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1987-05-11
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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper to be
presented at Seminar in RW 319 at
4.00 p.m. on Monday 11 May 1987

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"ENGAGING IN HONEST LABOUR": LAND, INHERITANCE AND STRATIFICATION IN THE REHOBOTH BASTER GEBIET

by Patrick Pearson

No. 212

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Introduction

The Rehoboth Gebiet, "homeland" of the Baster people of Namibia, covers an area of about 1.3 million hectares, or three million acres. Located slightly south on the central plateau, it has often been described as including some of the best farming land in the territory. The northern parts are regarded as being prime pasturage for large stock, while the drier and more sandy southern reaches are generally considered to be very good country for the raising of karakul, sheep and goats. But even the casual observer is struck by the fact that the land is poorly and unevenly utilized for farming purposes. Although there are a few farms where installations and livestock would compare very favourably with some of the better ones in the surrounding white areas, this is far from common. Many Baster-owned farms are clearly overcrowded, and unable to support through farming the large numbers of people settled on them. They are rural slums, where the only evidence of farming will be a few goats cropping the odd tuft of vegetation amid the many poorly-constructed corrugated-iron shacks. On other farms there may be good grazing, but few of the other necessities required to pursue modern farming methods: the quality of the livestock may be poor, and there may be a shortage of bore-holes and other installations required for efficient exploitation of the resources. Still other Baster-owned farms consist largely of pangrond: land almost devoid of vegetation, where the surface of the earth has been trampled into a hard crust through overstocking and drought.

In an earlier period, however, farming in the area had prospered. Some grain crops, and even fruit and vegetables, were raised, on both dryland fields and riparian plots - albeit with mixed success. It was, however, in the raising of livestock that the Baster community really excelled. For more than the first decade of German rule in the territory, transportation depended almost entirely on oxen bred from the "superior (Cape) colonial breed" of cattle in the Baster Gebiet. (1) The Schutztruppe also relied, in part, on remounts supplied by Baster breeders from the Gebiet, (2) and a Baster farmer won prizes for horses, cattle, and sheep against stiff competition from German settlers at the Windhoek show in 1902. (3)

Relative prosperity appears to have continued during the German Colonial period, despite the fact that the community lost vast tracts of land (and most of its political independence) under the regime. Likewise, in the early period of South African rule Baster farmers were reported to be "in good circumstances" because of the high prices that they were receiving for slaughter stock exported to the Union markets. (4)

In this paper I attempt to provide a brief outline of the historical conditions and customary practises which have led to the decline in the farming potential of the Gebiet, and secondly to describe the state's development initiative, and the political and economic consequences of this intervention.

Drought and Depression in the Baster Gebiet

In an earlier paper I have described some of the effects on the Baster community of a depression which struck in 1921. (5) The value of slaughter stock was to fall to 20 per cent of prices fetched two years earlier, and Baster farming began a severe decline from which it would not quickly recover.

The early 1920s also saw the majority of Basters embark on a campaign of defiance against the South African authorities over an agreement signed by the Baster Council in 1923. The agreement had failed to secure the return of land lost under the German regime, and also limited Baster political independence. Faced by a rebellion which threatened to spread to other parts of the territory, the administration attempted to bring the Baster community to heel by preventing the export of both firewood and livestock from the Gebiet. Although this had very severe local economic consequences, it proved inadequate as a means of ending the rebellion, apparently because many of the Basters were subsisting from renting grazing land to landless Herero pastoralists. The rebellion was eventually put down by force, and the Hereros were removed to other reserve areas, but for seven years the rebels stood firm in their refusal to collaborate with the state. Their resistance eventually crumbled in the face of drought and the Great Depression.

In his report to the League of Nations for the year 1928, the Administrator for South West Africa noted that "a somewhat severe drought" and exceptional heat had occurred in the second half of the year. (6) These conditions were to persist until 1934, when extensive floods broke what had been the worst drought in the territory in living memory. (7) The combination of drought and depression was to have disastrous effects on the country as a whole, and on the Baster Gebiet in particular.

Farmers lost up to 70 per cent of their livestock,(8) and what remained was naturally of very poor quality. In contrast to the situation in Namibia, the Union, which was virtually the only export market for the territory, had generally good rainfalls - at least up until 1930. Namibian slaughter stock, being of inferior quality in an already oversupplied market, was therefore unsaleable. (9)

In response to these conditions the state initiated a number of relief measures. Ten districts in the territory, including Rehoboth District, were declared drought-stricken, and farmers who resided within them became eligible for various forms of state-subsidised drought relief. (10) The state assistance took the form of the lowering of rail tariffs on stock and stock feed, and the granting of credit on railage costs. The repayment of loans to the Land Bank, as well as the interest on such loans, was deferred. (11)

It is possible that the Basters were the group which was most severely affected by this devastating combination of drought and depression. They were probably more deeply involved in the money economy than were any other indigenous groups, and consequently their inability to sell stock was disastrous in a community which was, in any case, always chronically short of ready cash. (12) But despite the fact that the farmers of the Rehoboth District were eligible for state assistance, Baster farmers actually received virtually nothing to ameliorate their situation. Unable

to afford the cost of supplementary feed, the Basters resorted to pulling down the enormous nests of the sociable weavers to feed their livestock. Reduced rail tariffs on animal feed were worthless to them. The poor condition of their stock, and its consequent unsaleability in the flooded export market made the concessions on its transport equally worthless. Similarly, the deferment on the repayments of loans, and interest on loans, granted by the Land Bank were irrelevant, since the Basters, as "non-whites", had never been granted such loans. (12a)

But while the Basters did not benefit from loans from the Land Bank, local shopkeepers provided an alternative source of credit, and the community soon fell deeply into debt to these traders. Debts of £80 to £100 were common, while it was estimated that only about 10 per cent of the community was in a position to meet their debts (13) which were calculated to be of the order of £20,000 by April 1932. (14)

Even Niklaas Olivier, a member of the Advisory Council, and regarded as being one of the wealthiest men in the Gebiet, was summonsed for debts totalling £85 in 1932. (15) The merchants, it was said, had had numerous debtors jailed "through hunger".

In a letter to the Administrator in September 1930, members of the community complained about the apparent lack of concern by the authorities for their plight. They noted that jobs in the postal services and road works in the Gebiet were in the hands of whites, while no employment was provided by the state for Basters; that ostriches in the Gebiet had been virtually exterminated as a consequence of hunting by police and other white residents, while the ammunition issued to those few Basters who had retained their weapons after the rebellion was severely restricted; that the Basters were not receiving any assistance comparable to that which whites in the territory were receiving. "Waarlik ..." they noted, "... ons is en god vergetene volk." (16)

The Administration responded by initiating relief work repairing roads in the Gebiet. The rate was 3/6 per working day (7 am to 6.30 pm). Half of the cost was borne by the Administration; the other half was was drawn from the Baster Community Fund. No rations were provided. (17) Over 200 Basters took up the offer. Pauper's rations were also provided for women and those men too old or unfit to work. The paupers' list numbered 82 by June of 1932. (18) Since poverty-stricken members of the rebel group generally attempted to avoid all state aid, and apparently tended to rely on the irregular and inadequate support of their co-rebels, this figure does not reflect the true extent of the desperate hardship in the Gebiet. People were, according to the Administrator, "literally dying of hunger" as early as November 1930. (19)

With their herds of livestock depleted by the drought, and in any case unsaleable, and all but abandoned by an uncaring state, the Basters had only one resource left: their grazing lands.

