 42 nos. 2 and 3 (1977): 215 - 221.

Badalian L., & Krivorotov, V. "Applying Natural Sciences to Studying History: Regarding the Example of England and The Industrial Revolution, Part II." *Santalka Filosofija* 14, no. 3 (2006): 37 – 53.

Balachandran, G. "Cultures of Protests in Transnational Contexts: Indian Seamen Abroad, 1886 – 1945." *Transforming Cultures eJournal* 3, no 2 (2008): 45 – 75.

<<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journalsTfC>> (Accessed January 10, 2010).

Balachandran, G. "Producing Coolies, (Un)making Workers: A (Post)Colonial Parable for the Contemporary Present."

<http://hei.unige.ch/sections/hp/Documents/Balachandran_producing%20Coolies.pdf>

(Accessed November 2, 2009).

Beinart, W. "African History and Environmental History." *H-Environment Historiography Series 2000*: 269 -302; <<http://www2.hnet.msu.edu/~environ/historiography/africaeh.htm>>

Beinart, W. "Soil erosion, Conservationism and Ideas about Development: a Southern African Exploration, 1900 – 1960." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (October, 1984): 52 – 83.

Benton, L. "Empires of Exception: Law and Geography in the European Colonial World, 1400 – 1900." Draft Paper, *New York University Legal History Colloquium*, (February 28, 2007).

Berg, R.H. & Weaver, F.S. "Towards a reinterpretation of political change in Peru during the first century of independence." *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* 20, no 1 (1978): 69-84.

Best, P.B. & Shaughnessy. "An independent account of Captain Benjamin Morrel's sealing voyage to the south-west coast of Africa in the *Antarctic, 1828 / 29.*" *Fisheries Bulletin of South Africa* 12 (1979): 1-19.

Bickford, J.H. "Dung in the space race: A surprising fuel for Projects Mercury and Gemini." *American Heritage.com*.
<http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/2004/2/2004_2_4.shtml>; (Accessed December 1, 2007).

Bickford-Smith, V. "Cape Town at the advent of the mineral revolution (c. 1875) economic activity and social structure." *Studies in the history of Cape Town* No.6, edited by C. Saunders, H. Phillips, E. van Heyningen and V. Bickford-Smith.. Centre for African Studies: University of Cape Town, 1988.

Bickford-Smith, V. "Keeping your own council": The struggle between house owners and merchants for control of the Cape Town Municipal Council in the last two decades of the nineteenth century." *Studies in the history of Cape Town* No.5, edited by C. Saunders, H. Phillips, E. van Heyningen and V. Bickford-Smith. Centre for African Studies: University of Cape Town, 1984, 189 – 207.

Bishko, C.J. "The Frontier in Medieval History." Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Mayflower Hotel, Washington D.C., December 29, 1955.

Bittermann, R. "The hierarchy of the soil: Land and Labour in the 19th century Cape Breton community." *Acadiensis* XVIII (1) (March, 1988): 33 – 55.

Bosman, A.L. & Hockey, P.A.R. "Seabird guano as a determinant of rocky intertidal community structure." *Marine Ecology* 32 (September, 1986): 247 – 257.

Bright, Aimee. Biography of John T. Arundel, Unpublished Biography of John T Arundel.<<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/record/804903>>

Bucheli, M. "The politics of vertical integration in extractive industries: Business History and Political Economy." (2007) ,<http://www.business.uiuc.edu/Working_Papers/papers/07-0112.pdf>; (Accessed May 20, 2008).

Buckley, K & Klugman, K. "South Pacific Focus: A record in Words and Photographs of Burns Philp at Work Book review by D. Munro." *Pacific Studies* 11, no. 3 (July,1988): 169 – 173.

Burghardt, A. F. "The bases of territorial claims." *Geographical Review* (1973): 225 – 245; <http://www.geohunter.cuny.edu/Courses/geog334/articles/bases_claims.pdf>; (Accessed June 16,2010).

Burnett, C.D. "The Edges of Empire and the Limits of Sovereignty: American Guano Islands." *American Quarterly* 57, no. 3, (2005): 779 – 803.

Carlos, A.M. & Nicholas, S.J. "Giants of an earlier capitalism: The chartered Trading Companies as modern Multinationals." *Business History Review* 62 (1988): 398 – 419.

Carlos, A.M. & Nicholas, S.J. "Agency problems in early chartered companies: The case of the Hudson's Bay Company." *Journal of Economic History* 50 (1990): 853 – 875.

Carroll, P. "Historical trends in policy transfer in Australia." *Refereed Paper presented to the Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, University of New Castle, 25 – 27 September 2006.*

Castro Herrera, G. "Environmental History (Made) in Latin America." *H-Environment Historiography Series*, (2001)

<<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~environ/historiography/latinam.htm>>; (Accessed June 10, 2007).

Carter, L. "Guano sifters on Gunnison Island." *History Blazer*, June, 1996 <http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/statehood_and_the_progressive_era/guanoshiftersongunnisonisland.html> (Accessed June 10, 2007).

Carruthers, J. "Review of Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600 – 1860.*" *H-Africa, H-Net Reviews*, (February, 1996)

<<http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=30131851657166>>; (Accessed June 10, 2007).

Carruthers, J. "Tracking in game trails: Looking afresh at the politics of eco-history in South Africa." *Ecohistory: New theories and approaches Presentation at the 20th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Sydney, July 2005.*

Carruthers, J. "Changing Perspectives on Wildlife in Southern Africa, C.1840 to C.1914." *Society and Animals* 13, no. 3, (2005): 183 – 200.

Chorley, G.P.H. "The Agricultural Revolution in Northern Europe, 1750- 1880: Nitrogen, legumes and crop productivity." *Economic History Review* 34 (1981): 71 – 93.

Clayton, L.A. "Chinese indentured labour in Peru." *History Today* 30 (June, 1980): 19 – 23.

Cooksey, C. "The history and chemistry of the murexide dye, 1840 – 1865." <<http://www.chriscooksey.demon.co.uk/murexide/page3.html>>; (Accessed September 25, 2007).

