

## VAN RIEBEECK DAY AND THE NEW JERUSALEM

### Identity, community and violence in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Cape.

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The eighteenth century colonial settlements that were established in the Atlantic world by European mercantile powers, revealed similar identities arising from similar social and economic structures. Among the most important of these was the institution of bound labour - indentured as well as slave - both of which must be seen as playing key roles in determining settler identities. Slaveholders were, in the last resort, dependent upon the metropolitan societies which underwrote their safety, both domestically - against slave violence and that of indigenous peoples - and externally, in the unstable international environment of predatory foreign powers. The fear that their own slaves would rise up against them was an important factor in the making of settler consciousness. But so was the conviction that too much metropolitan supervision was counter-productive and that they could cope all the better with slave uprisings if they could contain and restrain the intrusiveness of metropolitan supervision. As their experience of their new worlds expanded, it became a commonplace for settlers to develop disdainful attitudes towards the mother country, while at the same time, intimately identifying themselves with it in the event of external and internal danger.

These factors imposed upon the new communities a need to come to terms with the "motherland" and with the institutional, economic and psychological links that bound them. Such links varied from class to class within any settler society. Equally, they varied with the regional origins of the immigrants. All settlers were trapped by the dilemma of being "At once the same and yet not the same, as the country of their origin", but there were advantages in the duality. Thus, in metropolitan societies, political rights emerged from long-standing political struggles and the victors came to see their rights, not merely as customary, but as "natural". In time, the ideologies that settlers created, also allowed them to define themselves - and, by exclusion, to define the un-free members of their societies - by that nature.<sup>1</sup>

But the settler, for all that he might claim a natural equality with - or indeed superiority to - those at "home", was confronted with the fact that "without exception their countries of origin held them in low regard."<sup>2</sup> Settler communities were subjected to a continuous barrage of contempt from metropolitans, not least because they lived among "uncivilized" and "outlandish" peoples, whose supposed qualities they were assumed to have acquired. It was as though, John Elliot writes:

slothfulness, mendacity and barbarism were some kind of contagious disease.<sup>3</sup>

Such metropolitan contempt must have goaded at least some settlers into constructing a more satisfactory image of themselves.

Everywhere settlers began to acquire that sense of place so important to the creation of a new self-image. The landscape, initially so strange, often came to be seen as having a grandeur which contributed to the making of local pride. Yet, paradoxically - and typical of the settler-metropolitan relationship - the recognition of this grandeur did not stop the settlers from trying to make their physical environment look as much like the one they had left behind as possible. This created a tension between the desire to assert their gentility and the need to adopt a local idiom for the layout of their farms, buildings, villages and towns, and for their clothes and, ultimately, for their language and literature. Settler efforts to transform the landscape - their vision having been defined by memories of what they had left behind - was to have a determining effect on the fate of new settlements.<sup>4</sup> Yet this vision coincided with imperatives and language of "improvements". Every colonial society had its version of these improvements, which were useful in countering the metropolitan view that settlers were inherently idle. They made legitimate settler endeavours and bestowed upon the developmental programme the dignity of a divine purpose. This

perceived divine purpose helped settlers to cope with guilt about their treatment of indigenous populations and of slaves.

The "civilizing mission" that they developed may have been criticised in metropolitan societies but criticism tended to reinforce their own sense of purpose and identity. Ultimately, over the generations, this gave rise to a collective historical consciousness based on heroic feats of conquest and the stalwart struggle to build a "civilized" and Christian society. The development of an historical consciousness, albeit limited, shallow and narrow, contributed significantly to the transformation of colonial communities from immigrant to native and in the course of this, they were able to reconsider their relationship to the mother country.

In the second half of the eighteenth century a changing sensibility emerged among European colonists in the older settled regions of the new Atlantic provinces. To some extent this change was a response to the development of a colonial identity amongst the bound - mostly slave - populations of these settlements. Initially the violence of their resettlement in the new colonies had made the formation of such an identity difficult; a difficulty which was exacerbated by slaveholders' conscious attempts to prevent it. Nevertheless, a common identity was forged - both in the colonies of runaways and in the towns, plantations and farms that European migrants established. These parallel communities of the unfree, generally acquired the material culture of the settlers, in the form of tools and clothes. They also adapted, and in some cases transformed, the European settler's language, religion and political culture and, in the process, gave birth to a creole identity. Nor was this creolisation a one-way movement. As the identity of the settlers emerged, it borrowed from, and reacted to, the culture of the creole-cum-slave though at the same time, strenuous efforts were made to prevent European indentured labourers and African slaves from developing a perception of common cause. Nevertheless, a changing sensibility among settlers late in the eighteenth century was encouraged by creolisation, while a pietism and an evangelical movement emerged among settlers in the colonies. These opened the way both for the creation of a creole religion of resistance and a settler paternalism which aimed at inhibiting that resistance. Both resistance and paternalism contributed significantly to the creation of settler identity.<sup>5</sup>

This is not to suggest that the identities which emerged in colonial societies were created self-consciously. For the most part, the process was not so much one of creation as of transformation. To begin with, a new identity was a means of protection against metropolitan contempt, and such identities were uneven, partial and precarious. It was always equally possible to find colonists who insisted upon similarities of colonial and metropolitan values, as it was to find those who placed more importance and emphasis upon the differences. These settlers, when they came to make political and economic demands on the metropolitan society, could not appeal - as later nationalists in colonial Asia or Africa were to do - as native peoples. Instead they laid claim to political traditions shared with the metropolitan culture, or, as most were ultimately to do, they appealed to the body of "universal" natural rights. These were frequently associated with beliefs - sometimes millenarian - that settlements had been divinely intended for the purpose of constructing new societies purified of those vices which had taken root in the Old World. We are all familiar with the republicanism of British North America and with its attempts to escape from the corruption of [old] England. But Jesuits and "New Christians" in Brazil and certain missionaries in colonial Mexico also dreamed of creating new societies cleansed of the vices of the Old World. Not surprisingly, these ambitions owed something to the varying forms of European Christianity, even if national origin and local circumstance were to give each New Jerusalem its own distinctive character and colour.<sup>6</sup>

As eighteenth century ideologies emerged in Europe, these were filtered and selectively adopted by the colonial world which developed its own momentum in each different colonial context. In their colonial form, these ideologies may sometimes have been barely recognizable to metropolitan intellectuals, but they provided cognitive maps for settler notables confronted with new economic and social landscapes. With these maps they could feel more confident about challenging authority, establishing new hierarchies with new systems of rule, justifying their domination of slaves and, above all pursuing profit as an absolute good. As they became increasingly resentful of metropolitan rulers who appeared to have ultimate control over their societies, settler notables began to develop political

philosophies, derived and adapted from their metropolitan homelands, which would enable them to achieve the "New Jerusalem" in their new-found lands.

Some of the republics which settlers proposed were by their nature exclusive. They were perceived as communities of the just, with such high ideals that those outside; those who were either without freedom or without gods - viz. slaves and heathen - could not possibly possess or acquire the qualities necessary to join them. But where the republicanism of Jefferson, however reluctantly, was the republicanism of the exclusive community, Bolivar and San Martin came to offer - if not to create - an all-inclusive republic. In 1821 San Martin asserted:

in the future the aborigines shall not be called Indians or natives; they are children and citizens of Peru and they shall be known as Peruvians.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to minimize the great difference between that secular puritanism which created the republicanism of the American colonies and the covenant theology which offered to construct the new Jerusalem of the Cape; merely to remind ourselves that while the Atlantic world created many different political and social systems, it did so from not wholly dissimilar metropolitan ideologies. The enlightenment, the evangelical revival, the new sensibilities and new workshops, all contributed to the making of settler societies and their identities. As frontier violence gave way to new paternalisms, slavery to wage labour, the rights of kings and governors to the rights of man, - that is to say "white" man - so colonial societies created new identities. These identities were constantly being redefined as they responded, first to one set of stimuli, then to another. The social and political consciousness which emerged was sometimes at odds with that which preceded it and sometimes out of keeping with that which followed. In any event, these evolutions did not necessarily constitute a set of convenient pre-ordained stages on the way to an ultimate nationalist finale.

## II

John Stuart Mill wrote of the sugar islands of the Caribbean that they were

hardly to be looked upon as... carrying on an exchange with other countries, but more properly as outlying agricultural or manufacturing estates belonging to a larger community.<sup>8</sup>

The Cape was, by this analogy, a wayside inn on the road to market, providing the facilities which allowed the production of the outlying "estates" to reach its destination. It ensured that the vessels carrying the commodities put together by the European merchant companies in Ceylon, Indonesia and India were reprovisioned on their journeys to and from the "larger communities" of Europe. To begin with the Dutch East India Company hoped to satisfy its needs in the Cape by performing all its own economic tasks. But it very soon decided that the production of foodstuff would be better undertaken by independent producers. The Company therefore released a number of its employees from its service - significantly they became known as "free burghers" - to allow them to engage in commodity production for the market. They were utterly dependent on commodities themselves, and on the furthest frontier, every nail and iron sheet came from the Europe.<sup>9</sup> In an unfamiliar environment these new settlers - who, like the others of the Atlantic world, had shared the hazards and trauma of the ocean journey and the physical divide which separated them from their native country - were dependent on one another for comfort and emergencies, and they began to establish new communities under the wary eye of the Company.

The most striking features of these communities is that by the mid-eighteenth century, they were Dutch-speaking and members of the Reformed Church of Classis of Amsterdam. This was by no means the inevitable outcome of the original settlement. J. A. Heese in his valuable study, *Die herkoms van die Afrikaner, 1657-1795*, claims that, by the end of his period of study, 57 per cent of Afrikaners were of Netherlands origin (Dutch-speaking), 35 per cent of German, 14 per cent of French and 7 per cent of slave and Khoikhoi origin. Leaving aside any slave and African origin of this settler population, and keeping in mind that the figure of 7 per cent, being derived from baptismal and marriage records, is probably an underestimate, the linguistic homogeneity of the settler communities - a key factor in their identity - followed very largely from the policy of the Company. As every white South

African school-boy knows, conscious attempts were made to scatter the Huguenots in order to prevent a French-speaking enclave being established.<sup>10</sup>

The German-speakers were assimilated more easily, because the majority were single men who married Dutch-speaking women, but it was no accident that the only single women who migrated to the colony were Dutch-speaking. In addition, these German men came from a number of different northern regions and spoke a variety of dialects. That they surrendered their German identity with little struggle is suggested by the rapidly amended forms and spelling of German surnames. Matzdorf quickly became Maasdorp, Sonntag Zondag, Wohlemut Welgemoed. As for the Huguenots, the first generation taught their children French, but the second did not. In 1751, when Abbe de la Caillé visited the Cape, he found no one under the age of forty who spoke French.<sup>11</sup>