The Hiring of Grazing Lands

In the early part of 1931, good rains fell in the Gebiet, while surrounding areas remained in the grip of the drought. (20) What at first appeared to the Basters to be a heaven-sent relief from their plight was to lead to the near-destruction of the Gebiet's

farming economy. The rains temporarily improved pasture within the Gebiet, while the situation remained desperate in other districts. Soon, the Advisory Council was faced with a flood of applications from white farmers who wanted to hire grazing within the area.

Given the fact that it was the policy of the Administration to assist these farmers, and the fact that the Basters were under increasing pressure from their creditors, it is not surprising that the suggestion that Gebiet pasture be hired out was favourably received in both Windhoek and Rehoboth. At first only applications of farmers who lived within Rehoboth District (of which the Gebiet was a part) were considered, (21) but soon applications from all farmers, including those in districts further afield, were favourably considered. (22)

There was a certain amount of opposition to the hiring of grazing from particular individuals within the Gebiet. Some felt that only Basters should be permitted to hire Baster land, but this was opposed by others, who noted that there was virtually no demand for grazing from within the Gebiet. In any case, one Baster farmer claimed that when he had hired his farm to another Baster the profit had been insufficient to cover even the tax on the farm. The hirers were unable to meet the payments, and he could not easily sue them for the arrears. Whites would probably be better able to meet the hiring fees, he believed. (23)

One of the main reasons why opposition to the hiring of grazing could not be sustained - apart from the fact that many Basters had no other recourse in their straitened circumstances - was that the land was privately owned. Unlike other reserve areas where land was communally held, Baster land had been privatized as early as 1890. The Council had granted title to farms 7,000 morgen in extent to ordinary Burgers, and tracts of 10,000 morgen to its own members. (24) Although it was regarded as totally immoral to refuse grazing or water on your farm to anyone in need, there was nonetheless a strong feeling about the independence of the individual farm owner (captured, perhaps, in the use of the term "plaasbaas" to describe a farm owner) and his right to make decisions about the use of his land. According to the deeds the Captain and Council had the final say on the sale of the produce of individually owned land holdings, (25) but since both the Magistrate (who now held the title of Captain by virtue of Proclamation No. 31 of 1924) as well as the members of his Advisory Council were in favour of hiring, they readily consented to Baster land-owners entering into grazing contracts with white farmers.

Grazing permits which were valid for three to four months were issued to farmers from outside the Gebiet. These permits were later extended to six months, and it was intended that they could be regularly renewed for as long as the drought persisted. The grazier could either rent a farm (or a portion of one), or he could pay fees according to the number of head of livestock which he intended to graze on the farm. The rate for a farm varied from £1 to £2 10/- per month, according to the size of the farm, the quality of the veld, the availability of water, and the improvements such as bore-holes and buildings which the grazier might offer to effect. If he elected to hire according to the number of head he intended to graze, the rate was usually 6d per head of large stock or 5/- per 100 small stock per month. (26)

Limits on the maximum number of stock to be grazed were set in the contract, but oral testimony indicates that these were often greatly exceeded, and that the farms were drastically overstocked because of the dire financial straits of the farm owners. If the Council queried the number of stock being grazed on a particular farm, the Baster landowner would simply claim the excess number as belonging to his own flock or herd. Even where limits set in the contract were adhered to - and these appear to have been in the minority of cases - the number of stock which the contract allowed to be grazed on the land was often very high. Sometimes 800 head of small stock were permitted on a farm of 3,500 hectares, making an average of 4.4 hectares per head. This did not include stock which was owned by the landowner, and was grazed alongside the stock of the grazier. A recent study suggests that the stock-carrying capacity of average farming land in the Gebiet today is 3.5 hectares per head of small stock in non-drought conditions, (27) which leaves a margin of 0.9 Ha per head. But this certainly was a time of drought, and in any case, today's ratio is not really comparable with that of the early 1930s, when fencing and the camp system were not used by the Basters, and when there was an almost total reliance on wells as a source of water: bore-holes and windmills being beyond the means of all but the very rich.

The good later rains of 1931, predicted after the early fall in that year, failed to materialize, but despite this the graziers and their flocks remained, since conditions outside of the Gebiet remained even more dire than did those within it. Indeed, their numbers grew as an ever-increasing number of Basters and white farmers came to see renting of pasture in the Gebiet as their only salvation. Unfortunately the official figures for the number of stock introduced into the Gebiet in this period are imprecise, but the indications are that it was considerable. In the twelve month period between May 1933 and April 1934 alone, 50,000 head of small stock and an unknown number of large stock were allowed into the Gebiet under the grazing licence system. (28) Eventually the Council decided that the stock in the Gebiet was in excess of the carrying capacity of the land, and it was resolved that no further applications for grazing be considered. (29) This resolution was not strictly adhered to, however, and applications from "Coloureds" evicted from white farms to the south of the Gebiet, where they had previously been living as tenants, received favourable consideration from the Council. (30) Unlike the whites, who never gained the right to settle in the Gebiet permanently, these "Coloureds" could, after a period of residence, apply for citizenship of the Gebiet. The new immigrants were consequently to put further strain on the farming resources of the Gebiet in the long term.

The Voss and Scott Commission, and the Leasing of Baster Farms

In January of 1930, a Commission of Enquiry whose members were G. du T. Voss, Attorney General of the territory, and H.G. Scott, Magistrate of Grootfontein, was appointed to enquire into the system of land tenure practiced in the Gebiet. The terms of reference of the Commission reveal the quite remarkable degree of ignorance of the authorities in Windhoek about the situation in the Gebiet. It was required to investigate, inter alia, the system of land-ownership in the Gebiet (which was presumed to be communal), and to report on "what steps should be taken to introduce into the Gebiet a system of land tenure under which land will be owned by individuals." It was also required that the

Commissioners recommend a means whereby financial assistance could be offered to the community: possibly through the Land Bank. (31)

The only significant findings of the Commission were that the farms in the Gebiet had never been properly surveyed, that boundaries between farms were consequently ill-defined, and that the land register was inaccurate and inadequate in several respects. It was therefore recommended that a proper survey of the Gebiet be carried out, and that the results be recorded in a more efficient manner. (32) The opposition of Baster witnesses to these recommendations caused the Commissioners some dismay. Almost all of the witnesses were adamant that the surveying of their farms was undesirable. The alienation of land to people who were not members of the community had always been accompanied by a survey. "Plaas meet is grond vervreem ..." (33) they asserted. The Commissioners concluded that the two events had become associated and confused in the Basters' minds, and that opposition on these grounds, while understandable, was illogical. In fact, the two things were associated in more than just their minds, since the alienation of more land than had been sold was the common - and pernicious - accompaniment of those previous land surveys which had determined boundaries between white- and Baster-owned farms, both within, and bordering on, the Gebiet. Evidence given to earlier boundary commissions attests to the extent of this encroachment of white farmers onto Baster land. The question of what would happen to land lying unoccupied between Baster-owned farms once the proposed survey had been completed also loomed large in the minds of the witnesses, who were well aware that the 1923 Agreement between the Basters and the Union Government gave them rights only to those lands which they actually occupied. (34) They feared that if land to which no Baster held title were to come to light as a consequence of the survey, such land might be deemed to be the possession of the Administration rather than of the Baster community.