Cooper, F. "The state and agricultural labour: Zanzibar after slavery." *Working Papers in Southern African Studies* 3, edited by D.C. Hindson, 1 – 12. Braamfontein: Ravan Press.

Cox, H. & Metcalfe, S. "The role of networks in the early development of the Borneo Company Limited." *Research Papers in International Business*, Paper number 7- 97; Centre for International Business Studies, Southbank University, London (1997).

Christopher, A.J. "Crown land disposal in the Cape of Good Hope, 1853 – 1914." *Historia* 29(1), May, 1980: 40 – 54.

Clarke, D. *The sequential exploitation of the guano islands off the South West African coast*, Unpublished B.A. (Hons) Essay, University of Stellenbosch, 1975.

Craig, R. "The African guano trade." *The Mariners Mirror* 50, no. 1 (1964): 25 – 55.

Cram, E. "Re. *How is bat guano used in the production of cosmetics, particularly eye-make up*", (2000) <<http://www.madsci.org/posts/archives/aug2000/965793989.Gb.r.html>>; (Accessed December 1, 2007).

Cronon., W. "Modes of prophesy and production: Placing nature in history", *Journal of American History* 76, (1990): 1122 – 1131.

[Crowther, W.E.L.H.](#) "The development of the Guano trade from Hobart Town in the fifties and sixties Tasmania", *Papers of the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, (1939): 213-221.

Cushman, G.T. "Webster, Guano & Empire in Iraq." *History News Network* 9 (October 2002), <<http://hnn.us/readcomment.php>>, (Accessed September 25, 2007).

Cushman, G.T. "Enclave Vision: Foreign networks in Peru and the Internationalization of El Niño research during the 1920's." *Proceedings of the International Commission on History of Meteorology*", 1 January 2004: 65 – 73.

Cushman, G.T. "The most valuable birds in the world:International conservation Science and the Revival of Peru's guano industry, 1909 – 1968." *Environmental History* 10, Issue 3, (2005): 477 – 509;<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/10.3/cushman.html>> (Accessed April 26, 2007).

Cushman, G.T. "The Moon's Vagina & The First Guano Lords: Ferlizer and Fertility in Premodern Peru." Paper presented on occasion of the Minisymposium des Zentrums für Umweltgeschichte, IFF, 1070, Wien, Schottenfeldgasse 29 (October 8, 2007).

Daley, B., & Griggs, P. "Mining the Reefs and Cays: Coral, Guano and Rock Phosphate Extraction in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia, 1844 – 1940." *Environment and History* 12 (2006): 395 – 433.

David, J. & van Sittert, L. "A reconstruction of the Cape (South African) fur seal harvest 1653 – 1899 and a comparison with the 20th century harvest." *South African Journal of Science* 104, (March / April 2008): 107 – 110.

- Dixon, W.A. "The guano and other phosphate deposits occurring on Malden Island." *Royal Society of New South Wales: Journal and Proceedings*, XI (1877): 176-81.
- Dooling, W. "In search of profitability: Wheat and wine production in the post-emancipation Western Cape." *South African Historical Journal* 55 (2006): 88 – 105.
- Dooling, W. "The decline of the Cape gentry, 1838 – c. 1900." *Journal of African History* 40 (1999): 215 – 242.
- Duffy, D. C. "The guano islands of Peru: the once and future management of a renewable resource." *Birdlife Conservation Series* 1 (1994): 68 – 76.
- Duffy Burnett, C. "The Edges of Empire and the Limits of Sovereignty: American Guano Islands." *American Quarterly*, 57, no. 3 (2005): 779 – 803.
- Edelman, M. "Political Language and Political Reality." *Political Science*, (Winter, 1985): 10 – 19.
- Etherington, N. (2003), "The Western Australian Constitution in its British Imperial context." (2003); www.historycouncilwa.org.au/25%20October%202003%20%5D%20Etherington%20Paper.pdf (Accessed July 15, 2010).
- Ex Member of the Committee. "The African guano trade- being an account of the trade in guano from Ichabo, and other places on the African coast, more particularly the proceedings of the Committee of Management." *Nautical Magazine*, XVI (1845): 617 - 666.
- Fieldhouse, D.H. "Imperialism: An historiographical Revision." *Economic History Review* 14, no. 2 (1961): 187 – 209.
- Fingard, J. "Masters and Friends, Crimps and Abstainers: Agents of Control in 19th Century Sailortown." *Acadiensis* 8, no. 1(Autumn, 1978): 22 – 46.
- Fingard, J. "The Decline of the Sailor as a Ship Labourer in 19th century Timber Ports." *Labour / La Travail* 22 (1977): 35 – 53.
- Firth, S. "The Pacific Islands and the globalization Agenda." *The Contemporary Pacific* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 2000): 177 – 192.
- Flandreau, M. & Flores, J.H. "Bonds and Brands: Intermediaries and Reputation in Sovereign Debt Markets 1820 – 1830." Mimeo, July 2007; http://www.financesinternationales.sciencespo.fr/finchiers_articles_2/Bonds_and_Brands.pdf; (Accessed October 1, 2008).
- Fletcher, W.S. "The Guano Islands." *Cape Illustrated Magazine* 6, no. 1(1897): 21 – 23.
- Flores, D. "Environmental History: An art of people an place." *OAH Magazine of History* (Spring, 1996): 3 – 4.

Fosberg, F.R. "Man's effects on islands eco-systems." in *The Careless Technology*, (Washington: The Conservation Foundation & Centre for the Biology of Natural Systems, Washington University World, 1969 : 869 – 880.

Frank, E.F. "History of the Guano Mining Industry, Isla De Mona, Puerto Rico." *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies* 60, no. 2 (August, 1998): 121 – 125.

Fry, J.A. "Constructing an Empire?: Guano bananas and American Foreign Relations." *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 3 (Summer, 1996): 483 – 489.

Furness, B."Sea Birds: A natural History (Review)." *Marine Ornithology* 32 (2004): 119 – 120.