The Company's attitude to religion probably reinforced the position of the Dutch language in the Colony and ensured that it occupied a premier place among the settlers. According to J. N. Gerstner, the Company gave itself the role of promoting the "Gospel of justification by faith alone", and therefore insisted that prospective colonists be Reformed Protestant.<sup>12</sup> The substantial number of Dutch women who were brought to the Cape in the eighteenth century were almost entirely members of the Reformed Church. Nevertheless, there is evidence of Roman Catholic and Lutheran settlers in the Colony. The children of Catholics were required to be baptised in the Reformed Church and Reformed sponsors had to be found who would guarantee that they would grow up in that institution. Most Germans were initially Company soldiers and were obliged to attend Reformed Church services in Dutch. In addition, such education as was to be had in the colony included instruction in Reformed beliefs. In the absence of a church of their own, most Lutherans in the districts outside Cape Town attended Reformed Church services and their children were brought up within its traditions. The Lutherans were denied the right to establish their own Church until 1780 and by then most of their communicants were absorbed into Reformed congregations. We should, nevertheless, guard against the view that the settlers were caught up in a theocracy. As some among their elite showed in the 1770s and 1780s, a secular vision of society also existed. At the beginning of the century Adam Tas made it plain that he held the Cape's clergy in contempt.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century, therefore, a single language - though in a spoken form which deviated from that of the written - and a single Church, had come to dominate the consciousness of the settler population. When in 1770 the Dutch Rear-Admiral Stavorinus visited the Cape he observed that,

the first European people in this Colony, made up of different nations, have in the course of time merged to such an extent that at present they can no longer be distinguished one from another; most of those who were born in Europe and have lived here for some years have, as it were, exchanged their national character for that of this country.<sup>14</sup>

The spoken language of the colony, Cape Dutch, was well on the way to becoming Afrikaans and was probably derived from a dialect within central Holland used by the first settlers. This had been modified with the passing of time, in part because it was spoken by outsiders including Khoisan, Malay and Portuguese creole speakers who contributed to the simplification of the language. But Cape Dutch was probably not a fully creole language. Unlike the Caribbean Dutch creole of Demara, Essequibo, and Surinam, it was far more readily understood in the Netherlands, even if, in the 1770s, to speak this "*Caapse krom spreek*" was inclined to cause comment, not to say merriment. In addition, the written language of the settlement was standard Netherlands-Dutch, i.e. the Dutch of the Amsterdam and the Hague upper middle-classes and its presence in this form constantly thrust the Capes' upper classes to revert to the metropolitan representation of standard grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, the language of sermons and the Bible was in standard Dutch. Mentzel, who lived at the Cape between 1734 and 1745, believed that the language of the rural population differed from "pure" Dutch, just as the language of the German farmers differed from pure German. Lichtenstein talked of an "abbreviated, forcible [forceful] Afrikaans Dutch," and Burchell deemed it necessary that the traveller in the Cape have a "knowledge of Dutch 'according to the Cape dialect, and even according to the corrupt dialect of the Hottentots'". Language had a contradictory impact on the sense of identity of the settlers. On the one hand the standard form brought them closer to the metropole and created an internal unity which had not existed at the settlement's inception. On the other

the demotic created a distance. In the early nineteenth century a threat to "high" Dutch caused considerable anxiety and resentment among the elite and in the late nineteenth century - though not before - a demotic language became a focus for a new nationalism.<sup>15</sup>

It is very likely that two, or even more, versions of Dutch were being spoken at the Cape at the end of the eighteenth century. The first was the version used by settlers in Cape Town and the Western Cape, while the others were the languages used by slaves and Khoisan descended peoples for whom conquest and work had meant the surrender of their languages. Modern (White) Afrikaans has surprisingly few words loaned from Malay or Khoisan. It is claimed that less than half a per cent of the basic Afrikaans vocabulary of over 3000 words has its origins in those languages. In the 1960s Afrikaner linguists drew up a list of non-Dutch words to demonstrate the frequency with which they were used in the modern language. The words, almost certainly borrowed from slave languages, were found to occur in the basic vocabulary in the following order: "*baie*", at number 73, "*noi* or *nool*" at 1,458, "*sambreel*" at 1,849 and "*tamaai*" at 2,303. Linguistic cleansing is probably responsible for this relative infrequency, and it is also possible that "Coloured" Afrikaans retains greater links with Khoisan, Malay and Portuguese creole.<sup>16</sup>

### III

The western districts of the colony thrived in the eighteenth century and a prosperous class of notables came to preside over these new Dutch-speaking communities. As the colony expanded in a generally easterly direction, the difficulties of transporting crops more than ninety miles to the consumer at the port meant that producers beyond that distance had to restrict themselves to a product that could itself walk to market. Thus was the veeboer born. The most significant difference between these eastern stock farmers and the those who engaged in mixed farming in the west, was that the former could neither afford, nor did they much need, slave labour. The Company had acquired slaves, to begin with in small numbers, from the coasts of Africa and Madagascar and then, in larger numbers, from South East Asia in the mid-eighteenth century.

At the same time that production with slave labour was set under way, in the late seventeenth century, the economies of the indigenous pastoralists and hunter-foragers, the Khoikhoi and San of the region, were undermined by a combination of unequal exchange, violence, ecological blight and diseases carried by the settlers for which indigenous peoples had no immunity. As a result, the Khoikhoi were gradually incorporated by the settlers, either as clients, or as captives, in dependent, serving roles. In the most favourable circumstances, some Khoikhoi, reduced to being herdsmen for the burghers, maintained part of their original stock. This might increase naturally or as a result of a herdsman being given additional animals as wages. In such cases he was given protection against other predatory burghers by an overlord who combined the roles of conqueror, employer and defender. In the western districts, there was a recognition that on the part of a desperate Khoikhoi people that no alternative offered itself to this incorporation, and in their succumbing a reluctant peace came into being.

This unwilling peace was inevitably accompanied by a further decline in the economic power and status of the Khoikhoi as they were assimilated into burgher households. But, as the frontier moved further into the interior, settlers often provoked bitter counter-violence from the, as yet, unassimilated Khoikhoi and later the San. As these people sought to defend themselves against destructive encroachment by settlers, they wreaked a terrible retribution against burgher communities to which servants and slaves were particularly vulnerable in their isolated herding outposts. Frontier settlers responded with a ferocity that increased the Khoikhoi and San death toll and reduced ever greater numbers of them to the status of burgher captive.<sup>18</sup>

From the beginning of settlement, the Company attempted to forbid the sale of local captives. It was opposed to the enslavement of the local population, because it feared that the counter violence which enslavement might provoke would become so costly to counteract, or so uncontrollable, as to bring the viability of the Colony into question. However, by the last decade of the eighteenth century economic disaster, caused as much by resistance to their expansion as by a catastrophic drop in prices, led frontier settlers in the newly created Graaff Reinet district to look to the holding and selling of local captives.

This expedient was to ensure for themselves the labour which the overwhelming majority of frontier burghers could not otherwise afford and because some also saw the possibility of a profitable trade in captives.<sup>19</sup>

The Company's efforts to frustrate them were resisted by a population not only increasingly convinced of its own righteousness, but equally convinced of the malignancy of the unholy alliance of Company administrators, Khoikhoi rebels and occasionally coastal merchants, whom they saw as opposed to their interests. Like all settlers, nothing vexed them more than metropolitan representatives, whether from the mother country, or from distant colonial capitals, who stood in the way of their dealing with unfree and indigenous populations. It did not matter to them that colonial policy was designed to serve the settlers' long-term interests. As the frontier moved eastward, so a new generation of frontiersmen emerged with an identity moulded to a considerable degree by its experience both with the metropole and with the Khoi and San peoples. But this was not necessarily a fixed identity, since, as the next wave of frontier expansion took place and the settlements became more secure, they developed a culture closer to the colonial heartland.<sup>20</sup>

#### IV

The frontiersman's view that he was opposed by malign forces owed something to the Reformed Christianity which the Company had promoted and which held that while the settlers were "born Christians" the Khoikhoi, even when baptised, were not yet "redeemed". Since the earliest slave and Khoikhoi converts did not meet the expectations of the settlers a widespread view developed that it was not in the nature of such peoples to become Christian. This conviction was probably most deeply entrenched on the frontier, but, elsewhere, some slaves and Khoi were in fact being baptised at different times in the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, baptised "heathen" could not become what the settler had always been - a "born Christian" - and, from early on, the colonist's sense of identity was consolidated by posing an opposition to all outsiders including slaves and servants. Thus, a nineteenth century observer claimed to have heard a frontier farmer remark, after seeing two of his own community, plus a Khoikhoi servant and an Englishman: "Here comes two Christians, a Hottentot and an Englishman".<sup>22</sup>

If the "born Christians" of the Reformed Church were distinguishable from all other men, then over and over again, their clergymen stressed that their ultimate reward was to have arrived in the promised land. "[W]e have a well grounded hope", the Cape Town Church wrote to the Classis of Amsterdam in 1732, "that many citizens of Zion will be joined to the Lord in this Jerusalem."<sup>23</sup> And again in 1766 and 1768, the Cape Church Council urged the Classis to be one means by which "the well being of Zion and the peace of Jerusalem will be furthered" and the instruments, "through which Jerusalem's walls" may be rebuilt.<sup>24</sup> But it was in the sermons preached in Cape Town itself that the clergymen of the Reformed Church left their congregations in no doubt that they had arrived at the site of the New Jerusalem. Thus when the Rev Willem van Gendt preached a sermon in the Cape Town church on the 10th of February 1743, on the installation of Governor Van Imhof, he made it plain, according to Jonathan Gerstner in his *Thousand Generation Covenant*, that those in the congregation were the "continuity of Israel".

[We] are assembled as a people of the God of Abraham, because our shields, the shields of the land, are God's ... Take on your civil and religious responsibilities diligently, showing that you are the people of the God of Jacob and Israel his chosen ones.

the sermon ended appropriately with the identification of those present with Israel.

If we shall be faithful to our duty, both civil and religious ... the salvation of the Lord and his blessings will be over us ... Yes we shall as the true seed of Israel come to delight in the Lord our righteousness!