Another objection raised against the proposed survey was that it would lead to enmity between neighbours - an assertion which the Commission found difficult to understand, believing that "... disputes are far more likely to arise from uncertainty as to boundaries than from certainty." (35) This view failed to take account of the moral idea of vrye woning, in terms of which it was acknowledged that any member of the community had a moral claim to access to water and grazing on any Baster farm if he was in need - despite the existence of private ownership. It was feared that the absolute demarcation of boundaries between farms would lead to registered owners becoming more possessive of their land and, consequently, increasingly inhospitable. (36)

The most important objection against the survey was, however, that it would be very expensive (about £35 per farm) (37) and that the Basters were far too poor to pay the charges. The Commissioners countered this objection by recommending that the Land Bank advance the money, using the farm to be surveyed as surety against the debt. But to this proposal the majority of the witnesses were vehemently opposed, since they feared that it could lead to the expropriation of Baster land.

Because of the opposition to the scheme, the matter appears to have been left in abeyance. As long as the drought continued, there was a plentiful supply of white farmers wanting to hire pasture on short term contracts, and the Basters were content with the system. The short-term hiring of pasture soon began to create

difficulties, however. With the end of the drought the number of would-be hirers dwindled, and long-term leasing came to be seen as a desirable alternative to the grazing licence system. (38)

The Leasing System

The leasing system was introduced in 1938. Leases initially ran for a period of one year, but when this proved to be inadequate, they were replaced with leases lasting a minimum of two years. The leasing arrangement was attractive to Baster landowners for a number of reasons, the most important being that the income from the lease was greater than the cost of the survey, and the balance was paid to the landowner. Having become dependent on the income earned from hiring out pasture during the drought, there appeared to be little alternative to these landowners but to continue such dependence. A landowner could also often obtain employment from the white lessee, and could thus secure additional income without having to leave his farm. (39)

Leasing was also attractive to the white lessee. By 1939 practically all Crown Land in Namibia deemed suitable for white settlers had been allocated, and the acquisition of temporary access to Baster-owned land in Rehoboth was one of the few ways in which whites could build up a farming business before buying or leasing more expensive land in the white areas. (40) Established farmers were also attracted to the system, since in times of drought they could use the alternative facilities offered in the Gebiet. Very often they stayed on long after the drought had passed, and their stock grew in numbers on Baster-owned land. The most complete statistics of the leasing system are for the end of 1943. At that time at least 64 contracts were still in operation, and a minimum of 8,392 head of large stock and 71,188 head of small stock owned by whites were being grazed in the Gebiet. (41)

It was argued that this massive influx of white-owned stock benefited the Baster community. Not only was cash more readily available, but the white farmers also brought about improvements to the farms, particularly through providing water by drilling bore-holes, and also by building new dwellings. But the Magistrate at Rehoboth had doubts about these supposedly positive effects, and set out these doubts in a letter to the Administrator in 1942. He pointed out that however desirable the surveying of farms might be, the owners themselves obtained minimal, if any, material advantage from the system. He observed that the stock of the Baster owners had deteriorated, since lessees demanded the best pasture and water for their own stock, even in those cases where they did permit the owner to graze his stock on the land they had leased. The so-called improvements were also of dubious advantage to the owners. A well-built three-roomed house might make for comfort, but did little to assist the Baster farmer in rebuilding his farming business. Where bore-holes were drilled, they often meant little to the farm owner once the lessee had left. The majority of owners were too poor to buy pumps or windmills to draw the water, and consequently derived no benefit. Nor could much be shown for the cash payments which the owners received. They often covered only the subsistence needs of the lessor's family, and were thus not used to increase the capital of the farm. Only one wealthy man had used the money acquired from leasing his farm to fence it after it had been surveyed. (42)

In order to ensure that the Baster landowner derived some benefit

other than the dubious one of knowing precisely where the boundaries of his farm lay, the Magistrate recommended that the land be leased for a further term, even where the survey costs had been met, and that the rental be used exclusively for the provision of pumps for bore-holes or for the purchase of breeding stock. These suggestions were implemented in a modified form, (43) and consequently some Baster farmers were able to rebuild their depleted flocks. But the scale of leasing began to drop significantly in precisely this period, and the needs of white farmers were met, instead, by reverting to the grazing licence system during periods of drought.

Racial Ideology and the End of the Leasing System

Apart from the fact that white farming began to be established on a rather firmer footing in this period, there were also important ideological reasons for the Administration wanting to bring the leasing system to an end. One of these was that white farmers were becoming firmly ensconced in the Gebiet. Despite the fact that leases and grazing licences were supposed to be granted only to bona fide farmers, the regulations were not strictly observed, and whenever the droughts ended there were always some farmers who could not be persuaded to leave the Gebiet, simply because they had nowhere else to go. Some had even established trading stores in the Gebiet, and the Magistrate was reluctant to resort to what he saw as the extreme expedient of withdrawing their trading licences in order to force them to leave. (44) So firmly established did the white inhabitants of the Gebiet become that by 1955 they were agitating for the proclamation of a separate white town in Rehoboth. (45) The Administration had declared itself to be in favour of a regional separation of whites and "non-whites" at least 30 years earlier, (46) and the leasing and grazing licence systems now came to be seen to be operating in direct contradiction to this policy.

Apart from the general offence against the principle of separation of the races, the grazing and leasing systems also inverted the normal class positions of those involved. In a situation where colour and class were so closely intertwined, it was considered inappropriate to have a white tenant dependent on a "non-white" landowner. Baster farmers were seen as deriving benefits in the form of improvements to their farms - benefits which they did not "deserve". They were perceived to be "living off the white man". The Secretary for the territory noted that "... hulle wil die groot base wees en die witman moet werk." (47) In the same vein the Administrator told a Baster Council delegation: "Ons wil nie he dat julle oor die standpunt neem dat julle is hier groot menere en op die stoep sit met die pyp, en die Boer vir julle julle plase laat bewerk." (48)

But despite the fact that the verandah and the pipe were deemed to be the white man's prerogative, the system was to continue intermittently for as long as white farmers needed to exploit the reserve pasture which the Gebiet had to offer, and it was only in the 1960s, when the white farming sector was on a completely sound footing, that the system was outlawed. It continued to a small extent even after this, albeit in a clandestine fashion. (49)

Today many Baster farmers claim that it was only those few who were able to resist the temptation to lease their farms, who retain viable farming enterprises. This is an overstatement:

there were a few farmers who did manage to re-establish their farms through leasing them. But in the main it is true that the hiring out of farms, and the over-stocking which resulted, did severe damage to the Gebiet's pasturage.