Gamber, W."Gendered Concerns: Thoughts on the History of Business and the History of Women." *Business and Economic History* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 1994): 129 – 140.

Gartner, W.B. "Who is an Entrepreneur?": Is the Wrong Question." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, (Summer, 1989): 47 – 67.

Giezen, T. "Gender, myth, and mythmaking." *IIAS Newsletter* 37, (June, 2005): 23.

Glasco, J.D. "The Seaman Feels Him-self a Man." *International Labor and Working – Class History* 66 (Fall, 2004): 40 – 56.

Godley, Andrew C. "Pioneering Foreign Direct Investment in British Manufacturing." *Business History Review* 73, no. 3 (Autumn, 1999): 394 – 429.

Goebel, E. "Management of the Port of Saint Thomas, Danish West Indies during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." *The Northern Mariner / Le Marin du nord* VII no. 4 (October, 1997): 45 – 63.

Goodman, J. "Guano Happens (Sometimes)." November, 2006: 41 – 44; <www.geographical.co.uk>; (Accessed July 15, 2007).

Gordon, E.C. "Scurvy and Anson's Voyage round the World: 1740 – 1744 - An analysis of the Royal Navy's Worst Outbreak." *The American Neptune* XLIV no. 3 (Summer, 1984): 155 – 166.

Gorman, S.M. "The State, Elite, and Export in Nineteenth Century Peru: Towards an Alternative Reinterpretation of Political Change." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21, no. 3 (August, 1979): 395 – 418.

- Greenhill, R.G. and Miller, R.M. "The Peruvian Government and the Nitrate Trade, 1873-1879." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 5 (May, 1973): 107 -131.
- Guelke, L. "Die Blanke Setlaars, 1652 – 1780" In *'n_Samelewing in wording*, edited by H. Gillomee and R. Elphick. Cape Town: Longman, 1982.
- Hathaway, A.C. "Servant Church: Preaching and Teaching Servant Theology to African-American leaders in Union Baptist Church of Baltimore." Servant Leadership Research Forum, August 2006, Regent University;
http://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference_proceedings/servant_leadership_roundtable/2006/pdf/Hathaway.pdf (Accessed June 15, 2007).
- Hobsbawn, E.J. "From Social History to the History of Society." *Daedalus* 100, no.1 (Winter, 1971): 20 – 45.
- Hong, K. "An Ecological Reflection on the Food Self-Sufficiency Debate of the Antebellum American South." *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society* 39, no. 2 (2004): 171 – 194.
- Horseley, C.B. "Splendid Isolation Art of Easter Island: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 11, 2001 to August 4, 2002." <<http://www.thecityreview.com/easter.html>>; (Accessed November 23, 2006).
- Hu-DeHart, E. "Coolies on the Plantations: Opium and Social Control."(2004) <<http://192.38.121.218/issco5/documents/Hu-DeHartEvelyn.doc>> (Accessed October 18, 2007).
- Inggs, E. J. "Mfengu beach labour and Port Elizabeth harbour development, 1835 – 1870", *Contree* 21 (January, 1987): 5 – 12.
- Jacobsen, N. "Book Review of P.E. Gootenberg, (1989), Between silver and guano: Commercial Policy and the state in Post Independence Peru." (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press), *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23, Part 2, (May, 1991): 448 – 450.
- Jacobson, L. and Noli, D., (1987), "An Eye Witness Account of Coastal Settlement and Subsistence along the Northern Namibian Coast." *The South African Archeological Bulletin* 42 (146), December: 173 – 174.
- Jerolmack, C. "Animal archeology: Domestic pigeons and the nature-culture dialect." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 111, Issue 1, (April, 2007): 74 – 95.
- Jones, G. "Diversification strategies and corporate governance in trading companies: Anglo-Japanese comparisons since the late Nineteenth Century." *Business and Economic History* 25, no. 2 (Winter, 1996): 103 – 118.
- Jordan, W.T. "The Peruvian Guano Gospel in the Old South." *Agricultural History* 24, no. 4 (October, 1950): 211 – 221.
- Joubert, K. "Opwelling is Weskus se 'enjin'." *Custos* 11, Issue 11, (1990): 42 – 44.

- Jung, M. "Outlawing "Coolies": Race, Nation, and Empire in the Age of Emancipation." *American Quarterly* 57(3), September, 2005: 677 -701.
- Kallaway, P. "Tribesman, Trader, Peasant and Proletarian: The Process of Transition from a Pre-capitalist to a Capitalist mode of Production in the immediate hinterland of the Kimberley Diamond Fields during the Nineteenth Century: A Case Study of the Thlaping." P. Bonner (1981), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 2. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press): 8 – 30.
- Kinahan, J. "The historical archeology of nineteenth century fisheries at Sandwich Harbour on the Namib coast." *Cimbebasia* 13 (1991): 1 – 27.
- King, S. & Sigrah, K.R. "Legacy of a Miner's Daughter and Assessment of the Social Changes of the Banabans after Phosphate Mining on Banaba." Conference Lecture presented at "*Changing Islands – Changing Worlds*": *Islands of the World VIII International Conference*, Kinmen Island (Quemoy), Taiwan, 1 – 7 November 2004: 934 – 955.
- Kirk, T. "The Cape economy and the expropriation of the Kat River Settlement, 1846 – 53." S.Marks & A. Atmore (eds.). *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*. (London: Longman, 1980): 226 – 246.
- Klaren, P. F. "The sugar industry in Peru." *Revista de Indias*, vol. LXV(233), 2005: 33 – 48.
- Kondor, L. "The Great Guano Rush of 1844." *Skyhost* 1, no. 1 (1993).
- Lambert, J. "The responsible government question in Natal, 1856 – 1893." *Kleio* (1975):
- Land, I."Customs of the Sea: Flogging, Empire, and the 'True British Seaman' 1770 – 1870." *Interventions* 3, Issue 4 (August, 2001):169 – 185.
- Laracy, H."Quixotix and Utopian:"American adventurers in the Southwest Pacific, 1897 – 1895." *Pacific Studies* 24, no. 1 / 2, (March / June, 2001): 39 – 62.
- Lawlor, R. "The history of Bird Island." *Looking Back* 34, (September, 1995), Historical Society of Port Elizabeth: 5 – 9.
- Lawrence, E.A. "The symbolic role of animals in the Plains Indian Sun Dance." *Society & Animals: Journal of Human – Animal Studies* 1, no. 1 (2004) <http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa1.1/lawrence.html>; (Accessed July 6, 2007).
- Lawrence, F. "Britain's fertility crisis."(April 22, 2006), *The Guardian*, <http://books.guardian.co.uk/reviews/scienceandnature/0,,1758541,00.html>;(Accessed July 18, 2006).
- Lau, B. "Sources for the study of Namibian history in the Cape Archives Depot, 1780 – 1910." *Suid Afrikaanse Argief Jaarblad* (1985): 46 – 56.