A similar message was conveyed by the first African-born pastor of the Reformed Church, Petrus Van der Spuy, when he was called upon to deliver a sermon on the 8th of April 1752, on the centenary of the establishment of the colony.<sup>25</sup>

## VI

The free burghers had moved into the new Zion from the moment they moved out of the Company's immediate orbit in the 1660s and they went in search of arable land and pasturage. From then on they were obliged by necessity to cooperate with one another. Cooperation was particularly essential to ensure the security of the new settlements and to allay the fears of the burghers with regard to the imported slave population.<sup>26</sup> The settlers also had a need to cooperate against wildlife, both against predators, and in their search for ivory and other products of the hunt. Exotic and fierce animals, which had seemed at first so strange, soon became a source of pride, not to say swagger, for the young men of the community who told extravagant tales about their own hunting prowess. Hunting, which was an important means of acquiring income, also helped to bond the young men of the settlement. Trading in the interior, in order to profit from bartering with indigenous people, also required cooperation. The burghers needed to share resources and information in order to undertake such expeditions, even if the profits which were ultimately distributed, depended upon the value of any one individual's initial contribution to the funding of the endeavour. Above all, they needed to cooperate when their hunting or trading parties - in truth little more than robber bands - found themselves in violent conflicts with Khoikhoi or San people. These joint undertakings, which grew out of the perpetual search for trade goods, contributed to the making of settler communities with a consciousness increasingly their own, over which the Company attempted to preside.<sup>27</sup>

Paradoxically, as Wayne Dooling has shown, as these communities emerged with an increasingly local identity, they were, by their nature, caught up in contention and conflict with one another. Nevertheless, such contentiousness in itself contributed to the making of a new consciousness.<sup>28</sup> There was, as R. Percival, among others, reported, a "perpetual inclination to quarrel, and a thirst of revenge [which] equally distinguish the Boor of Graaf Reynet and of the Cape."<sup>29</sup> In the last resort, therefore, it was necessary for the Company to create a state which ensured that fractious behaviour did not lead to wider social breakdown. The state helped to foster a settler identity since the Company had created autocratic powers for itself from the very beginning. From a highly centralized executive, the Council of Policy, the Company set out to maintain its hold over settler communities and it attempted to do this by controlling access to the market, by maintaining military force, and by retaining control of the judicial system, including its local representative, the *landdrost*, or magistrate, who combined judicial and administrative functions. In addition the Company also exercised power over the Reformed Church, which, in turn, was able to exert its authority over secular as well as spiritual matters. Thus the fractiousness of these communities was precariously contained - a feat of cohesion which went some way to creating a new consciousness.

But the Company's purpose was, above all, economic, and we must not forget that the colonial state was created to serve that end. The Company dominated the economic institutions of the Colony and its influence was felt far beyond its own immediate activities. It was the major source of credit in the colony - credit which was used by the burghers for obtaining slaves and other necessary purchases. All land was initially acquired on a quit rent from the Company. At the same time, the Company allowed a group of privileged traders to emerge in Cape Town who were permitted to operate monopolies - for example in the purchase of meat - in order that the Company might fulfil its obligations as a refreshment station. This group of traders and merchants grew prosperous under the Company's dispensation, but their success led inevitably to the growth of considerable resentment. In addition, the Company controlled the imports of commodities from Europe and Asia and, while it allowed privileged traders to participate in this commerce, its own officials also carved out a substantial niche for themselves in this increasingly lucrative trade. Two trading companies in operation in the 1770s, Cruywagen and Co., and Le Febre and Co., were enterprises undertaken by high-ranking officials in partnership with leading free burghers. Considerable fortunes were made from such ventures, but they were to rouse great hostility from those free burghers excluded from the lucrative trade. As we shall see, the antagonism created by the trade of officials, became one of the foci of opposition to the Company and prompted a new development in the consciousness of the settlers.<sup>30</sup>

The Company's administrative institutions became ever more visible in the eighteenth century as they came to be replicated in local communities. But, because local people filled most posts these parochial bodies ultimately posed a potential challenge to the colonial

state. Thus, the Company's troops were matched by the *kommando* and its *veld-kornets*, i.e. the civilian militia and its local officials, and these played an increasingly important role in frontier expansion. The *landdrost* was paralleled in the districts by the courts of *heemraden* which presided over local judicial matters, but which also had some involvement in the administration of the region. Similarly, in the outlying Church congregations, which were established with the Company's permission, *ouderlinge* (elders) and *diakens* (deacons) matched the power of the *dominee* and played an important role in supporting local government. Equally significant, the Company's role as creditor was paralleled in the country districts by a system of commercial loans which helped reinforce the power of the elite. The complex network of domestic lending and borrowing existing in the districts meant that very few settlers in the interior survived without becoming either creditors or debtors.<sup>31</sup>

Out of these creditor-debtor links came a large number of patron-client relationships which went a considerable way to reinforcing community alliances. The fact that debtors were chronically indebted to their creditors, must further have reinforced these links. But we should also note that much credit passed from neighbour to neighbour, and kinsman to kinsman, and that the obligations which such borrowing created were, if not weaker, then different in kind. These two sets of relationships meant that sureties were relatively easy to find. But even more important, since these structures of credit were not simply determined by the market place, there were limits to which wealth could be used to impose upon the poor. Nevertheless, the wealthiest settlers tended to be the most conspicuous creditors and, not surprisingly, many of them held office in the Church, the militia and the Courts of *heemraden*. Moreover, they often held several local offices simultaneously.<sup>32</sup>

As a local elite emerged, dominated by men of property, so it began to construct a "moral community" which established an hegemony over lesser colonists. In the process, it also helped to construct a local identity which it sought to control. The regional courts became prime instruments for these exertions and in this role they were generally supported by the *landdrost*. In particular, the Courts of *heemraden* employed their power to assert themselves over those with poor reputations and it would appear that the acquisition of such "reputation" coincided with the act of giving offence to the local elite. Thus, for the courts to work, required the willingness of settlers to give evidence against their compatriots, and this willingness was determined by community considerations. The quality of testimony would have been of secondary importance.<sup>33</sup>

A man of good standing was unlikely to be brought before the *heemraden* and, even if he were, he was unlikely to face charges. As members of the district's notability, the *heemraden* assigned reputations to members of the community and it was they who became the self-appointed guardians of the public peace. Again, it was the *heemraden* who held sway in matters relating to property, for example, where there were disputes over farm boundaries or access to water. The *heemraden* also played a part in deciding how the defence of the district should be undertaken and they required the colonists of the locality to acknowledge their call to do *kommando* duty. They played a similar role in determining the fate of slaves and servants. It was the *heemraden* who decided the circumstances under which ill-treatment was deemed scandalous and the point at which it could not be permitted to continue unchecked, and it was they who decided who should - and presumably who should not - be punished for such transgression. Thus, in 1776, Carel Buytendag was sentenced to be banished from Stellenbosch for atrocities committed against his Khoikhoi servants. The evidence suggests that, had he not succeeded in antagonising his neighbours, and in particular the powerful Van der Merwe family, his misdemeanours would not have reached the notice of the authorities.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, because Roman law, which the Company had introduced into the Cape, did not deny the slave a legal personality, slaveholders were never completely above the law. This is in marked contrast to the position in the American South where English law held sway. Slaveholders in the Cape could be prosecuted and the servile population, Khoi as well as slave, had access to the courts. At the same time, slaves and servants were brought to court by masters for offences which could quite easily have been dealt with in their own households. This provided a double-edged weapon because, while it could be used to reinforce the powers of masters, it could also be both a check upon the master's capacity to act as he chose, and a demonstration to the slaves and Khoi that slaveowners did not have absolute authority. Nevertheless, a slave or servant complaining to the Court was

extremely vulnerable if the *heemraden* chose not to support his charges. "Unfounded" complaints were generally punished brutally.<sup>35</sup>

In the circumstances, therefore, in seeking redress, slaves sometimes devised an alternative strategy and did not take their complaints directly to the court. They might, instead, request a local notable, or sympathetic neighbour, to intervene on their behalf. If these reputable burghers agreed to intercede, they would then appeal to the slaveowner on behalf of the slave and the matter could be resolved in this way. On other occasions, slaves found encouragement to go to court but the success, or otherwise, of a prosecution was determined by the concerns of the dominant group within the local community. From very early on concern about the appropriate treatment of slaves and servants entered the consciousness and identity of the Cape's dominant settlers and the need to be perceived as good masters became important to them. As we shall see, in the early nineteenth century the view was often expressed by slaveholders that slavery in the Cape was uniquely mild. Such claims rarely have any basis in fact but they did contribute in a significant way to the slaveowners ideology.<sup>36</sup>

In the Buytendag case, the *Landdrost* and *heemraden* petitioned the Governor to take action against the accused because, they argued, such ill-treatment of servants by a burgher could only lead to "*groot onheil voor 't algemeenwelzijn*" (great disaster for the general welfare), though they did not specify the form which such "disaster" might take. Whether the *heemraden* were acting to forestall increased government intervention in the affairs of slaveholders and their slaves and servants, or whether they feared that settler behaviour would provoke a slave and servant rebellion, is not clear.<sup>37</sup> The Council of Policy, acting on the charges made by the notables of his district, decided that Buytendag should be banished from the colony, although the Governor suspended his sentence after he had pleaded for leniency and promised good behaviour. As we shall see, the consequences of this leniency were somewhat unexpected.<sup>38</sup>

When burghers were brought to court for unacceptable brutality, or even for the murder of Khoikhoi - and on the few occasions this occurred in the eighteenth century - they fared worse than those accused of similar offences against slaves, since the unlawful killing of a slave was deemed not to be murder. This followed from the premise that, if a slave were property, it could be assumed that an owner, who may have killed his chattel in the course of executing a brutal punishment, would not knowingly have set out to destroy a valuable possession. Thus, a burgher found guilty of unlawfully killing a slave, could face the lesser punishment of banishment from the district or even the colony. On the other hand, because the Company was intent upon ensuring that the Khoikhoi be protected from enslavement, different legal assumptions were made in the course of accusations about their unlawful killing. The killing of a Khoikhoi could lead to the death sentence being passed, since it was not necessary, in such cases to establish that the crime had been premeditated. For example, the death sentence, passed in 1767 for the killing of a Khoikhoi in the western district of Hottentots Holland, followed the court's explicit rejection of the idea that premeditation need be established before murder could be proven.<sup>39</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Khoikhoi in the newly created but strife-torn Graaff Reinet district, were making considerable use of the court, and, as we shall see, the use of this institution came to play an important part in the efforts made by the creole population to defend itself. In the process it advanced a sense of its own identity. At the end of the eighteenth century the Khoi, besides laying charges of murder and assault, also complained of unpaid wages, contracts dishonoured, children detained under duress to work for burghers, and the misappropriation of livestock. Nor were these complaints always in vain. According to Susan Newton-King, a wronged Khoikhoi who persisted with his complaint, had a good chance of receiving support from the courthouse and the administration, and she reports the case of a child held under duress being reclaimed with the court's assistance.<sup>40</sup> It would seem that the difference between Graaff Reinet in the 1790s and the more settled western districts of the colony, was not that the Khoikhoi made greater use of the courts in this new region. Rather the difference lay in the *landdrost* of the district, H. C. D. Maynier, who chose to prevent the local notables from using their power to deter the Khoikhoi from taking advantage of the courts. He followed this course of action, not because he wished to deny the burghers access to labour, but because he sought to make their authority safe by transforming the nature of their rule. This he proposed to do by ensuring that Khoi labour was paid for and that coercion was minimized. By so doing,

he hoped to prevent a Khoikhoi rebellion which would seek support from the neighbouring Xhosa.<sup>41</sup>

To the burghers of Graaff Reinet, giving the Khoi such access to the courts particularly at a time of dire economic distress, was provocation beyond endurance. The response to Maynier's policy is well known. It gave rise to a burgher rebellion in which the frontiersmen of Graaff Reinet, and then of Swellendam, expelled their officials, put tricolour cockades on their heads, elected *volksverteenwoordigers*, (i.e. peoples' representatives), called on the *algemene volkstem*, (the general will), and established a *Nasionale Vergadering* (National Assembly) in which officials were addressed as "citizen" (as in "citizen" *landdrost*, "citizen" *predikant*). Because their narrow interests were so transparent, most accounts of these events have tended to dismiss the possibility that they had any connection with the politics of the age, and have reduced them to the burlesque. And to the twentieth-century observer, there is indeed something absurd about these events. But we must get beyond this judgement if we are to achieve an understanding of the republics of Graaff Reinet and Swellendam. If it were merely farce that we had to deal with, then we should have here no more than a South African version of Mark Twain's Duke and Dolphin. What is significant is that the Graaff Reinet rebels chose to adopt a non-monarchical hierarchy for their alternative system of government. Nor should we dismiss the effects of behaviour in the outside world upon the happenings on the Cape frontier, nor fail to recognize that the actors in these events were influenced by the politics and social philosophy of the age. That the effects and influences of the outside world were both filtered and selected in the political struggles which took place on the Cape frontier goes without saying. But the filters were not so effective as to screen out all traces of politics of the age of revolution.