Apartheid and (Separate) Development

After the Second World War South Africa came under increasingly intensified pressure from the United Nations Organization over its administration of Namibia. It would be inappropriate to examine the nature of this dispute in any detail here, but it is important to note that in the face of this pressure the South African Government began to bring about important changes to the administrative structure in the territory. (50)

The instrument used to formulate these changes was the Odendaal Commission which was appointed in September 1962. (51) Both its composition (Odendaal was a leading Nationalist, and Administrator of the Transvaal) (52) and the narrowness of its terms of reference ensured that the recommendations of the Commission would be in line with Government thinking of the time. (53) The Commission took fifteen months to arrive at a blue-print for the implementation of Apartheid in the territory. (54)

The Commission recommended that the country was to be divided into white farmlands and "homelands" for the "non-white" groups, and each of these groups was to progress independently along the path to "self-determination". Concrete proposals for the establishment of development projects within the homelands were to be left to the Department of Bantu Administration, or one or other of the State development corporations. (55)

Of all the proposed homelands to be established in the territory, the Rehoboth Gebiet was probably the most advantaged. Unlike some others, the Baster homeland had no areas classified as desert, it was favoured with better-than-average rainfall, and a much smaller than average ratio of population to land than many other "homeland" areas. It is also in close proximity to the markets of Windhoek - the commercial centre of the territory - and has a choice between road and rail transport for its produce. Given these advantages, the Commissioners believed that Rehoboth could be developed into a "model homeland": a showpiece of Separate Development. It was, they argued, because the Basters had lived by leasing their farms to whites rather than engaging in "honest labour" that the Gebiet presented the sorry picture that it did. (56)

The task of making concrete proposals to provide alternatives to the leasing of farms in the Gebiet was left to a committee established in February 1967 under the chairmanship of A.H. du Plessis, a member of the South West African Legislative Assembly. Its brief was to investigate methods of developing the Gebiet. (57) The other members of the Committee included the Magistrate of the district (in his capacity as Captain of the Baster community), and three members of the Baster Advisory Council. Two of these were to withdraw from the Committee before it could draw up its report because they were opposed to the idea that capital for the development of the Gebiet should be made available to members of the community in the form of loans. They feared that this would lead to the alienation of Baster-owned land, and were of the opinion that any assistance which was to be given should

take the form of donations made by the State. (58)

The Committee found that the lack of adequate capital for the Gebiet was a major reason why the Rehoboth Gebiet was, in 1968, producing between one-third and one-fifth of its potential had it been a white farming area. (59) An additional major stumbling block was the proliferation of numerous land holdings of sizes which were far less than the minimum economic unit. This had come about because of the traditional system of inheritance, through which the land had been drastically subdivided. (60)

In order to illustrate the extent of this subdivision, the Committee produced the following table which shows the pattern of ownership of the 346 surveyed and registered farms in the Gebiet: in 1968.

Table 1: Ownership of Farmland (1968) (61)

Number of owners		Number of farms
1		126
2-4		78
5-9		59
10-19		64
20-29		10
30-40		6
47-72		3
Totals	= 2,244	346

The table shows the deleterious effects of the system of inheritance. Almost two thirds of the farms had more than one owner, while one farm had 72 owners. But the table does not show the full extent of the problem. Of the 126 farms which had only a single owner, only 81 consisted of more than 1,500 hectares - which the Committee took to be an economic unit. Of the farms with between two and four owners, a further 24 were of an economic size, making the total number of such farms 105, owned by 141 individuals. In other words, a bare six percent of all farm owners in the Gebiet were farming tracts of land of an economically viable size.

The traditional system of inheritance had also contributed to the scale of the leasing of Baster land, since it was simpler and more economical to lease an inherited farm in its undivided state, with all heirs benefiting from a portion of the leasing fee, than to go through the expense of a land survey and subdivision, and then be left with a multitude of economically unviable plots.

We turn now to a more detailed examination of the traditional inheritance system. We will also consider briefly some cases studies of subdivision, and then examine some of the traditional mechanisms through which the subdivision of land was avoided, or through which subdivided land was reconsolidated.

The Inheritance of Land in the Baster Gebiet

The traditional system of inheritance practised by the Rehoboth Baster community apparently has its roots in Roman-Dutch law. It is a partible system which does not discriminate on grounds of sex or order of birth. On the death of a spouse, the estate of the

deceased is divided between the heirs. It is first divided in half, with one half devolving on the relict spouse. The other half is divided into a number of equal portions: one for each child of the marriage, plus one. The additional portion is then added to the half devolving on the relict spouse. An example in which there are four children who are to inherit from an estate may be diagrammatically represented as follows:

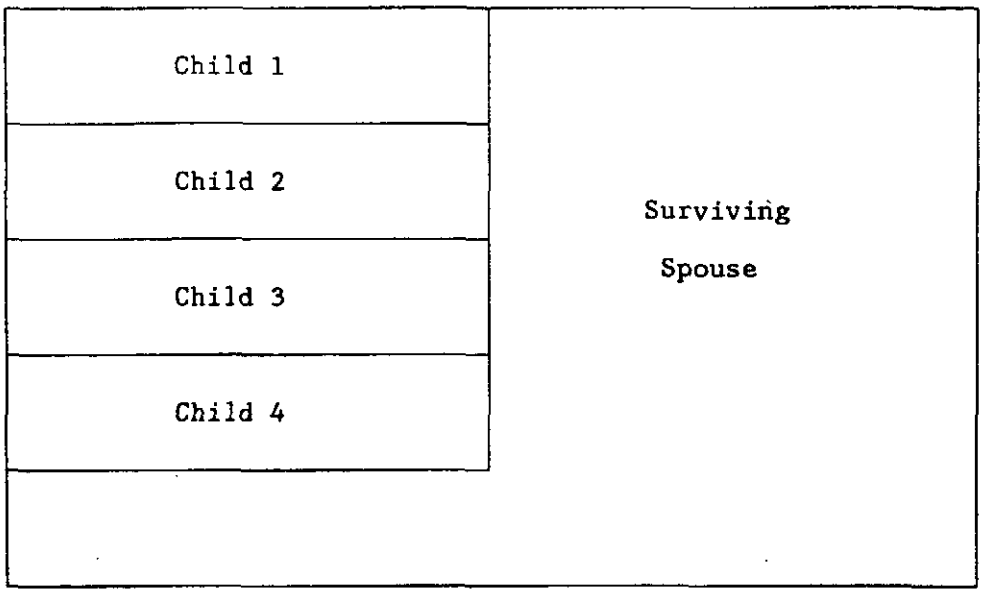


Figure 1: Subdivision at Inheritance

When the relict spouse dies his or her share is divided equally between the children. If the relict spouse remarries before he or she dies, the rules of inheritance become decidedly uncertain, however. Some informants claim that a woman loses all rights to the property; others say that the sex of the inheritor is of no consequence, and that, once inherited, the property is retained if the person remarries. Most informants insist that if the situation was to be all that complicated, there would certainly be a written will! One might note, however, that if this is not the case, a good measure of intra-family conflict might well be an unintended part of the patrimony.