Legassick, M. "The Frontier Tradition in South African History." In *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, edited by S. Marks and A. Atmore. (New York: Longman, 1980): 44 – 79.

Legassick, M. & Ross, R. "From slave economy to settler capitalism: The Cape and its extensions, 1800 – 1854", in C. Hamilton; B.K. Mbenga & R. Ross (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa: From Early Times to 1885*, vol. 1; (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Lichtenstein, A. "Breaking from the pack: History from the wolf's perspective? Or a cow's: A new breed of thinkers look beyond."(2007), <http://animalliberationfront.com/Philosophy/Morality/Speciesism/wolfhistory.htm>); (Accessed June 10, 2007).

Livingstone, A. "The west coast of Africa and islands adjacent, where guano may probably be found with remarks for mercantile adventures in these parts." *Nautical Magazine* (1844): 307 – 313.

Mackenzie, J. M. "The Bad, the Indifferent and the Excellent: A Crop of Imperial Biographies." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23, no. 2 (May, 1995): 317 – 324.

Martin, D. "Chinese Migration into Latin America – Diaspora or Sojourns in Peru?" Conference Paper, (2009) http://history.appstate.edu/Conference_Papers/dorothea_martin/paper.pdf), (Accessed March 10, 2009).

Martinez-Alier, J. "Ecology and the Poor: A Neglected Dimension of Latin American History." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23, no. 3 (October,1991): 621 – 639.

Martinez-Allier, J. "Marxism, Social Metabolism, and Ecologically Unequal Exchange." *Draft Paper for presentation at Lund University, Conference on "World Systems Theory and the Environment*; 19 - 22 September 2003.

Matsuda, M.K. "The Pacific." *The American Historical Review* 111, no.3 (June 2006), <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/111.3/matsuda.html>), (Accessed March 10, 2009).

Mathew, W.M. "A primitive export sector: guano production in mid-nineteenth century Peru." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 9, no.1 (1977): 35 – 57.

Mathew, M. "The imperialism of free trade, Peru 1820 – 1870." *Economic History Review* 21 (1968): 562 – 579.

Mathew, W. M. "Peru and the British guano market, 1840- 1870. *Economic History Review* 23 (1970): 112 – 128.

Mathew, W. M. "The first Anglo-Peruvian debt and its settlement, 1822 – 1849." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 2, no. 1 (1970): 81- 98.

- Mathew, W.M. "Foreign contractors and the Peruvian government at the outset of the guano trade." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52, no. 4 (1972): 598 – 620.
- Mathew, M. "Bookreview." *Economic History Review* XLIV, no. 1 (February, 1991): 204 – 205.
- McNeill, J.R. & Winiwarter, V. "Breaking the sod: Humankind, History and Soil." *Science* 304, (June 11, 2004): 1627 – 1629.
- Midgley, M. "The four-leggeds, the Two-leggeds, and the Wingeds: An overview of *Society and Animals* 1." *Society & Animals* 1, no. 1 (1993)
<<http://www.psveta.org/sa/sa1.1/shapiro.html>>; (Accessed October 15, 2007).
- Mohr, R. "Enduring Signs and Obscure Meanings: Contested Coats of Arms in Australian Jurisdictions." *Paper presented to the workshop on Contemporary Issues in the Semiotics of Law*, IISL, Oñati; 15-17 May 2002.
- Mosley, S. "Common ground: Integrating social and environmental history." *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3(Spring, 2006): 915 - 933
<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journal/jsh/39.3/mosley.html>> (Access May 14, 2007).
- Munro, D. "Book Review of K. Buckley & K. Klugman,(1986), *South Pacific Focus: A record in Words and Photographs of Burns Philp at Work*." Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, *Pacific Studies* 11, no. 3 (July, 1988): 169 – 173.
- Murphy, R.C. "The oceanography of the Peruvian littoral with reference to the abundance and distribution of marine life." *Geographical Review* 23, no. 1 (January, 1923): 64 – 83.
- Nathan, A.J. "The great guano boom" *Lantern* 39, no. 3 (1990): 37 – 40.
- Newbury, C. "Mammon in Paradise: Economic Enterprise in Pacific Historiography." *Pacific Studies* 19, no. 2 (June, 1996): 37 – 58.
- Newton-King, S. "The labour market of the Cape Colony, 1807 – 28." In *Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa*, edited by Marks, S. & A. Atmore. (New York: Longman): 171-207.
- O'Connor, B. "The Origins and Development of the British Coprolite Industry." *Mining History* 14, no. 5 (Summer, 2001): 46 – 57.
- O'Donnell, D. "The nineteenth century Pacific guano trade." *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology* 19, no. 2 (1995): 27 – 32.
- O'Donnell, D. "The Pacific guano islands: The stirring of American empire in the Pacific Ocean." *Pacific Studies* 16, no. 1 (1993): 43 – 66.