## V

These events were part of a wider crisis and probably owed some of their agenda and language to earlier events in the colony's history in the western districts of the Cape in the late 1770s. At that time there was an increasing awareness of economic stress, associated in the minds of the burghers with the commercial and administrative policies of the Company. This led to a growing number of angry, if clandestine, discussions among burghers in the western Cape. Their strong sense of grievance was given additional conviction when the writings of Dutch pamphleteers reached the Cape and became the focus of secret deliberations in and around Cape Town. Like settlers elsewhere at this time, those in the Cape chose to challenge or question metropolitan rule by claiming that it was denying them their common political traditions and obstructing their natural rights. This was doubly convenient, since they could not claim their rights as natives of the soil - at least not yet. By having recourse to claiming their rights as citizens of a European society, they had no reason, at the same time, to extend access to these rights to the colony's native population.

But why should a straightforward set of economic grievances be articulated in the language of natural rights? Sixty-five years before, when Adam Tas and his companions had complained of similar abuses of power by Company officials, they had not felt it necessary to use this particular idiom. We can only assume that those who were responsible for circulating the pamphlets, if not those who signed the petition, were members of a small intelligentsia whose reading habits and grievances coincided. Out of this coincidence they articulated their opposition to Company policy in what appeared to them to be the style of the metropolis. In their need to confront the metropolis, they had to show that they were among the most sophisticated of men. We have some sense of the reading habits of the Cape Town and western Cape burghers, because of the practice of auctioning books, along with other possessions, upon the death of their owners.

The best known of these collections - created by Joachim Von Dessin, a company official who settled at the Cape - was enlarged by such purchases from deceased estates. It was, however, systematically developed by a self-conscious use of contemporary guides to the gentleman's library published by Leibniz and others. At his death in 1761, Von Dessin bequeathed his collection of books, manuscripts, paintings, as well as mathematical and astrological instruments, to the Reformed Church in Cape Town, on condition that it serve as a library, "*ten nutte van 't algemeen*." Ultimately, in 1819, this Dessinian collection became the South African Library. Works, mainly in Dutch, French and German, include

volumes of theology, history, philology, jurisprudence, geography, natural history, philosophy, mathematics and medicine along with encyclopaedias. Von Dessin's collection - which contains Descartes first editions - was the largest in the colony, but it was certainly not unique. One private library, that was sold upon the death of its owner, was that of Nicholaas Godfried Heyns. Heyns owned over four hundred books. He was close to those involved in the discussion of natural rights documents in 1778 and was a member of the 1779-82 deputation to the Netherlands which followed those discussions.<sup>42</sup>

In 1778, a handwritten copy of a 1754 pamphlet (written by Elie Luzac) entitled *The Powers and Liberties of Civil Societies, (De Magt en Vrijheeden eerner Burgerlijke Maatschappije)* was circulated in the Western Cape. This was a verbatim transcript of the document whose circulation had been proscribed as soon as it was published in Holland. A second, but locally written pamphlet was circulated later in 1778. Its author may have been the Cape Town-born Johannes Henricus Redlinghuis. In 1777 he was a school teacher; he then became a building-contractor and in 1784 was a licensed butcher. Later he was to serve on a Cape deputation to Holland where he remained for the next ten years. After the French invasion, he was associated with the Jacobins in Holland and, in 1795, he became the editor of the *Nasionale Courant*. He returned to the Cape in 1803 and lived for another twenty years.<sup>43</sup>

Redlinghuis's pamphlet, also derived from *Powers and Liberties*, was far more limited in scope. With the aid of Locke, Grotius and others, it dealt with popular sovereignty as the basis for government. The Cape pamphleteer limited himself to abstracting two "laws" from the original document. These "laws", it appears, did not have the wide-ranging implications of the original document. The first claimed that "every man must promote his own welfare, together with that of his fellows, and in particular that of his fellow citizens". The second held that "every man should contribute ... to the welfare of the general community, and in particular to the citizenry of which he is a member".<sup>44</sup>

Redlinghuis, and those who worked with him, distanced themselves from the claims asserted in *Powers and Liberties* to an inalienable right to resistance. The Cape document had the more modest but, in the context, still radical objective, of convincing fellow burghers that they did not owe an absolute obedience to the government. Rather than attempting to overthrow colonial rule, they were claiming equality with the citizens of the metropolis. This, they believed, they had once held, but, in the long process of their settlement at the Cape, had allowed to be lost. Pre-eminent among these rights were those which permitted them free trade. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Company had agreed to the burghers' demands that its officials be forbidden to engage in trade, but it had allowed its own rules to go by default. Company servants and their favoured burghers dominated trade, both in the colony and externally, but, as the pamphleteer argued, two natural laws obliged the free burghers to complain about "the miserable condition of ... commerce, ... trades, etc." In desperation the Redlinghuis pamphlet named the high officials and their favoured clients whose illegal trading had allowed them to become the colony's premier merchants.

The fear that they might run foul of the authorities and suffer some harsh and capricious punishment must have been in the minds of the readers of the clandestinely circulated pamphlets. Moreover, no sooner had the burghers begun reading this brew of rights and privileges, and begun to discuss the means by which such rights and privileges could be achieved, than they were provoked into action by the arrest and exile to Batavia, apparently without trial, of Carel Hendrik Buytendag. Two years before, in 1776, Buytendag, as we noted earlier, had fallen foul of the district notables and was arraigned before them as a result of brutal assaults on his servants. He was sentenced to be deported but, before this could be enforced, the Governor suspended the sentence on Buytendag's promise of good behaviour. He had had to move closer to Cape Town so that his conduct might be better supervised yet in January 1779, his wife and eldest daughter laid charges against him, complaining that he had assaulted them. The authorities immediately invoked the earlier deportation order and he was bundled on to a ship at anchor in Table Bay. Within a matter of days he was on his way to Batavia.<sup>47</sup>

Buytendag was hardly the stuff of martyrs, and his earlier sentence, we have seen, was a sign of his low standing in the community, but the burghers chose to be unaware of the suspension of the earlier sentence and his apparently arbitrary deportation became the

occasion for them to act against the Company's Cape officials. Led by the Burgher Councillors, i.e. the two nominated settler members of the Court of Justice, the *heemraden* of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, and about 400 burghers, it was decided to send a deputation to the Netherlands to inform the Company of their grievances. In the decade which followed, petitions and pamphlets began to elaborate the demands of free burghers. The circle from which these emanated, came to be known as the Cape Patriots after the similarly named group in the Netherlands.

The initial deputation drafted a wide-ranging petition and submitted it to the Company's highest body, the Chamber of XVII, in Amsterdam, in October 1779. This petition complained about the abuse of power by the Fiscal - who was, after the Governor, the company's senior official and acted as the colonial prosecutor - but it also complained of the use of extortion by other officials. The signatories not only wanted these harassments halted. They also wanted the laws of the colony to be codified so that they would not any longer be charged variously, and arbitrarily, under the statutes of the Netherlands, India or the Cape, as it pleased officials. The petitioners also protested against private trading by officials and asked the Company to enforce its own codes. They complained that Company officials, to whom they had to bring their slaves when these were considered to be "obstinate", and in "dereliction of duty", did not always comply with settler requests for punishment. They petitioned the Council of XVII to allow the burghers to punish slaves themselves. In addition, they asked to be represented in the Council of Policy by seven of their own elected fellows in those matters affecting them. Similarly, they proposed that half the seats on the Council of Justice be given to burghers.

The pamphleteers were not long in expanding on the themes with which they had begun. In 1783 a pamphlet published anonymously in Leiden, but probably written by one of the Cape delegates to the Council of XVII, presented the Cape Patriots' argument in the commonplace format of the times. Europe, it was argued, no longer had any arbitrary despots, because all its peoples had "gradually been enlightened as to the rights which they were granted by nature". Elsewhere in "wild regions" inhabited by beings "created to be reasonable", "natural feelings" had been so blunted that it was understandable that despots should be required to tyrannize over them. But, they continued, how could they

forgive the rulers of Europe for tyrannizing those of their subjects who have left the fatherland and settled in remote countries, distant from their sovereign? This arbitrary despotism is all the less excusable as these countries were first settled and built up for the benefit of those same rulers, who pluck the most precious fruits of the sweat and diligence of the settlers.

The settlers in America, they warned,

provide us with an example worthy of consideration. The English have found to their detriment how impolitic it is to oppress their subjects and no longer to consider them as brothers of the same motherland... The example of the English Americans can be followed by the settlers of both Indies [East and West Indies]. This example can become infectious.<sup>48</sup>

The conduct of Company officials at the Cape had become "intolerable" and the "original social contract", which had been entered into by the Company and the first settlers it sent to "this fruitful part of Africa", had been broken. In a 1784 pamphlet, the Cape was referred to as the fatherland, the Netherlands as the "renowned Republic". A group calling itself "the representatives of the People", came into being and, ultimately by-passing the Council of XVII, addressed three petitions to the States-General in the Netherlands.