The pattern of the division of the estate which I have described above was the one always recounted to me as the traditional form of inheritance, but in practice the situation is often very different. It is actually quite rare for the farm to be subdivided on the death of one partner in the marriage. I came across only one case in which land devolved on the children of a marriage prior to the death of a relict spouse. Even here, the family farm was not subdivided. Instead, the children of the marriage inherited a piece of land which the relict spouse had bought from a neighbouring farmer. In all other cases investigated the farms remained undivided until the death of the relict spouse. Although moveable property was divided between the heirs according to the traditional formula, the land continued to be utilized as a unit, with all the children of the marriage - and their surviving parent - having rights to its use. When I questioned the children who were heirs to such farms as to the reason for the subdivision not having taken place, they invariably replied that this was because the cost of a land survey was very high. Instead of dividing the land immediately, they said, it was better to wait a while. This I took to mean that it was better to wait until their surviving parent had died before employing a surveyor to divide

the farm, thus saving half of the cost of having it done twice. I was also told that such a division was unnecessary while the children were getting on well with one another: if any one of them became dissatisfied, it might have to be done; until then, it could be put off. The division of an estate often generates disagreement among heirs, and the most common of these arises over the division of land. By putting off the division of the farm until after the death of their parent, the children were sparing him or her the animosity which might arise. When I put the question of why the division had not taken place to the relict spouse, he or she would always cite the cost of the survey as a reason, and add that, in any case, the children did not want it to take place as yet.

One should note that the decision of whether or not to follow the traditional formula for the devolution of land is directly influenced by the age of the surviving spouse. In the case cited above where land did devolve on the children of the marriage before their father had died, this took place shortly before he remarried. In other cases investigated the ages of the surviving spouses made it most unlikely that they would marry again. It would seem, therefore, that following the traditional formula of inheritance in respect of land is appropriate only where the family, too, is likely to be divided between siblings and step-siblings. The portion of the farm inherited by the relict spouse would then enable him or her to provide for the support of a second family which might be established.

To illustrate the effects of the system of inheritance on farm sizes, one may briefly cite the following case studies:

1. Olifantspan. (62) This farm lies in the south-western portion of the Gebiet. The owner of this farm, which is 10,000 hectares in extent, died in 1974. Although his wife had predeceased him two years before, no subdivision took place until after his death. Each of his surviving seven children inherited 1,000 hectares, which is about half of what is considered to be an economic unit in this part of the Gebiet. The other three children had predeceased their father, leaving a total of 19 children between them. These children inherited between 200 and 111 hectares each: between a fifth and a tenth of an economic unit.

2. Bloupoort: This is a 7,000 hectare farm in the north-eastern part of the Gebiet. When the owner died in 1972, there were so many heirs to the property that it was decided that rather than subdivide the farm it should be sold as a whole, and the proceeds of the sale divided between the heirs. Some heirs received as little as R24 as an inheritance.

3. This case was cited in a report published in 1981, (63) where no name of the farm (or portion of the farm) was given. It concerned the case of a man who had inherited a landholding some 250 hectares in extent. He had decided that on his death, his 15 children would inherit the property as a joint estate. The children had already built houses on the property, and lived there whenever they returned on leave from their places of work.

From these examples one can see that if the rule of partibility had been rigorously applied, without attempts being made to reconsolidate subdivided land, the number of sub-economic plots in

the Gebiet would be even greater than it it actually is. In fact, there are a number of common practices which serve to reduce the rate of subdivision. This is not to suggest that these practices are particularly effective: on the contrary, the figures in Table 1 prove that they are dismally inadequate. Nevertheless, they must be mentioned, if only in order to account for the fact that subdivision has not proceeded with the relentless geometric progression that it might have. (64)

The first method is simply to run the farm as a communally utilized unit. It has already been mentioned that this is very common where the age of the relict spouse is such that a second marriage is unlikely. Sometimes, however, the farm continues to be kept as a unit by the children even after the death of the surviving parent. All of the children are then responsible for contributing to the annual land tax, and all are entitled to keep stock on the farm and to reside on it. This strategy is most commonly the one pursued by the poorest people, who cannot afford the cost of a land survey, or, where there is a particularly large group of heirs: the two conditions often being coterminous. The success of this strategy obviously depends largely on the degree of cooperation which can be maintained between the heirs.

An alternative but closely related strategy is involves informal subdivision. Here the heirs decide among themselves where the boundaries of their particular portions of land lie, demarcate them, and perhaps even fence them off, but do not institute a formal survey, or register the portions in their own names. This system is most commonly used where the heirs are poor, but relatively few in number. Naturally, it does not serve to reconsolidate land: perhaps its only real effect is to conceal the real extent of subdivision in the Gebiet.

Another method through which the subdivision of land may be curtailed is through the benefactor leaving a will. This will may be (and is more often today than in the past) a written document, or it may simply be a verbal indication by the person concerned as to how he or she wishes the estate to be divided. Very occasionally a potential heir may be disinherited because of something that he or she has done during the life of the parent, or another heir may be left more than his or her rightful portion (that is, according to the customary rules of devolution) of the estate as a reward for some service rendered to the parent. Where this happens, the favoured heir is often the youngest child, who has cared for the aged parent in the last years of his or her life. However, by far the most common departure from custom that a will may contain is a discrimination between heirs on the grounds of sex. The benefactor may specify that moveable assets in the estate must be given to his or her daughters, and the land to the sons. Such a will simply anticipates a strategy which may, in any case, have been adopted by the heirs.

Another means through which the subdivision of land may be avoided, or its rate reduced, is through marriage strategies. Three types of marriage may contribute to the maintenance of viable farming units. The first of these is cousin marriage. In so far as it is an effective strategy for the reconsolidation of land, it is equally effective whether between cross- or parallel cousins, and in both patrilateral and matrilateral directions.

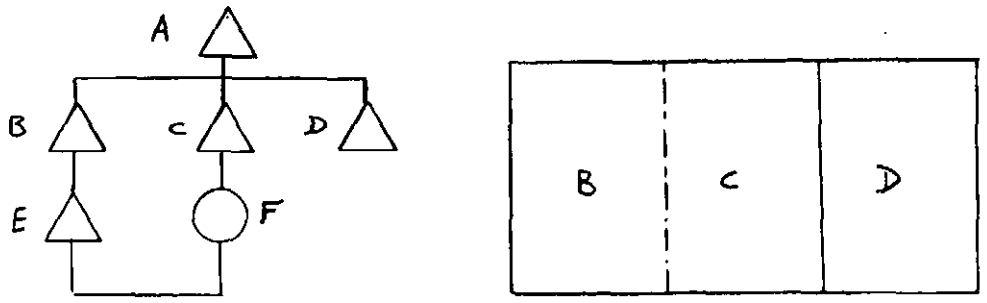


Figure 2: Cousin Marriage and land Consolidation.