- O'Donnell, D. "The Lobos Islands: American Imperialism in Peruvian waters in 1852." *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 39 (1993): 37 – 55.
- Olinger, J. P. "The guano age in Peru." *History Today* 30 (June, 1980): 13 – 18.
- Overton, M. "Agricultural revolution in England, 1500 – 1850." (2002),
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/agricultural_revolution_print.html> (Accessed October 15, 2006).
- Parkinson, C. "George Higinbotham and Responsible Government in Colonial Victoria." *Melbourne University Law Review*, vol. 6, (2001);
< <http://www.austlii.edu.au/journals/MULR/2001/6.HTML>>(Accessed June 25, 2010).
- Park, S.H. "Rough Waters: Life at Sea in the 19th Century", *Department of History, University of Connecticut Conference Papers*, (1995).
<<http://digital/commons.uconn.edu/hist.papers/3.>>
- Parnaby, A. "The many motivations of Jack Tar", Review Essay, (2008).
<<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/11t/62/paraby.html>>,(Accessed April 21, 2010).
- Pawson, E. & Dovers, S. "Environmental History and the Challenge of Interdisciplinarity: An Antipodean Perspective." *Environment & History* 9 (2003): 1 – 23.
- Phillips, J.A.S. "The avarice bidders for immense wealth." *Windhoek Observer*, (September 26, 1981): 36 – 37.
- Phillips, J.A.S. "Alfred A. De Pass: Benefactor of Groot Constantia." *Bulletin of the South African Cultural History Museum* 2, 1981: 5 – 13.
- Phillips, J.A.S. "The Pomona Story based on the Dr. George Wunderlich Collection." *Journal of the SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft*, 1981/2 – 1982/3: 11 – 43.
- Phillips, J.A.S. "The de Pass Claim at Lüderitzbucht- a Tragicomedy par Excellence!" *Journal XXXIX- SWA Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* (1984/1985): 53 – 64.
- Phillips, J.A.S. "The forgotten discoverer of guano, Benjamin Morrell." *Rössing* (April 1987).
- Phillips, L. "British slavery after abolition: the Pacific trade." *Race and Class* 41, no. 3 (Jan-March 2000): 13 – 27.
- Pirie, P. "Untangling the myths and realities of fertility and mortality in the Pacific Islands." *Asia- Pacific Population Journal*, (June, 2000): 5 – 20.
- Porter, A. "Brittain, the Cape Colony, and Natal, 1870 – 1914: Capital, shipping, and the Imperial Connection Connection." *Economic History Review* 34 (1981): 554 – 577.

Porter, A. "John Owen Smith and the Port Elizabeth Public Library." *Looking Back* 10 (1970), Historical Society of Port Elizabeth: 48 – 50.

Porter, A. "John Owen Smith 1840 – 1871.", *Looking Back* 24 (1984), Historical Society of Port Elizabeth: 93 – 96.

Proyekt, L. "Marxism, ecology and the American Indian." (November, 1999). <<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/25b/009.html>> ; (Accessed February 18, 2008).

Quinlan, M. "We've been down this road before: Evidence on the Health Consequences of Precarious Employment in Industrial Societies, 1840 – 1920." Paper delivered at the Inaugural Conference of the Academic Association of Historians in Australian and New Zealand Business Schools (AAHANZBS), University of Sydney, December 14 – 15, 2009.

Rand, R.W. "Guano enterprise in South West Africa." *Ostrich* 23, Issue 3 (December, 1952): 169 – 185.

Richards, R. & Du Pasquier, T. "Bay whaling off Southern Africa, c.1785 – 1805." *South African Journal of Marine Science* 8 (1989): 231 – 250.

Richardson, J., (not dated), 'Sic vos non vobis' – The School Motto"; <http://www.raglanjunior.org/index.php/about/info/sic_vos_non_vobis_-_the_school>; (Accessed June 19, 2010).

Ritvo, H. "History and Animal Studies." *Society & Animals* 10, no. 4, (2002); <<http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa10.4/ritvo.html>>, (Accessed July 15, 2007).

Romney, P. "A conservative reformer in Upper Canada: Charles Fothergill, Responsible Government and the "British Party", 1824 -1840." *Historical Papers / Communications Historiques* 19, no. 1(1984): 42 – 62.

Ross, G.J.B. & Randall, R.M. "Phosphatic sand removal from Dassen Island: effect on penguin breeding and guano harvests." *South African Journal of Science* 86 (1990):172 – 174.

Ross, R. "The origins of capitalist agriculture in the Cape Colony: A survey." W. Beinart, P.J. Delius & S. Trapido (eds.). *Putting a plough to the ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in rural South Africa, 1850 – 1930*. (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1986): 56 – 100.

Ross, R. "Emancipations and the Economy of the Cape Colony." <https://www.openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/1887/4235/1/1246876_067.pdf> (Accessed September 20, 2008).

R. S. F. (Anonymous) "Statistics of Guano." *Journal of the American Geographical and Statistical Society* 1, no. 6 (June, 1859): 181 -189.

Sachs, A. "The ultimate "other": Post – colonialism and Alexander von Humboldt's ecological relationship with nature." *History and Theory* 42 (December, 2003):111 – 135.