The Council of XVII took its time to respond to the petitioners. It consulted the Cape officials who, not surprisingly, dismissed the Patriots as unrepresentative. Initially the Company rejected most of the Patriots' complaints, though the XVII did order officials to stop trading on their own account and the Council of Justice was told to allow burgher participation. But the Company's trading monopolies were retained and no elected representation was conceded. This led to the further pamphleteering and the delegations to the Netherlands to which we have previously referred. However, the colonists' association with the Patriot movement in the Netherlands was unhelpful since both the XVII and the States-General were Orangists. Nonetheless, pressure from the colonists was maintained and times were changing. In 1790, when the Company chose to disregard one of the

concessions which the Council of XVII had conceded, and appointed a retired official to the Council of Justice, the colonists continued their protest with the assertion that

it has been the practice among all nations since ancient times that when they are granted representation on certain bodies in some matters ... they are also given the freedom of nominating the representatives themselves.<sup>49</sup>

In 1791 there was yet another petition to the Council of Policy, this time from burghers on the eastern frontier. Were they not "competent to represent the pressing needs of the people in such cases" they asked, "and to request alleviation of their burdens." The petition continued: "...the law of nature teaches that the inherent right to do this belongs to the people since ancient times."<sup>50</sup> A year later the burgher councillors presented a memorial to the incoming Commissioners who were to investigate the financial and administrative position of the colony. It asked that burgher councillors be allowed to constitute themselves as an independent representative body and although to begin with, the request was turned down, in one of the last acts of the DEIC in its one hundred and forty-eight year rule at the Cape - it was reconsidered and permission was given for the establishment of a burgher council which became known as the Burgher Senate when the Cape was occupied by Britain in 1795.<sup>51</sup>

This had come too late for those burghers who dominated Graaff Reinet's institutions and who could not accommodate to events in the colony and in their own district. They were in the midst of an economic crisis which threatened to destroy their settlement and reduce their members to a penury which would drive them back to the west in a state of absolute poverty. Alternatively, in the social philosophy of the time, poverty would reduce them to a barbarism denuded of the culture which they believed gave them the right to dominate the world in which they found themselves. In the midst of this crisis they were asked to pay arrears in taxes and rents to the Company which in some cases stretched back twenty years. The merchants buying burgher stock were required to collect their taxes before paying them and this at the very moment when prices had collapsed. In addition, the Company was unable to provide specie with which to pay colonists for their animals and they were offered paper money which the merchants would not accept.<sup>52</sup>

Because of the desperate condition of the economy, the Company, as we have seen, was growing more and more concerned about the state of war on the frontier which threatened to embroil it in an expensive defence of the colony. They therefore asked Jacobus van Reenen to report on the state of the frontier. He was a prosperous, third-generation, colonial notable who had spent eighteen months in Paris in the 1770s trying to reclaim money owed to his father by the French military authorities. Van Reenen concluded that the frontiersmen were "selfish people with bad intentions" and that they had robbed the San of their land and their means of survival, so that the San had had to "proceed to the most desperate actions".<sup>53</sup> Even the Council of XVII in the Netherlands was now moved to criticize the frontiersmen and it urged them to be "more mindful of pacifying these natives, with more charitable intentions".<sup>54</sup>

By this time the Graaff Reinetters were caught up in a continuous war of great ferocity with the San and were determined to destroy them as a people. Taking captives had not been the original purpose of their growing violence but, now that they had captives, they were intent on enslaving them for their own use and some among them talked of engaging in a slave trade. Thus the use made of the courts by both the Khoikhoi and the *landdrost* were seen not merely to challenge proper authority but also to deny them the new direction which they were intent upon following, a direction which they saw as the only means by which they could survive. "Did we request this magistracy for us, or for the Hottentots?" they asked.

All know what *schelms* [scoundrels] they are - and we may ask if, since the first foundation of the Colony, so much Christian blood has ever been shed by the heathens as since the foundation of this district?<sup>55</sup>

## VII

If the collapse of the Dutch East India Company had not coincided with the British occupation of the Cape in 1795, then South African history might have been very different.

British rule led to the emergence of two opposing political factions among the settlers in the colony; Anglomen and their opponents, the grandly, but inaccurately, styled "Jacobins". Whatever little momentum the Patriots of the previous decade may have had was lost and their programme disappeared from the political agenda. This lost momentum can be correlated with the fact that positions of consequence in the incoming administration, and increased economic opportunities, were on offer to those who collaborated with the occupying power. Economic advantage existed for those who would provision the British army and fleet. At the same time, the limiting of restricting monopolies held by the DEIC, together with the greater flow of trade, brought about by Britain's increasing Indian commerce, offered many more opportunities for the settler population. Had a Dutch colonial administration been able to carry on where the DEIC left off, it might not have been willing or able to involve itself in maintaining the interior against rebellious or independent Khoikhoi, let alone the western Xhosa. The outcome might have been to force the frontier settlements to retreat into the western districts of the colony. Resentment against the mother country, as well as a need to come to terms with African society, might then have generated a more radical anti-colonialism and a more pragmatic internal policy of the kind that Maynier and others had begun to evolve. Radicalism, we must hasten to add, was compatible with slavery, as the revolution of the North American colonies had demonstrated. As it was, the British occupation ultimately hastened the modernization of the colony, but associated it first with a foreign power, and then with a foreign economic class. In varying degrees, therefore, it became possible for settler identity to be selected from a nostalgic and "conservative" idealization of an imagined Netherlands rather than from a radical version of an equally invented country.

To begin with, however, the settlers were divided between those - the Anglomen - who associated themselves with the incoming British administration, ostensibly because they were recommended to do so by the House of Orange, and those who objected to an association with the British and lost their opportunities for preferment. To some extent this latter position was encouraged by the widely held belief that Dutch rule would soon be restored once the European war was ended. This view seemed to be borne out in 1803 by the establishment of the Batavian Republic's administration, but it was soon followed by the return of the British in 1806, though it was not until 1815 that Britain's occupation was confirmed by the treaty of Waterloo and the Cape became a British Crown Colony. Even after that date, many of the Cape's Dutch continued to comfort themselves with the belief that British rule was temporary. However, not only did Dutch restoration not take place, but the Cape was sold to Britain for a derisory sum.

The colonists had, therefore, to define themselves not only in relation to the Netherlands, but also in relation to the conquering power. This definition was undertaken in daily life rather than in political action. The leading, Cape-born, officials of the DEIC transferred their allegiance to the British. For some amongst the Cape Town burghers, particularly those who benefitted from the presence of this more dynamic, not to say more progressive, colonial power, the solution was simple. Not having beaten it they would join it. They, and in particular their children, learned to speak English, their daughters married British officials, their sons sought posts in British commercial institutions or commissions in the British army. They adopted British styles and, as a single community came into being, they asserted a loyalty to the British Crown. Families like the Van Rynevelds, the Truters and the de Wets come immediately to mind, but there were others. A high administrative, military and commercial network came into being in Cape Town. Officers and administrators were caught up in a "constant routine of festivity and entertainments" which "the better sort of Dutch families" provided for the officers of the British encampment. The friendliness and hospitality of "the lovely Afrikandas .... in all the dazzling splendour of youthfull beauty ... that no man can gaze upon with impunity," seems to have led to marriages to British officials and officers.<sup>56</sup>

Hendrick Cloete claimed that the "most friendly bond of union" existed between English and Afrikaners and this had "literally transformed all ranks of society into one family, to which the spirits of party, of jealousy, or of distinction of race was utterly unknown".<sup>57</sup> But Cloete, who was an advocate and later a colonial Judge, was one of the few local men to marry a British woman. Nevertheless, even Wilberforce Bird, who had been at the Cape since 1810 and was a high ranking civil servant, thought that through immigration and intermarriage, the Dutch settlers "have become so completely anglicised, that British habits, laws, and language, will be considered most congenial to the feelings, and best adopted for

the interests and happiness of the colony."<sup>58</sup> But Bird qualified this observation within a very few pages. The habits of the Dutch and English, he wrote "are not yet sufficiently amalgamated to allow them to associate and mix in the same free manner as is usual with individuals of a common stock".<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, Donald Moodie, who in 1819, settled in the rural, and Dutch-speaking district of Swellendam, observed of the local Afrikaners that they were

strongly attached to their own customs, and unwilling to adopt the language and habits of the English further than their interests require[d].<sup>60</sup>

However much their identity was reshaped in these early years of British rule the settlers continued to adhere to the Dutch language, both in its demotic and its standard form. Between 1806 and the 1830s, there were two Dutch language institutions to which the Cape Town settler population remained loyal, even when it was claimed that they were adopting English ways. The first of these, predictably, was the Reformed Church; the second, less predictably, was the Nederlands theatre. To deal with the latter first, Nederlands theatre proved to be the most resilient of Cape Town amusements and, from 1806 onwards, there is evidence of regular performances, regardless of other changes in Cape Town life. Kotze refers to regular advertisements for Dutch theatre. In addition, a French company, which performed comedies and operas *comiques* also existed in Cape Town from 1803 and survived the transfer of power to the British. In 1807 this company was joined by the erratic, irascible and often dishonest Frenchman, Charles Etienne Boniface, who not only acted and managed the theatre, but also wrote plays for it including, in 1823, a comedy known in Dutch as *De dolzinnige*. This was translated from the French version known as *L'enragee*. Boniface fell out with his translator Joseph de Lima and in response to a lampoon written by the latter, wrote the comic monologue, *Detwe lakken: of Limacon sen. en Limacon jun.*<sup>61</sup>

In 1832 Boniface wrote a popular satirical farce in four acts called *De nieuwe ridderorde of de temperantisten* which was an attack on Dr John Philip and the zeal of the temperance movement. A little earlier, in 1830, Boniface became the first editor of *De Zuid Afrikaan*, but his political insensitivity, and his tactless and imprudent manner, made him an unsuitable editor. One of the many feuds Boniface maintained was with the Amsterdam-born Joseph de Lima. de Lima was by turns lawyer, translator, schoolmaster, journalist, bookseller and publisher. He created a children's theatre known as *Tot Oefening en Smaak* although this fell foul of the *Nederduitsch Zuid Afrikaansch Tijdschrift*. In 1825 he wrote the first history of the Cape. He intended this for his school pupils and called it *Allereeste beginselen der geschiedenis van der Kaap de Goede Hoop* (*First principles of the history of the Cape of Good Hope*). He also edited the first weekly Dutch-Afrikaans secular literary journal known as *De Verzamelaar*.<sup>62</sup> *De Kaapsche Cyclopdie*, as its name suggests, was a journal of wider intellectual interest containing, historical, theological, biographical and philosophic articles. In short, in the early nineteenth century, Dutch high-culture in Cape Town, far from being close to collapse, gave rise to an increased number of intellectual activities.<sup>63</sup>

The Reformed Church was, in these years, another bastion of the Dutch language, although to some settlers it was a bastion under threat. This was because the British authorities, in considering ways of anglicising the settler population, began to contemplate transforming the language of the Church. The old colonial state had, as we have seen, considerable powers over the Church, and its successor did not relinquish these powers. To have transformed the language of the Church would have gone a considerable way to achieving the state's anglicising policy but, although this increasingly informed the assumptions of officials and the British merchant classes of Cape Town, it is doubtful whether it was thought through in any systematic way. Instead the policy was given impetus in unexpected and unintended ways.

Thus when George Thom broke with the London Missionary Society in 1817, he did so in part because of his sympathies for the settlers and their Church. He not only spoke Dutch, but he felt that missionaries were maligning the settlers. But he accepted the assumptions of official circles that it would be desirable for the Reformed Church to become an English-speaking institution. He therefore proposed to the Church's first synod, that it should link itself with the Scottish Church. He also proposed that the Heidelberg Catechism be translated into English. But Thom was not alone in supporting this measure and it was

given endorsement by Dutch clergymen, not least because the Governor, Lord Somerset, had promised to establish a theological college in the Cape. Moreover, with Somerset's encouragement, Thom recruited the Reverend Andrew Murray and five Scottish Presbyterian school teachers. Together, these measures left the widespread impression that the government was about to impose English on the Church and to anglicise the system of education. The result would have been the alienation of the young from the Dutch-Afrikaans language.