In the example of cousin marriage given in the diagram above, A leaves a farm to his three children, B, C, and D. When the children of B and C (E and F) marry, they are able to reconsolidate B's and C's portions of the farm.

Cousin marriage, which was a common feature of Baster marriage practices in the past, particularly among the wealthiest and poorest sections of the population, is less common, but far from rare today, although it now usually takes the form of marriage to second cousins, where the significance for the reconsolidation of land is naturally less great - unless the parents from whom the couple inherit had no siblings.

A second form of marriage through which consolidation of land may take place is through sibling group marriage. This is the term which will be used to describe marriage between two brothers of one family and two sisters of another, or between a brother and sister of one family and a brother and sister of another. Once again, the fact that the rules of inheritance do not discriminate between males and females means that the sex of the participants is not of significance.

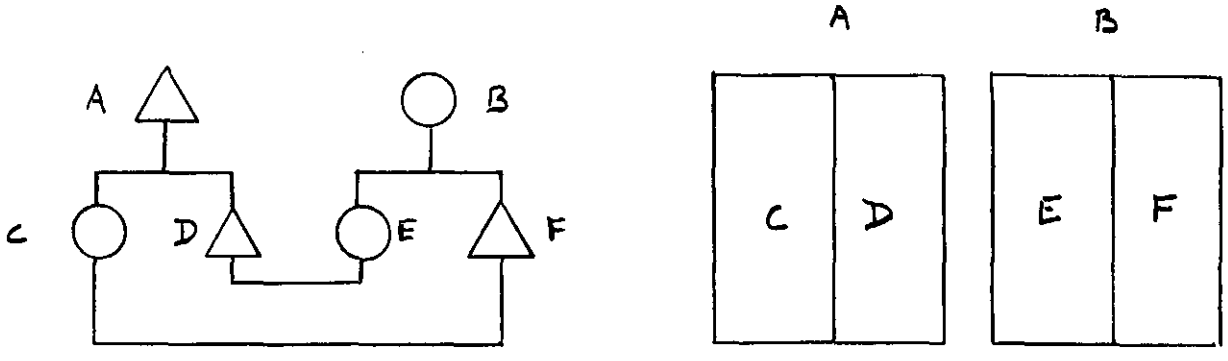


Figure 3: Sibling Group Marriage

In the example given above, C and D each inherit equal shares of the farm belonging to A. In a similar way E and F inherit equivalent portions of the farm belonging to their parent B. If C and F, and D and E marry, the two couples may negotiate the distribution of land which they have inherited. It is not uncommon for an exchange of land to take place (perhaps supplemented with a larger or smaller adjustment in cash or livestock) which will lead to a reconsolidation of both estates. In other words, C may agree to exchange his portion of farm A for E's portion of farm B. This will enable C and F to live on portions E and F of farm B, while D and E live on portions C and D of farm A.

The third kind of marriage which can lead to consolidation of land holdings is that between neighbours. In such a case the couple who marry may ensure that the pieces of land which they inherit are adjacent to one another. They may then remove the fence between the two farms in order to create a consolidated unit. Or, more commonly, they will simply install a gate between the two sections and treat them as camps of one farm. This arrangement is, in one respect, the converse of informal subdivision, since the fact of consolidation will not be reflected in the official records.

A final means through which subdivision may be avoided is through the sale or leasing of the farm. An example of the selling of land is given in the case of Bloupoort, described above. Selling land that would otherwise be subdivided would appear to be the most logical solution to the problem, but it is one which is fraught with difficulties. Firstly, there is is the problem of the availability of a suitable buyer. Since ready cash has always been in short supply in the Gebiet, and since credit facilities were very limited (the reasons for which will be discussed below), heirs may be hard-pressed to find a buyer. In addition, by decree of the Advisory Council, no one may own more than 14,000 hectares of land in the Gebiet. (65) But even if one were to be able to find a buyer with the necessary cash or credit who owned less than the maximum amount of land, there would still be difficulties. There is generally an emotional attachment to "family land", and it is regarded as less than desirable to sell land to non-kin. This obviously severely limits the number of possible buyers. Sometimes heirs will arrange amongst themselves to exchange moveable assets, particularly livestock, for land, but this often leaves viable areas understocked.

A major difficulty with selling farm land, whether to kin or non-kin, lies in the paradox that the value per hectare rises as the size of the land holding falls. While the productive potential of farmland declines through the process of subdivision, its value as residential land actually increases, since it becomes a cheap place on which to stay, and a form of surety against the vagaries of the future. In Namibia as a whole, very little is provided in the way of financial security for aged or jobless blacks, and a plot of land on which to live, virtually free of cost, is obviously a most desirable asset. The consequent increase in the unit value of these tiny plots often makes their reconsolidation into viable farmland economically unfeasible. The owner of a piece of land of say 50 hectares in extent would not be interested in selling his land at the prevailing market value of say R3.00 per hectare, but would probably want at least R1,000 or more for it, since it would mean having to re-establish his household somewhere else - either on a school farm, communal farm, or in the town - and the costs of moving and building another dwelling would certainly exceed the R150 which he would get if he were to be paid the market value. (66)

A common method of avoiding some of these difficulties is to simply lease inherited land to a co-heir. Such arrangements are often both very informal and very complex. Cash transactions are seldom part of the arrangement: most often they include leaving a certain amount of stock on the land in the care of the co-heir, and may sometimes include residence rights for the lessor's family.

Although the partible system of inheritance is one which

contradicts sound economic practice, and has undoubtedly contributed to the decline of the productive capacity of the Gebiet's farm land, it is a custom which does not differ markedly from that practised by surrounding white farmers. The reason why it has detrimental effects in the Baster Gebiet is because of lack of access to capital which would enable subdivision to be avoided.

Problems of Finance in Rehoboth

The lack of access to capital for the development of farming, as well as of retail enterprises, was identified by the Du Plessis Committee as the major cause of economic stagnation in the Baster Gebiet. This lack of access to capital was primarily due to the fact that fixed property in the Gebiet could not be acquired by anyone other than a Baster Burger. This meant that the normal sources of capital such as commercial banks and finance houses were generally unwilling to grant loans where fixed property was offered as security. (67) Even where they did agree to do so, the effect of the limitation of the disposal of fixed property (particularly land) was to depress the value of the property which was offered as security, and hence to reduce the size of the loan. This was because potential buyers were restricted to the few rich Basters who, in any case, might already be in possession of the maximum 14,000 hectares.

The other major source of capital - through State institutions - was also closed to Baster farmers, at least in the earlier period. (68) The Land Bank of South West Africa, which had been of such immense importance in establishing white agriculture in the territory, had never been intended as a source of capital for "non-white" farmers. Even if it had been, it would never have granted loans where restrictions existed on the sale of property used as security.