- Salmon, M.S. "A Bull Market: The recent historiography of Canadian Economic Development." *Archivaria* 43 (On-line), January 1, 1997; <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivaria/index/article/view/12182/13194>; (Accessed October 31, 2007).
- Schick, A. "Agencies in search of Principles." *OECD Journal on Budgeting* 2(1),2002: 7 – 26.
- Schwarz, F. D. "Does guano drive history." *Invention & Technology Magazine* 19, (Spring, 2004), http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/2004/4/2004_4_2.shtml; (Accessed July 15, 2008).
- Schwelkart, L. "Antebellum Southern Bankers: Origins and Mobility." *Business and Economic History* 14 (1985): 79 – 102.
- Scott, J.C. "Resistance without Protest and without Organization: Peasant Opposition to the Islamic Zukat and the Christian Tithe." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29, no. (3), (July, 1987): 417 – 452.
- Secada, C. & Alexander, G. "Guano and Shipping: The W. R. Grace interest in Peru, 1865 – 1885." *Business History Review* 59, no. 4 (Winter, 1985): 597 – 621.
- Sennholz, H.F. "The phantom called 'monopoly.'" *The Free Market*, (March, 1960): 39 – 53.
- Shapiro, K.J. "Editor's introduction to *Society and Animals*." *Society and Animals* 1, no. 1,(1993); <http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa1.1/shapiro.html> (Accessed July 15, 2007).
- Shewmaker, K.E. "Untaught Diplomacy": Daniel Webster and the Lobos Island Controversy." *Diplomatic History* 1, (1977): 321 – 340.
- Shineberg, D. "The New Hebridean is everywhere": The Oceanian Labour Trade to New Caledonia, 1865 – 1930." *Pacific Studies* 18, no. 2 (1995): 1 – 21.
- Snyder, L. "The role of Herbert Bismarck in the Angra Pequena negotiations between Germany and Britain, 1880 – 1885." *Journal of Negro History*, (1950): 435 – 452.
- Sörlin, S. & Warde, P. "The problem of the problem of Environmental History – a Re-reading of the field and its purpose." *Unpublished Conference Paper*, (April, 2005).
- Sörlin, S. & Warde, P. "The problem of the problem of Environmental History – a Re-reading of the field and its purpose." *Unpublished Conference Paper*, (September 2005).
- Spadi, F. "Navassa: Legal Nightmares in a Biological Heaven?" *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin*, (Autumn, 2001): 115 – 130.
- Spenneman, D. H. R. S. "Exploitation of bird plumages in the German Mariana Islands." *Micronesia* 31, no. 2 (1999): 309 – 318.

Steyn, P. "The greening of our past ? : An assessment of South African Environmental historiography", *Lecture presented on occasion of the Meeting of the American Society for Environmental History, Tacoma, Washington* published in *H- Environment Historiography Series* (2000) <<http://www2.hnet.msu.edu/~environ/historiography>> (Accessed May 14, 2007).

Stockton, P. L. & Lutjeharms, J. R. E. "Observations of vortex dipoles on the Benguela upwelling front." *The South African Geographer* 15, no. 1-2, (September- April, 1987-88): 27 – 35.

Stroud, E. "Does nature always matter?: Following dirt through history." *History & Theory* 42 (December, 2003): 75 – 81.

Sutter, P. "Reflections: What can U.S. Environmental Historians Learn from Non-U.S. Environmental Historiography ?" *Environmental History* (January 2003), < www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/8.1/sutter.html>; (Accessed July 15, 2007).

Sutton, J. E. G. "Irrigation and soil- conservation in African Agricultural History." *Journal of African History* 25 (1984): 25 – 41.

Swart, S. "Riding High - horses, power and settler society, c. 1654 – 1840." *Kronos* 29, (November, 2003): 47 – 63.

Taylor, R.H. "The Sale and Application of Commercial Fertilizers in the South Atlantic States to 1900." *Agricultural History* 21(1), January, 1947: 46 – 52.

Terrel, J.E. "Islands in History: Historical, Ethnographic and Archeological Approaches to Island Landscapes", *Discussant's Comments presented at the 98th Annual Meeting, American Anthropological Association*, (November 20, 1999).

Thomas, D.P. "Sailors, scurvy and science." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 90 (January, 1997): 50 – 54.

Thompson, A. "The power and privileges of association: Co-ethnic networks and the economic life of the British Imperial world." *South African Historical Journal* 56 (2006): 43 – 59.

Thomson, F. M. L. "The second Agricultural Revolution, 1815 – 1880." *Economic History Review* 21 (1968): 62 – 77.

Torstendahl, R. "Thirty- five years of Theories in History: Social Science Theories and Philosophy of History in the Scandinavian Debate." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 25, no. 1/2 (1999):1 – 26.

Van Breda, P. "Ontstaan van die eerste Landbou- en Boereverenigings in die Kaapkolonie tot 1883." *Contree* 14 (1983): 20 – 24.

Van der Linde, G.J. "The South African Fertiliser Industry – a Short History – and Overview of Future Challenges." *Fertilizer Focus*, (May / June, 2006): 23 – 26.

- Van Sittert, L. "The handmaiden of industry: Marine science and fisheries development in South Africa 1895 – 1939." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 26, no. 4 (December, 1995): 531 – 558.
- Van Sittert, L. "Holding The Line: The Rural Enclosure Movement in the Cape Colony, c. 1865 – 1910." *Journal of African History* 43 (2002): 95 – 118.
- Van Sittert, L. "From "mere weeds" and "bosjes" to a Cape floral kingdom: the re-imagining of indigenous flora at the Cape, c. 1890 – 1939." *Kronos* 28 (November, 2002): 102 – 126.
- Van Sittert, L. & Crawford, R. "Historical reconstruction of guano production on the Namibian islands 1843 - 1895." *South African Journal of Science* 99 (January / February, 2003):13 – 16.
- Van Zyl, D. "Die geskiedenis van die graanbou in die Kaapkolonie, 1795 – 1826", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* 1, (Pretoria, 1968).
- Vizcarra, C. "Guano, credible commitments and state finances in nineteenth century Peru." (University of Vermont, September,2006),
http://www.international.ucla.edu/economichistory/eh_papers/vizcarra_state.pdf;
(Accessed July 15, 2007).
- Visser, W. "Trends in South African Historiography and the present state of historical research." Paper presented at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden, 23 September 2004.
- Wagner, R. "Zoutpansberg: The dynamics of a Hunting Frontier." S. Marks & A. Atmore (eds.). *Economy and Society in Pre- Industrial South Africa*, (New York: Longman, 1980): 313 – 349.
- Warren, D. "Property, profit and power: The rise of a landlord class in Cape Town in the 1840s." In *Studies in the History of Cape Town* No. 6, edited by C. Saunders, H. Phillips, E. van Heyningen and V. Bickford-Smith.. Centre for African Studies: University of Cape Town, 1988.
- Waters, H. "Historiography of the Pacific: the case of The Cambridge History." *Race & Class* 41, no. 4 (2000): 101 – 119.
- Watson, A.C. "The guano islands of southwestern Africa." *Geographical Review* 20(4), 1930: 631 – 641.
- Weaver, J.C. "Exploitation by Design: The dismal science, land reform and the Cape Boers, 1805 - 22." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29, no. 3 (September, 2001): 1 – 32.
- White, R. "Environmental history, ecology and meaning." *Journal of American History* 76 (1990): 1111 -1116.