The defence of Dutch in the Church came from, at first sight, an unexpected source. Johannes Andreas Truter, by then Sir John Truter, served as the political commissioner to the first synod of the DRC in 1824, where he spoke out against this intention. Truter conceded that civil servants would have to acquire and use English in performing their duties. He also conceded that the Church came under the state's aegis, and depended on its patronage. Nevertheless, he argued, clergymen were not civil servants and the obligation to use English could not be extended to "Religious Worship". Truter's arguments were largely pragmatic. Barely ten years had passed since the colonists had accepted that the Cape had finally passed to Britain. Dutch remained, he said, the "Domestic" language of almost all [old] settler families. Under these circumstances "religious instruction cannot be given otherwise than in the Dutch Language, except at the expense of Religion itself." A time would come, he continued, when

every one's own interest will prompt him, voluntarily and without any humiliating feeling to give up by degrees the domestic use of the language of his ancestors for that of a New and liberal Mother Country.

When the English language was so widely spoken then it would be time to use that language in the Reformed Church.<sup>64</sup>

Truter's diplomacy may have cautioned the administration against so drastic an intervention in the settlers' culture, but the issue simmered on for a decade or more. Thus correspondents in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* (SACA) the Cape Town newspaper which set out to form opinion among the merchant population, continued well into the 1830s to assert that it would be both desirable and improving to hold Dutch Reformed Church services in English. But there were other assaults on the consciousness of the Dutch-speaking population. In 1827 reforms were introduced which were intended to withdraw the right to use Dutch in the administrative and judicial system. The earliest implementation of this policy was the abolition of the Cape Town Burgher Senate. This roused the ire of the Dutch middle-classes in Cape Town so that, for example, nine years after the event, D. F. Berrange, who was Secretary to the Council of Justice, continued to rage against a decision, taken, he said, without consultation. At a stroke it had abrogated local political rights and institutions, and had treated his compatriots as if they were "*minderjariges, verkwisters of sinneloses*" [minors, wastrels or mentally deficient].<sup>65</sup> Even before this event Berrange's fellows - some were officials, most were lawyers - began to express their disquiet, at British attempts to anglicise the Dutch population. In 1825 this group included, in addition to D. F. Berrange, the advocates Daniel Denysen, J. H. Neethling, Johannes de Wet, C. J. Brand and J. A. Joubert, as well as the clergyman J. C. Berrange, Dr Van Oosterzee and the surveyor Willem Fredrik Hertzog.<sup>66</sup>

One of the earliest actions of the group was to rescue *Het Nederduitsch Zuid Afrikaansch Tijdschrift*. This became the focus of a new consciousness which was emerging among a Dutch-Afrikaans intelligentsia. The contributions received by the *Tijdschrift* so evoked the Dutch connection, and were so determinedly hostile to the British presence, that the editorial board felt obliged to censor many of them. Articles on "*vaderlandlief*" (love of the fatherland), or those which were very well disposed to the Netherlands, or which contained anti-British utterances, required, said the editors, discrete editing. On one occasion they decided to place an article entitled '*De eene edele daad wekt de andere op*', (one noble deed inspires another) but to remove the three lines beginning "*Nederlands mijn Vaderland*" (Netherlands my fatherland). The *Tijdschrift* members grew increasingly troubled about the efforts being made to anglicise the Cape Dutch population. They expressed misgivings about the administration's continuing exertions to attract Scottish ministers into the Reformed Church and they shared the uneasiness of a correspondent to the *Tijdschrift* who was concerned that the colonial administration should want to limit instruction at school to English. How, he asked, can a nation "raise itself up" if it was not to educate the young "in the use of their language?"<sup>67</sup>

But we should hesitate before assuming that the *Tijdschrift* group was simply the precursor of some latter-day Afrikaner Christian Nationalist association. Although it was concerned to foster Dutch-language education, it was anxious to provide this in as secular a context as possible. This emerges from its role in the development of the South African College. The College was established in 1829, by public subscription, for further secondary and higher education. Among those who played an important part in its foundation were C. J. Brand, J. H. Neethling, Jan de Wet and D. W. Hertzog. They also had the support of the editor of the SACA, John Fairbairn, although his attentions were elsewhere at this time. The colonial government had been lukewarm about the project when it was first mooted, but once it had come into existence, the government belatedly attempted to give the College Council direction. The politics of deference had led the shareholders to elect Judge Burton as president of the Council, and Sir John Truter as vice-president. In 1830 Burton proposed that religious instruction be introduced into the school. The anglophone members of the Council, Truter, the Reverend A. Faure, Dr James Adamson and Hamilton Ross, gave him their support, but the proposal was rejected by Brand *et al*, not, they said, because they were opposed to religious instruction - among those who supported Brand was the Lutheran minister in Cape Town - but because they felt that such education should take place outside the College and be left to an individual's Church. Brand pleaded for the exclusion of religious instruction from the College on grounds that it would excite religious animosity where none had previously existed. He was reported as saying:

the peace of our churches, and with it the safety and integrity of our worship, must be cast down, with it the tranquility and contentment within homes must be destroyed, and end with the ruin of our Fatherland.<sup>68</sup>

It is possible that Brand and his allies were being over cautious and suspicious of the motives of those who favoured religious instruction taking place in school. They saw in this a means by which the administration could, deviously, introduce this instruction in English. "[G]ee die vinger dan gryp hulle jou hand," ("If you give them a finger they'll grab your hand.") Brand was supposed to have said. In private, those who proposed the measure denied that this was their motive. There was, Judge Burton informed the Governor, "no reason to apprehend any intention of introducing the English church Catechism as was falsely pretended." Whether that would have satisfied Brand and his allies is difficult to decide. It was not the "English church Catechism" that they feared, but rather the Reformed Church version taught in English. Burton interpreted the opposition to his measure as being the result of "a bad feeling existing in the minds of a few, who are jealous of the increasing union of the well disposed Dutch and English inhabitants, and of their increasing attachment to the Government." For Burton, it was the work of those who preferred "party feeling" to "the good of their country" which was to be achieved in "the union of Dutch and English".

Another incident which occurred at this time suggests that Brand and his fellows differed strikingly from latter-day Afrikaner nationalists. In 1833, the one Roman Catholic member of the Council, F. Mabile, was not re-elected and his defeat was attributed to the religious prejudice of an organized group led by Hamilton Ross and Professor Rose Innes. To show their opposition to these prejudices Messrs Brand, Hofmeyr and Smuts resigned from the Council.<sup>69</sup>

Much happened in the 1830s as the Cape Town Dutch-speaking elite became more self-conscious about its identity. For the moment, however, I can only provide a brief note to anticipate the way in which events and processes unfolded in the 1830s and in the 1840s. In 1833, a group of Dutch-speakers, most of whom had been active on the *Tijdschrift*, established a *Maatschappij ter uitbreiding van Beschaving en Letterkunde* [Society for the Expansion of Culture and Literature]. It was soon committed to that task to which such organizations are impelled - the preparation of a history of "the people". For all that the Dutch-speaking, and sometimes Netherlands-educated, elite was driven to establish its own identity, it was at the same time, caught up in the contemporary ethos of "progress" and "improvement" which was much proclaimed by Cape Town's new English-speaking middle-class. There was one member of the Cape intelligentsia who rejected the progressive shibboleths of the age. This was G. W. A. Van der Lingen, who, in 1830, accepted a call to the Paarl Reformed Church. He was much influenced by his anti-modernist, and anti-revolutionary mentors in the Netherlands and he adopted their cyclical theory of history, explicitly rejecting the linear doctrine professed by liberals like Fairbairn.

Fairbairn and his circle foresaw British institutions advancing along an endless continuum towards the goals of "Progress". By contrast, Van der Lingen believed that national institutions lived through cycles of birth, development, old age and ultimately death. But he also held that these institutions could undergo periodic regeneration.<sup>70</sup> The Dutch state, he claimed, had reached great heights of civilisation, but it now lacked the capacity to restore itself to its former position and he doubted whether any European nation could ever again achieve as much as it had achieved. Nonetheless, he was convinced that there would be a regeneration and that the Cape would recreate Dutch power in a new and "equally magnificent historical cycle". Van der Lingen presented his historical theory to an audience at the South African College in 1833 and although there would have been support for his vision of a Cape following in the "footsteps of an exemplary Holland", his hostility to progress would have left many of his audience nonplussed.

In 1830, just prior to the establishment of the *Maatschappij*, the Cape Town Dutch-speaking intelligentsia turned its energies to the establishment of the weekly newspaper, *De Zuid Afrikaan*. In its first decade the paper was confronted by two major, colony-wide sources of anxiety. Property-holders suffered a record number of bankruptcies in 1834 and these were followed, for slave-owners, by widespread social anxieties brought about by abolition. These factors contributed to a further sharpening of the sense of identity which had been coming into being since the 1820s. At the same time, this new consciousness alienated John Fairbairn who, having attempted to build a political alliance with the Cape Dutch to achieve self-government, now came to see the growing sense of Cape Dutch identity as a greater danger than the arbitrary power in the hands of the colonial government. It led to Fairbairn's ensuing assaults on Cape Dutch identity - assaults which furthered the intensification of their Cape Dutch self consciousness. The decade ended with C. J. Brand, having recently been appointed editor of the *Zuid Afrikaan*, writing to Andries Pretorius, leader of the Voortrekkers to inform him that "*Ik ben zedert eenige maanden de edituer geworden van ons vaderlandsche corant 'De Zuid-Afrikaan'*" ("I have become the editor of our fatherland's newspaper *De Zuid Afrikaan* some months ago.")<sup>71</sup>

But Brand would soon direct his energies elsewhere and, in July 1841, in calling for the creation of representative institutions, he claimed them as "*die erflike reg van elke Britse onderdaan*" ("the inherent right of every British subject").<sup>72</sup> By 1848, Fairbairn noted that a western political alliance had come into being in which the Dutch identity of the 1830s no longer seemed to exist. As he observed in the SACA in September 1848:

It is certain that the Dutch are considerably the most numerous. By far the greatest part of the land and fixed property are in their hands, together with the greater part of the moveable property on the land. Of the Commerce and active Capital the greater part is in the hands of the English. But there is no difference between these two classes, in rank, place, or consideration in society. They are all engaged in the same pursuits, and meet each other everywhere on a footing of perfect equality. They do not stand apart, like the European and African, in the characters of rich and poor, capitalists and laborers, employers and employed. Their interests are identical, and cannot be separated, or opposed to each other, without injury to both. By local intermixture, by intermarriages, and by connexions in business, these two classes have, to a greater extent, lost their original distinctions, and the educated, well-informed and well-disposed sink them entirely, without an effort, in the ordinary affairs of life.<sup>73</sup>

At much the same time, F. W. Reitz was so concerned by attempts being made by "Conservatives" to drive a wedge between "classes", that he called for unity between "Africans of Dutch, French, German, English, Danish, Portuguese, Mozambiquan, Malay, and Hottentot extraction".<sup>74</sup>

By the early 1850s there were calls for English services in Cape Town's *Groote Kerk*.