The authorities had recognized the need for granting aid to Baster farmers even before the investigation of the Odendaal Commission and the Du Plessis Committee. In March 1960, for example, the Administration had lent R20,000 to the Advisory Council so that farmers in the Gebiet could be granted loans. The rate of interest which the Administration charged on the loan was 3.5 per cent, - the same rate that it charged the Land Bank. But whereas the Land Bank could re-lend the money at 4 per cent because its clients were generally on a sound financial footing, the Baster Advisory Council was forced to charge 5 per cent interest in order to cover itself against possible bad debts. As the Du Plessis Committee noted, Baster farmers were consequently considerably disadvantaged, compared to their white counterparts, even when State assistance was offered. (69)

The Committee recommended that a statutory body be established in order that finance could be made available for the development of the Gebiet. (70) The model to be used was that of the Coloured Development Corporation which had been established in South Africa six years earlier. (71) REKOR (Rehoboth Beleggings en Ontwikkelingskorporasie) was subsequently established.

The Establishment of REKOR

REKOR came into being on the 27th of June, 1969, with a share capital of R10,000, all of the shares being held by the South

African Government. (72) Its establishment was fiercely opposed by the Baster Advisory Council and by numerous members of the community. There were many reasons for this opposition. The Board of Directors of the Corporation was -despite objections by the Advisory Council - to be composed only of whites because, in the words of the Minister of Rehoboth Affairs, "persons of integrity" were required to fill seats on the Board. (73) There was also opposition to the fact that the Corporation was able to operate entirely independently of any formal control by the Advisory Council. It was not even required to consult with the Council. In fact, its powers actually exceeded those of the Council which was, at this stage, still a purely advisory body.

The political party which held all of the seats on the Council, the Volksparty, opposed the establishment of REKOR on the grounds that it represented a furtherance of the aims of the policy of Separate Development, (74) but the main reason why the majority of the members of the community were opposed to the establishment of the Corporation was because it could grant loans, and could mortgage the land as security. Even though the Act which had established REKOR specifically debarred the Corporation from disposing of any property which it might acquire in the Gebiet to any person other than a Baster Burger, it was feared that Basters would lose their land to whites through accepting loans from REKOR. (75)

Suspicion that the establishment of the Corporation would lead to the alienation of Baster land gave rise to demonstrations and protest marches. Telegrams were sent to the British and American ambassadors, as well as to the United Nations Organization. It was also demanded of the South African Prime Minister that a referendum on the desirability of establishing REKOR be held in the Gebiet. Thousands of booklets containing a message from the Minister of Rehoboth Affairs, in which he attempted to allay suspicions that Baster land would be alienated, were publicly burned. (76)

Despite this opposition, REKOR began its activities in the Gebiet in August 1969. In its first annual report the Corporation noted that it was operating in the face of opposition "... from a certain group of Rehoboth burghers ..." In fact there was a quite effective boycott of the loans offered. Only 26 applications for loans were received, of which 21 were granted. (77)

The boycott was fairly short-lived, however, and in the next financial year 80 applications for loans were received. Of these 59 were granted, while the total amount loaned was increased from R122,050 to R302,446. By 1974 the Board of Directors could report that opposition to REKOR was "... gradually giving way to a more realistic view of the value of the Corporation." (78)

By the end of March, 1983, REKOR had granted loans totalling R4,700,422, of which R3,375,752 (almost 72 per cent) had been granted for farming purposes. The table below gives a breakdown of the purposes for which loans were granted. It is apparent that most loans were made were for business purposes, followed by the purchase of livestock and the purchase of land.

Table 2: Loans Granted by REKOR: August 1969 - March 1983 (79)

Purpose	Number	Amount (in Rands)	Percentage of farming loans	Percentage of total loans
Livestock Purchases	276	1,265,160	37.5	26.9
Land Purchases	143	1,165,911	34.5	24.8
Fencing	140	446,470	13.2	9.5
Water Instal-lations	131	211,208	6.3	4.5
Land Surveys	151	90,660	2.7	1.9
Other (mainly discharge of debts)	72	196,343	5.8	4.2
Business	124	1,324,670	-	28.2
	1037	4,700,422	100.0	100.0

Although the initial resistance to REKOR was largely overcome during the first five years of its existence, numerous criticisms of the way in which the Corporation operated were expressed during my fieldwork, and many Baster farmers still avoid taking out loans from REKOR. A major general complaint was simply that once one had taken out a loan, one lost control over one's farm. "'n Man is nie meer baas van sy eie plaas nie" was the common complaint. One is forced to submit to a variety of directives from the Corporation about the way in which the farm is stocked and managed, and many of these instructions, it is claimed, are not sound farming practices for the region.

The type of camping system, in particular, came in for considerable condemnation. Baster farmers claimed that it had been developed in the Orange Free State, and was being implemented in the Gebiet without due consideration of the differences between the two regions in respect of veld-types and climatic conditions. But even if the system was a sound one for the area, there is doubt that it is actually cost effective because of low stocking levels. (80)

Many Basters were also highly critical of the Corporation's policies in respect of the granting of loans for the purchase of livestock. Such purchases must be made from the experimental farm at Tsumis, which was established by the Department of Agriculture on the recommendations of the Du Plessis Committee. (81) It was said that the quality of livestock sold at Tsumis was markedly inferior to that owned, and offered for sale, by many of the more progressive Baster breeders. The auctions held at Tsumis, its critics claimed, simply served to provide white farmers in the territory with an opportunity to off-load their inferior and unwanted animals at inflated prices.

Whatever the truth about the quality of livestock offered at Tsumis, it does seem that REKOR embarked on a policy of financing

the purchase of karakul breeding stock at precisely the same time as the industry was going through a period of great instability. (82) It also seems as if REKOR bore a major responsibility for the overstocking of the Gebiet. In the decade following its establishment in 1969, the Corporation provided R1,074,360 for the purchase of livestock, most of which was karakul sheep. (83) By 1979 the ratio between land and small stock units stood at 2.01 Ha / ssu. (84) An apparently reliable estimate of the carrying capacity of the area suggests a ratio of 3.5 Ha / ssu. (85) REKOR had assisted in raising the Gebiet's stock-holding to an alarming 174 per cent.

If the Corporation appears to have been eager to finance the purchase of livestock in excess of the land's capacity, it was less than vigorous in tackling the problem of the reconsolidation of land - at least until 1981, when a change in policy seems to have occurred. Until then it spent only R543,064 on attempting to combat the problem of subdivision. This represented less than 18 per cent of all money loaned, and less than 22 per cent of finance made available for agricultural purposes. (The comparative figures for the purchase of livestock are R1,160,560 being 38 percent of all loans, and 46.5 percent of farming loans.) (86) At the time of my fieldwork many Baster farmers expressed the opinion that the amount of money being made available for reconsolidation of subdivided land was hopelessly insufficient, a criticism which seems to be well-founded. Between 1969 and 1983 REKOR granted 143 loans for the purchase of land. (87) It is not known how many of these loans were used to reconsolidate subdivided land, and how many financed the purchase of land units that were already of an economically viable size, but figures from a study conducted in 1980 suggest that little success had been achieved.