Willmott, B. "Chinese contract labour in the Pacific Islands during the nineteenth century." *The Journal of Pacific Studies* 27(2), 2004: 161 – 176.

Wilson, J. "Rural Revolution – Wheat, Wool and Politics in the Overberg." *Contree* 31(April, 1992): 3 – 10.

Witt, J.M. "Master next to God?"- The merchant captain from the 17th to the 19th century." J.M. Witt, *The Sea in European History*, (Edizioni Plus, 2001): 237 – 249.

Wolch, F. "Anima urbis." *Progress in Human Geography Lecture; Lecture originally delivered at the AAG Annual Conference, Los Angeles, 2001*: 721 – 742.

Worster, D. "Transformation of the Earth: Toward an agroecological perspective in history", *Journal of American History* 76 (1990): 1087 – 1106.

Zins, H. "The international context of the creation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885." *Pula Journal of African Studies* 11, no. 1(1997): 54 – 62.

F. Books

Beinart, W., P.J Delius. & S. Trapido (eds.). *Putting a plough to the ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in rural South Africa, 1850 – 1930*. Braamfontein: Raven Press, 1986.

Beinart, W. *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment 1770 – 1950*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Bixler, R. W. *Anglo- German Imperialism in South Africa, 1880 – 1900*. Baltimore: Warwick & York Inc., 1932.

Boëseken. A.J., (red.) *Dagregister en briewe van Z. Wagenaer*. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1973.

Bonilla, H. "Peru and Bolivia" in L. Bethell, (ed.). *Spanish America after the independence c.1820 –c.1870*. New York; University of Cambridge Press, 1987.

Bryson, R.A., & Murray, T.J. *Climates of Hunger: Mankind and the World's Changing Weather*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977.

Burman, J. & Levin, S. *The Saldanha Bay Story*. Cape Town & Pretoria: Human & Rousseau, 1974.

Carr, E.H. *What is History?*, 2nd Edition. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited, 1987.

Chase, J.C. *The Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Province of Algoa Bay, with statistics of the Colony*. London: Pelham Richardson 1842.

Davenport, T.R.H. & Saunders, C. *South Africa: A Modern History*. 5th edition. London: Longman, 2000.

De Kock, W.J. "Die ekstra-territoriale vraagstukke van die Kaapse owerheid, 1872 –1885", *Argiefjaarboek vir S.A. Geskiedenis*. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1992.

De Kock, W.J. (red.). *Suid Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek*. Kaapstad: Nasionale Boekhandel, 1979.

De La Vega, Y.G. *Royal commentaries of the Yncas*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1871.

Dye, T. R. *Understanding Public Policy*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 8th edition, 1995.

Eden, T.E. *The search for nitre and the true nature of guano: being an account of a voyage to the south west coast of Africa; also a description of the minerals found there and of the guano islands in that part of the world*. London: Groombridge, 1846.

George, M. "John Bardwell Ebdon: His Business and Political Career at the Cape, 1806 – 1849." *Archives Year Book of South African History* 49, vol. 1. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1986.

Gillomee, H. & Elphick, R. (eds.). *'n Samelewing in wording*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1990.

Gootenberg, P. *Imagining Development: Economic Ideas in Peru's "Fictitious Prosperity" of Guano, 1840 – 1880*. Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1993.

Gootenberg, P. *Between Silver and Guano: Commercial Policy and the State in Post Independence Peru*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Green, L. *Panther Head*. Cape Town: Stanley Paul & Co, 1955.

Grundlingh, M.A. S. "The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope, with special reference to Party Politics, 1872 to 1919." *Archives Year Book for South African History*. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1969.

Hatfield, E.F. *St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope or Incidents in the missionary life of the Reverend James Mcgregor Bertram of St. Helena*. New York: Edward H. Fletcher, 1852.

Herman, L. *The History of the Jews in South Africa from the earliest Times to 1870*. London: 1930.

Jeffries, K.M. (ed.). *The Memorandum of Commissary J.A. De Mist, containing Recommendations for the Form and Administration of Government at the Cape of Good Hope, 1802*. Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1920.

Leigh, G.J. *The World's Greatest Fix: A History of Nitrogen and Agriculture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Levin, J. *The export economies: Their pattern of development in historical perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.

Lewsen, P. "The First Crisis in Responsible Government in the Cape Colony." *Archives Yearbook for South African History*, Vol. II. Pretoria: Government Printer 1942.

Marks, S. & Atmore, A. (eds.). *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*. London: Penguin, 1980.

Mathew, W. M. *The House of Gibbs and the Peruvian guano monopoly*. London: Royal Historical Society, 1981.

Mcall Theal, G. Mcall. *History of South Africa since 1795*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1920.

Metraux, A. *Easter Island: A stone-age civilization of the Pacific*. London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1957.

Meltzer, J. L. "The growth of Cape Town commerce and the role of John Fairbain's Advertiser, 1835- 1859." *Argief Jaarboek vir Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* 57. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1994.

Molteno, P.A. *The Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno*, vol. 1. London: Smith, Elder, 1900.

Moorson, R. *Fishing: Exploiting the sea*. London: CIRP, 1984.

Morrell, B. *A narrative of four voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, Chinese Sea, Ethiopc and Southern Atlantic Ocean, Indian and Antartic Ocean from the year 1822 to 1831*. New York: Harper, 1832.

Muir, R. *The new Commonwealth: A short history of the British Commonwealth*. London: Georg Phillip & Son Ltd., 1954.

Odell, P.R. & Preston, D. *Economies and societies in Latin America: A geographical interpretation*. London: Wiley & Son, 1973.