## VIII

If the Cape Town elite, in responding to British rule, were slow to create a new identity for themselves, then the same could be said for the country people, although it is unlikely that they accepted the foreign power which had come to rule over them. For some its advent meant a sense of bewilderment and helplessness which left them unable to play a significant

political role. "The Cape Dutch", wrote Wilberforce Bird in 1820, "are content to be quiet, and to obey". Six years later the Commission of Inquiry observed, "It was not to be expected that the Dutch part of the Community should so far divert themselves of their feelings of habitual submission and acquiescence in the measures of the colonial government, which they had been taught especially to regard."<sup>75</sup> A decade later Andries Stockenström wrote to the Cape Governor, noting,

...so deeply have I always lamented those unfortunate circumstances which predispose the minds of my Countrymen to that apathetic acquiescence under all vicissitudes which has brought upon them too justly the charge that, with the Cape Colonists any thing may be done because they submit to every thing.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, an external enemy, intent on overthrowing British rule, would have found them willing allies. Thus in 1806, as the second British occupation began, Lt Colonel Robert Wilson let it be known that he doubted "whether the British could ever induce the Dutch ... to adopt the British cause" and he went on to observe that he saw no "symptom of abated affection for the mother country." Similarly, Burchell who travelled widely in South Africa between 1810 and 1815 felt the chill wind of anti-British hostility. He reported coming across men, who, though they had no "love for the Dutch Government ... hate that of the English." But whether this was because the new administration was enforcing British law, or whether any law enforcement would have incurred their hostility, is not clear.<sup>77</sup> Burchell was made welcome where ever he went, but it was made apparent to him that hospitality was not to be confused with pro-British sentiment. Thus, after one countryman had repaired Burchell's broken axel he let it be known that, had Burchell made use of the letter of introduction from the government, instructing every one to do all in their power to help him on his journey, the Samaritan would certainly have crossed the road.<sup>78</sup> Another episode, in 1812, serves to illustrate the existence of anti-British feeling among the farmers, this time in the district of Stellenbosch. Lieutenant Gerrit Hendrik de Waal, who was serving in a British regiment, attended a birthday party for one Henry Cloete. Cloete's father called for a song to be sung and de Waal immediately broke into Rule Britannia. Some of those present were hostile to the singing of this song and Cloete senior told de Waal to stop. De Waal continued with his song and he was thrown out of the house in consequence. He was denied his horse and his sword, and had to spend the night in the rain in a trench.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the Moravian missionary, Christian Ignatius Latrobe, in his *Narrative of a Visit to South Africa*, found widespread complaints about taxes and fluctuations in market prices. He was anxious that steps be taken to ensure that "the occupation of this land by the British (be) considered a blessing, and not a curse, as we have sometimes heard it called."<sup>80</sup>

To be so certain of what they were up against gave country people a common cause and this would have contributed to the way in which they viewed themselves. But the way in which other people viewed them must also have contributed to their image of themselves. From the time of the earliest settlement, outsiders - whether from Cape Town or from Europe - were at work constructing a none too flattering picture of these rural people. Although travellers like Stavorinus included the burghers of Cape Town in their strictures, the likes of Barrow, Percival, Burchell and J. W. D. Moodie were most critical of rural people. There are endless laments about their idleness and ultimately their degeneracy. Their "indolence of body", wrote Barrow, led to a "low groveling mind". They were "entirely destitute of enterprise, and so completely indifferent to the art of bettering their situation", wrote Percival. Moodie found the women "lazy, listless and inactive". Burchell concluded that the

ease of an indolent life, with all its losses, is so much more agreeable to [them] than the labour of an industrious one with all its advantages, that the lives of such men must be entirely new-modelled before they can be capable of receiving the improvements of other countries.

J. M. Coetzee, from whom these quotations are taken, concedes that there might be a degree of chauvinism in the commentators' descriptions of life among settlers at the Cape. But he also quotes the Dutch admiral, Stavorinus, who provided a description of a "typical" day in the life of a late eighteenth century Cape burgher. "A long smoke and a stroll in the morning, an hour or two of business, a midday meal followed by an afternoon nap and an evening of cards."<sup>81</sup>

Travellers who, we must assume, rarely undertook manual or even skilled labour themselves - and we have noted how Burchell had to have his axel repaired for him by one

of these same idle settlers - went on at length about their lack of energy and activity. Slavery did make the master class indolent, but the philosopher's prediction, that it led to physical degeneracy, was no more fulfilled than the classical economist's prediction that slavery would lead inevitably to economic collapse. Nevertheless, Mentzel wrote of the frontiersmen that, if they did not intermarry with Europeans from outside the colony, they would "degenerate and become uncivilized".<sup>82</sup>

There was enough of this kind of comment in the air for the Dutch settlers to have developed a sense of resentment against the outsider and, in the process, to have begun to develop their own collective image of themselves. Here the travel writers' image was reversed in the construction of the Cape settlers' "imagined community". This process took place in the context of struggles between Evangelical missionaries, on the one hand, - and with them those engaged in humanitarian and anti-slavery movements - and colonial settlers on the other. In the course of coming to terms with the way in which they had been presented to the world, Cape settlers rejected the view that they were both brutal in their treatment of servants and unchristian in their behaviour. We get some indication of the sense of offence given from the Stellenbosch Church Council's decision to write to the Directors of the London Missionary Society and complain of the "*naadelige Gerugten*" (prejudiced rumours) which the *Missionary Chronicle* disseminated about its members.<sup>83</sup>

They began, therefore, to assert that their treatment of servants and slaves was humane, not least because, from the beginning of the nineteenth century and immediately before the arrival of the Evangelical missionaries, the Church increasingly encouraged religious instruction for slaves and servants. Some settlers began to develop new sensibilities, partly because the belief began to grow that the Christian servant was more submissive and more willing to work. Increasingly, mission stations were accepted for this reason, but religious instruction, initiated by settlers, took place both in the "*oefen huis*" (meeting house) especially set aside for the purpose, and in the settlers' own households, in what was known as "*huisgodsdienst*" (domestic religious service). This practice, as travellers noted, played a significant part in settler households from the early nineteenth century and was part of what should be seen as a growing ideology of paternalism.

At the same time, Cape Dutch judges of the Circuit Court went out of their way to comment on the supposedly humane and kindly treatment of slaves, not least because they expected their views to reach high places within the British government. Thus Truter reported to the Governor, in 1812, that, because slaves were such valuable property, their masters were obliged to treat them well, to feed and clothe them properly, to care for them when they were ill and to raise their children with care. He went on:

the so-called slavery here is at present hardly more than the name, and their real state is in many respects far better and more comfortable than that of many of the free poor classes in the civilised countries of Europe.<sup>84</sup>

The commissioners of the Circuit Court also reported:

As far as the undersigned could perceive during their journey, all the slaves (the number of whom is not very great in the country districts) had every appearance of being well treated and satisfied with their condition.<sup>85</sup>

And again:

With regards the treatment of slaves, the undersigned, for as far as they had any opportunity of seeing, cannot speak otherwise than favourably, and they take the liberty to refer to the satisfactory declaration which your Excellency was pleased so publicly to make on your return from your Excellency's extensive journey through the settlement.<sup>86</sup>

As I will argue elsewhere, paternalism played an important role in colonial politics, not least because it helped construct a worthy self-image for the Dutch-Afrikaans population. The place of paternalism is a matter of some controversy among historians of the Cape and, for the moment, I do not wish to enter into the debate on whether or not it existed, and if so whether it transformed the consciousness of servants and slaves. But this does not preclude us from promoting the view that the ideology of paternalism played an important part in creating the identity of the master class. When John Philip was sued for libel in

1832 and lost his case, the burghers of Paarl held a dinner to celebrate this event, because his defeat vindicated them. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that when the Dutch-speaking middle class of Cape Town turned their new found ethnic identity to creating a newspaper, the editor immediately trained his sights on what he called the four great "Humbugs" of their era.

Wy beginnen met FREE-PRESS *humbug*, - INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER *humbug*. MISSIONARY *humbug*, en vooral (want dit is de paramount of non plus ultra van alle *humbugs*) de PHILIPISH-*humbug*. Vestigt, vooreest uwe geheele aandacht op deze vier voorname *humbugs*.<sup>87</sup> [We begin with the Free-Press *humbug* - Independent Newspaper *humbug*, Missionary *humbug*, and (especially because it is the paramount or non plus notion of all *humbugs*) the Philipish -*humbug*. Focus, to begin with, your whole attention on these four aforementioned *humbugs*]

## IX

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the identity of the Cape's continental-European settlers was constantly being redefined. To begin with, a set of religious, linguistic and even metropolitan loyalties, which had not previously existed, were created for the first time. These loyalties led to the construction of a Cape Dutch population which drew its identity from its imagined "fatherland". In time it came to claim the "natural rights" of that fatherland. The conquest of the Cape by the British, combined with the fresh prosperity which came with that new rule, led to a dilution of the settler identity.

Some of the Cape Dutch were anglicised as a result of this prosperity and the administration in consequence developed a facile view of how easy it would be to make the settlers loyal to British institutions. In the 1820s and 1830s, the elite in Cape Town, in the face of threats to their language and religion, as well as to their economic and political status, provoked the development of self-conscious cultural and linguistic associations. These pre-date many of the associations linked with European nationalism. At much the same time, settlers also came to see themselves as having a Christianising and a civilising mission and they deeply resented the attacks made upon them by the Evangelical Missionaries. By the 1840s, however, the middle-class Afrikaner elite of the west had come to share many economic interests with the British merchants of Cape Town. Mutual recrimination ceased and the cultural associations of the 1830s declined and played no part in the political movements of the late 1840s, when the elite sought to achieve self-government by another route. In this process it had the support of the majority of those who spoke Dutch-Afrikaans, in spite of the fact that the campaign was not explicitly associated with the politics of its cultural identity. Moreover the campaign to achieve self-government was led by liberals and its stated objective was the creation of a property-owning non-racial political system.

As elsewhere, the Cape's colonists responded, first to one set of stimuli, then to another. The social and political identity with which they emerged was constantly changing. Each evolution in their identity did not constitute a pre-ordained stage on the road to some nationalist finale. On the contrary, there was much in each new identity which would be anathema to the modern Afrikaner nationalist. The process provides us, therefore, with the redeeming feature about the construction of ethnic and nationalist identities: that, in the long run, communities will always deny their own past constructions and will begin to construct anew. This offers us a small hope, in the case of Afrikaner nationalism - that it will abandon its current construction for a less destructive identity. It is already becoming difficult to find anyone who ever supported apartheid.