Table 3: Ownership of Farmland (1980) (88)

Surface Area (in Hectares)	No. of Farms	%
7,000 +	7	0.25
4,000 - 7,000	31	1.12
2,000 - 4,000	109	3.93
1,000 - 2,000	218	7.86
500 - 1,000	250	9.00
101 - 500	960	34.60
1 - 100	1,200	43.24
	2,775	100.00

It would seem that REKOR took note of these figures, for between 1980 and 1983 it granted 37 loans for land purchases totalling R662,847. This represented more than 40 percent of all loans granted, and, more significantly, 75.5 percent of all farming loans granted in the period. (89)

Another criticism is that REKOR has not been involved in any form of development other than assisting farmers and retailers in the Gebiet. No mines have been established, although this is supposedly one of the aims of the Corporation expressed in the preamble of the Act by which it was formed, nor has a single factory been built with its assistance, despite the fact that at least one-third of the adult population of the Gebiet is temporarily or permanently outside of its borders because of the need to seek employment. (90)

The most persistent criticism of the financial policies of the Corporation, however, is that it helps only those who are wealthy to start with: increasing their wealth, while doing nothing to assist the poorer farmers. This contrasts with the leasing system of the earlier period, which does not seem to have contributed markedly to the development of class distinctions in the community. A few wealthier Baster farmers may have been able to put the incomes which were generated through leasing to some productive use, but, as we have seen, this was not the norm. The contrast with REKOR is striking. Despite the fact that the manifest purpose for the establishment of the Corporation was to generate development of the Baster community "on its own lines", the capitalization of Gebiet agriculture has undoubtedly stimulated economic stratification in a form that was not inherent in the community before REKOR was established.

Money (other than for land purchases) is granted only to farmers who already own an economic unit. In other words, the R3,375,752 allocated to farmers between 1969 and 1983 has been lavished on only a very few individuals. In 1968 there were 105 farmers with economic units out of a total of 2,244 landowners. (91) Even presuming, firstly, that all of the 143 loans granted by REKOR between 1969 and 1983 for the purchase of land created new owners of economic units (although the evidence suggests that this is not the case) and secondly, that the total number of land owners did not increase between 1968 and 1983 (which seems most unlikely), the Corporation had, by that stage, assisted just over 11 per cent of all the landowners in the Gebiet.

In addition to being accused of bias in favour of the wealthier members of the community, the Corporation is also commonly charged with being politically partisan. It is claimed that its loans are used to buy political support for the South African Government's policies, and that only those who supported the Bastervereeniging political party were likely to be granted loans by the Corporation. In the by-elections of 1975, the Corporation's employees were accused of having tried to influence Baster farmers who were applying for loans to support this "moderate" party, rather than the more "radical" Volksparty. (92)

Whatever truth there was in this allegation of direct interference on the part of REKOR officials in the political affairs of the Gebiet, there is little doubt that the activities of the Corporation have had certain indirect political effects inside the community. Only those who are not implacably opposed to the policy of Separate Development apply for, and are granted, the loans which the Corporation offers. Consequently, support for the South African Government's policies and the provision of financial aid have come to be equated. In addition, assistance is granted to those who are already wealthy in the eyes of the community, and hence to those who tend to have political influence.

The disseminating of this political influence happens largely through the patron-client relationships which are a typical feature in Baster politics. When the Corporation grants loans to wealthy - and Goverment-supporting - Baster farmers, support for the State is ensured from a much larger group of Baster voters as well. These clients may simply be poor families who live as bywoners on the rich landowner's farm. The scale of the patron-client system is far greater, however, on the so-called school farms.

On such farms schools were established by wealthy landowners - ostensibly for the convenience of farmers in the surrounding areas, but also, very often, to enable the landowner to further his political ambitions. A rough classroom was erected, the services of a teacher secured, and parents of children of school-going age would be permitted to build small houses on the farm, and reside there in order that their children could attend the school. Apart from schooling, the benefits derived by the residents included being able to live rent-free, and entitlement to free water, firewood, and such grazing as was required for stock for their immediate household needs. In return, their main formal obligation, in the past, was to contribute to the salary of the teacher, and to render assistance to the farm owner if required. They also gave electoral support to the farm owner if he sought political office on the Council.

Although, today, the nature of these reciprocal benefits has changed, the school farm system continues to ensure political support by the residents for the farm owner. The teachers are paid by the state, and the absence of most able-bodied men means that the amount of labour rendered to the farm owner is insignificant, but the clients' political obligations, although less direct, are still important. A party system has developed in the Gebiet, and the parties compete to gain control of the school farms through the owners and other notables. A common pattern is for one or other party to establish a branch on the farm, and for the owner to be elected as chairman of the party branch, with the principal of the school as the secretary, and perhaps a teacher or shopkeeper as the treasurer.

If the farm owner is the recipient of a REKOR loan, positive attitudes towards the policies of the South African Government can be easily and effectively disseminated through such a patron-client system. Support for REKOR is quickly and easily transformed into support for the Bastervereeniging, at the expense of the Volksparty. Antagonistic attitudes towards REKOR have thus served to provide a focus for political conflicts between the contending parties in the Gebiet.

In attempting to promote the development of agriculture of a particular type in the Gebiet, the policies of REKOR have had profound consequences for the pattern of class formation and political competition in the community - consequences which the leasing system did not have. The Corporation's activities have served to strengthen patron-client relationships, since it has provided ready support for the wealthy landowners who act as patrons in the community. At the same time, it has done nothing to lessen the dependence of the clients, and so has heightened the contradictions between the classes through favouritism towards those few whose future lies in the development of the ranching potential of the Gebiet, while simultanously antagonizing those Burgers who have no hope in sharing in the economic benefits of its development.

The inheritance system, on the other hand, tends to have a countervailing tendency. Subdivision breaks down large landholdings into small ones, whether the owners are rich or poor. It also has direct political effects, since it can make patrons less able to dispense favours to their clients, and consequently less able to generate political support.

The results of this process are most striking on school farms

which have been subdivided. Very often the customary rights to firewood and grazing are curtailed when the farm is parcelled out to the heirs, because the resources available to the (usually unfortunate) individual who retains the section of the farm on which the school settlement is located are barely adequate to provide for his or her own needs.

On one school farm which has been divided into portions which are significantly smaller than viable economic units the heir to the piece of land on which the school settlement is located has even initiated steps to have the area declared a village in order that he can sell, or lease, residential plots to the parents of children attending the school.

The termination of patron-client relationships in this way leads to greater political freedom. To an increasing extent the previous uniformity in political support by residents of school farms is giving way, as they are subdivided, to greater diversity, and it is now not uncommon for all political parties to have branches on such farms.