Odell, P.R. "Major themes in Latin American economic geography" in P.R. Odell & D. Preston, *Economies and societies in Latin America: A geographical interpretation*. London: Wiley & Son, 1973.

Oliver, D. L. *The Pacific Islands*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.

Payne, A. & Crawford, R. *Oceans of life off Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Vlaeberg Uitgewers, 1994.

Phillips, J.A.S. *Deutsch-englische Komödie der Irrungen um Südwestafrika: eine Studie zu Bismarcks Kolonialpolitik und deren Folgen*. Pfaffenhofen: Afrika Verlag, 1986.

Prescott, W.H. *History of the Conquest of Peru*. London: Routledge & Sons, 1847.

Rand, R. *Die Staatsghwano-eilande: Voëls en Pelsrobbe*. Pretoria: Departement van Landbou, 1950.

Rosenthal, E. *Stars and Stripes in Africa*. Cape Town: National Books, 1968.

Scott, J.C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1985.

Shaughnessy, P.D. *Historical population levels of seals and seabirds on islands off Southern Africa, with special refernce to Seal Island, False Bay*. Cape Town: Sea Fisheries Research Institute, 1984.

Skaggs, J. *The Great Guano Rush: Entrepreneurs and American Overseas Expansion*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1994.

Stewart, W. *Chinese bondage in Peru*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1951.

Swinfen, D.B. *Imperial Control of Colonial Legislation, 1813 – 1865: A study of British policy towards Colonial Legislative Powers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Tarmarkin, M. *Volk and Flock: Ecology, Identity and Politics among Cape Afrikaners in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Pretoria: Unisa, 2010.

Taylor, A.J.P. *Germany's first bid for colonies, 1884- 1885*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1938.

Thom, H.B. (red.). *Jan van Riebeeck: Dagregister*. Kaapstad: Van Riebeeck Society, 1974.

Van Onselen, C. *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900 – 1933*. London: Pluto Press, 1976.

Van Zyl, D. “Die geskiedenis van die graanbou in die Kaapkolonie, 1795- 1826.” *Argief Jaarboek vir Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* 27. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1968.

Waisbard, R. & Waisbard, S. *Masks, mummies and magicians: A voyage of exploration in Pre-Inca Peru*. Edinburg & London: Oliver & Boyd, 1965.

Warren , D. “ Merchants, Commissioners and Wardmasters: Municipal and colonial politics in Cape Town, 1840 – 1854.” *Argief Jaarboek vir Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* II. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1992.

[Williams, M. & MacDonald](#), B.K. *The Phosphateers: A History of the British Phosphate Commissioners and the Christmas Island Phosphate Commission*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1985.

G. Dissertations

Alexander, W.J. *Wage labor, Urbanization and Culture Change in the Marshall Islands*. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1978.

Bregman, L.D. “*Snug little Coteries*”: *A history of Scientific Societies in Early Nineteenth Century Cape Town, 1824 – 1835.*” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Univeristy College, London, 2003.

Bullard, D.T. *A Deterritorialized History: Investigating German Colonialism through Deleuze and Guattari*. Unpublished Master of Arts (History) Degree, University of Victoria, 2005.

Clarke, D. (née Webb). *The Sequential Exploitation of the guano islands off the South West African Coast*. Unpublished B.A. (Hons) Essay, University of Stellenbosch, 1975.

Cushman, G.T. *The Lords of Guano: Science and Management of Peru's Marine Environment, 1800-1973*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Texas, May, 2003.

De Kock, W.J. “*Die ekstra-territoriale vraagstukke van die Kaapse regering, 1872- 1885.*” Ongepubliseerde doktorsale proefskrif (Gesiedenis), Universiteit van Stellenbosch, 1948.

Greef, F. Van Rhyn. *Die Suid Afrikaanse Kunsmisbedryf: Struktuur, Gedrag en Prestasie*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (Economics), University of Pretoria, October 1983.

Meagher, A.J. *The introduction of Chinese laborers to Latin America: The “Coolie Trade, 1847- 1874.* Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, 1975.

Scholtz, P. L. *Die historiese ontwikkeling van die Onder Olifantsrivier 1660 – 1902: Gesiedenis van die distrik van Van Rhynsdorp*. Ongepubliseerde doktorsale proefskrif, Januarie, Universiteit van Stellenbosch, 1964.

Van Sittert, L. *Labour, Capital and the State in the St. Helena Bay Fisheries c. 1856- c.1956*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992.

Walker, R. "*The de Pass family*." Unpublished B.Hons Thesis, Bristol Polytechnic, July, 1979.

Wines, R.A. "*From recycled Wastes to Commercial Fertilizers*." Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Brown University, 1981.

H. Newspapers

Cape Argus. "Guano." 1 January 1861.

Cape Times. "Guano for Eastern Province." 14 July 1893.

De Zuid Afrikaan. "De guano kwestie - een deputasie van Malmesbury en Omstreken." 17 Januarie 1893.

Ons Land. "Guano." 17 January 1893.

Shipping and Mercantile Gazette. 28 March 1845.

South Australian Register. 23 January 1845.

The Australian. 26 April 1845.

The Cape of Good Hope & Port Natal Shipping and Mercantile Gazette. 19 April 1845.

The Cape of Good Hope & Port Natal Shipping and Mercantile Gazette. 25 April 1845.

The Courier. 29 October 1844.

Windhoek Observer. "The avarice bidders for immense wealth." 26 September 1981.

I. Personal Communication

D. Clarke (née Webb). Letter to Author, January 17, 1997.

Day, R. Former Guano Concession Holder, Cape Town, Letter to Author; November 22, 1994.

J. Internet

House of Commons Debates. 26 February 1969, volume 194, columns 404 – 406; <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1869/feb/26/leave>>; (Accessed June 15, 2009).

University of Hull Archives. *Pressure Group Archives Subject Guide: Association for the Protection of Sea Birds*, < <http://www.hull.ac.uk/arc/collection/pressuregrouparchives/apsb>; > (Accessed June 15, 2009).