## NOTES

- 1 John H. Elliott, "Introduction: Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World" in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, (eds.), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton, 1987); Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (London, 1988) provides an excellent comparative study of slavery in the Atlantic world.
- 2 Elliott, "Colonial Identity", p 9.

- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.* citing William Cronon: *Changes in the land.*
- 5 Joyce, E. Chaplin, "Slavery and the principle of humanity: A modern idea in the early lower South", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1990, pp 299-315. The creation of a non-Afrikaner creole identity in the Cape must await a later essay but see my "The Emergence of Cape Liberalism and the Making of Hottentot Nationalism".
- 6 Elliott, "Colonial Identity". The North American literature on Republicanism is voluminous. A few references must serve: Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of Republicanism in American Historiography", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXIX (January, 1972), pp 49-80; Robert E. Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXXIX (April, 1982); Gordon S. Woods, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution.* (New York, 1992).  
For Hispanic America see David Brading, "Classical Republicanism and Creole Patriotism" in D. A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, 1991).
- 7 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Second edition, London, 1992), p 50. In his second edition Anderson complains of the neglect of his original chapter four. This placed the first modern "ethno-linguistic" nationalism in the Atlantic world rather than in the Europe of 1848. The chapter first appeared as "Old Empire, New Nations". He has retitled it "Creole Pioneers". This device caught my attention but it is hardly a solution to the problem.
- 8 James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom. An Interpretation of the Old South* (New York, 1990), p 55.
- 9 Susan Newton-King, "'The Enemy Within': The struggle for ascendancy on the Cape eastern Frontier 1760-1799", Ph.D., London, 1992.
- 10 C. G. Botha, *The French Huguenots at the Cape* (Cape Town, 1970).
- 11 Jonathan Gerstner, *Thousand Generation Covenant, Dutch Reformed Church Theology and Group Identity in Colonial South Africa* (Leiden, 1991), pp 32-38. J. du P. Scholtz, "Afrikaans" in *The Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*, (Twelve Volumes), (Volume I, Cape Town, 1970). pp 81-113.
- 12 Gerstner, *Thousand Generation Covenant*, p 33.
- 13 *Ibid.*, *The Diary of Adam Tas 1705-1706*, edited by Leo Fouché and revised by A. J. Boeseken (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1970). Tas called his clergyman an "hypocritical old templar" and constantly described his sermons as "*seer droevig*", (156), "He was once again tedious," and "spoke in his usual tedious manner", (187).
- 14 J. S. Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East Indies*, translated by S. H. Wilcocke (3 vols., London, 1798), cited by J. du P. Scholtz in "Afrikaans." p 84. Scholtz has written extensively on the history of Afrikaans.
- 15 The origins of Afrikaans is a complex question in both linguistics and history. My reading has left me aware of my ignorance. For the time being I have relied on the work of J. Du P. Scholtz, and my citations are from Scholtz's work.
- 16 Nevertheless "Coloured" Afrikaans is a Dutch-based language as this anecdote suggests. J. Du P. Scholtz ("Afrikaans") reports that in the course of the eighteenth century the word "moei", meaning father's or mother's sister, continued in use until the early part of the nineteenth century; but eventually the Dutch example was followed in white Afrikaans. According to Scholtz, however, *moei* (and in the diminutive *motjie*) is used in Western Cape black and Malay Afrikaans.
- 17 Nigel Penn, "Land, labour and livestock in the Western Cape during the eighteenth century" in Wilmot G. James and Mary Simons, *The Angry Divide. Social and economic history of the Western Cape* (Cape Town, 1989), pp 2-19.
- 18 Susan Newton-King, "'The Enemy Within'", pp 143, 145, 148, 171. J. S. Marais, *Maynier and the First Boer Republic* (Cape Town, 1944).
- 19 Newton-King, "'The Enemy Within'", pp 227, 228, 229, 233, 234.
- 20 Newton-King, "'The Enemy Within'"; A. D. Martin, *Doctor Van der Kemp* (London, 1931). Elizabeth Elbourne, "'To Colonize The Mind': Evangelical Missionaries in Britain and the Eastern Cape, 1790-1840", D.Phil, Oxford, 1992. H. B. Thom, *Die Lewe van Gert Maritz* (second edition, Cape Town, 1965). The Graaff Reinets waggon-maker was one of those who, in 1825, contributed to the purchase of windows for the mission institute or *oefen huis*, in the village.

- 21 See for example, Anna Boeseken, and M. Cairns, *The Secluded Valley. Tulbagh: 't land van Waveren, 1700-1804* (Cape Town, 1989), ch. 10.
- 22 Gerstner, *Thousand Generation Covenant*, p 252.
- 23 Gerstner, *Thousand Generation Covenant*, p 240; The Cape Town Church to the Classis of Amsterdam, 5 June, 1732, cited in C. Spoelstra, *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiederis de Neerduitsche Gereformeerde Kerken in Zuid Afrika* (2 vols. Amsterdam, 1907), vol. 1, p 171.
- 24 Gerstner, *Thousand Generation Covenant*, p 240. The Cape Town Church to the Classis of Amsterdam, 7 Jan. 1766, cited in Spoelstra *Bouwstoffen*, vol. I, pp 310-11; see also the correspondence between the Cape Town Church and the Classis of Amsterdam, 26 Jan. 1768 and 4 Feb. 1771, in Spoelstra, *op. cit.* pp 316, 325.
- 25 Gerstner claims that his interpretation does not restore a simplistic Calvinist doctrine of the Elect to a central role in constructing the settlers' identity. I do not think that my essay is in conflict with André du Toit's "No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology", *American Historical Review*, 88, (October 1983), pp 920-52. I am not arguing for a continuity between the eighteenth century Covenant theology and modern Afrikaner nationalism. Nor would du Toit argue that it had no impact at all on Cape settlers.
- 26 As late as 1774 the Boards of *Landdrost* and *Heemraden* at Stellenbosch could not allow too many burghers to go on commando because that would result in "stripping these districts of men and exposing them to the danger of murder and robbery by their slaves" [*The Record, or a series of official Papers relative to the condition and treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa*. Compiled, translated and edited by Donald Moodie (Cape Town and Amsterdam, 1960), 1838?] Photostatic Reprint. Part III, 23.
- 27 The various works of P. J. van de Merwe bear this out. See my paper "South Africa and the politics of hunting", to the *Past and Present* Conference on the Politics of Hunting, June 1990.
- 28 Wayne Dooling, "Law and Community in a Slave Society: Stellenbosch District. 1760-1820", M.A., UCT, 1991, ch. 1, "The contours of community". Much of what follows in the next few paragraphs is dependent on this excellent thesis.
- 29 R. Percival, *An account of the Cape of Good Hope* (London, 1804), p 225. Wayne Dooling, "Law and Community", p 14.
- 30 See below.
- 31 Dooling, "Law and Community", pp 19-23.
- 32 Dooling, "Law and Community", p 21.
- 33 Dooling, "Law and Community", ch. 2, "The Community and Access to the Law for the Servile Population".
- 34 N. G. Penn "Anarchy and authority in the Koue Bokkeveld, 1739-1779: The banishing of Carel Buytendag", *Kleo*, XVII, 1985, p 32.
- 35 Dooling, "Law and Community", pp 75-76.
- 36 See below.
- 37 Dooling, "Law and Community" p 98.
- 38 See below.
- 39 Dooling, "Law and Community", p 122.
- 40 Newton-King, "The Enemy Within", pp 275, 6.
- 41 Newton-King, "The Enemy Within", pp 118, 119, 239, 279, 285, 289, 344; Marais, *Maynier and the First Boer Republic*.
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- 65 Visagie, "Willem Fredrick Hertzog, 1792-1847", p 57.
- 66 Visagie, "Willem Fredrick Hertzog, 1792-1847", pp 57-58; Miscellaneous minutes of the editorial board of the *Nederduitsch Zuid Afrikaansch Tijdschrift*, 1825-1834.
- 67 H. C. Botha, "Die rol van Christoffel J. Brand in Suid-Afrika 1820-1854" (1977), p 38. [de vrede van onze kerken, en daar mede de veiligheid en vaardigheid van onze Godsdienst, moet onver werpen, het welk de rust en tevredenheid binne onzen huizen moet vernietigen, om te eindigen met die ondergang van on Vaderland.]
- 68 Botha, "Die rol van Christoffel J. Brand", pp 39-40, *South African Commercial Advertiser*, henceforth (SACA), 19 Jan. 1833; W. Ritchie, *The History of the South African College 1829-1918* (Cape Town, 1919), vol. I, p 80.
- 69 Jean du Plessis, "Colonial Progress and Countryside Conservatism. An essay on the legacy of Ds G. W. A. Van der Lingen", M.A., Stellenbosch, 1988, p 114.
- 70 H. S. Pretorius, D. W. Kruger with C. Beyers, *Voortrekkerargiefstukke, 1829-1849* (Pretoria, 1937), R 39/39 C. J. Brand - A. Pretorius, 13 Junie 1839, cited in Botha, *Die rol van Christoffel J. Brand*, p 82.
- 71 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 30 July 1841; Botha, *Die rol van Christoffel J. Brand*, p 81.
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- 79 C. I. Latrobe, *Journal of a visit to South Africa in 1815 and 1816* (London; facsimile reprint, Cape Town, 1969).
- 80 Adam Tas, we may add provided similar descriptions at the beginning of the eighteenth century. His diary entries always begin with a mention of work being carried out by his servants and slaves followed by a description of his own activities. Thus on 6 July, 1705 he wrote:  
 Fine morning. Progress was again made with vine pruning and digging. This morning I walked to Stellenbosch and paid Mr Mahieu 2 1/2 rixdollars for three books bought at the sale of Mr van der Loon's books; thereafter I went to the home of Mr Bek, where I smoked sundry pipes of tobacco and drank a glass or two of sack between whites. Then I walked to my home in the company of Messers. van der Bijl and van der Heijden, where we ate dinner, and after dinner fell back to playing cards, during the course of which we enjoyed a round of drinks; in the evening we again ate and drank together, and after supper our friends left.  
 This could have been a day in the life of familiars of Jane Austin's Mr Bennet or even her John Knightly. Like them Tas was a successful, not to say progressive, farmer. (*The Diary of Adam Tas 1705-1706*, pp 72-73).
- 81 Those African born...have accustomed themselves to an extent to the carefree life, the indifference, the lazy days and the association with slave and Hottentots, that not much difference may be discerned between the former and the latter. If, in addition, the sweet little wife has grown up among slaves and Hottentot women, one may easily form the conception of the kind of people their children will eventually be. Will they not, with the passing of time, forget that there is a God who created them?  
 C. F. A. Mentzel, *Complete and Authentic Geographical and Topographical Description of the Famous and (...) Remarkable African Cape. 1785, 1787*, (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1921, 1922, 1944), vol. 3, pp 115-6; Gerstner, *Thousand Year Covenant*, p 165.
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