BACKGROUND TO THE KHOIKHOI REBELLION OF 1799-1803

by

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Nearly every potted history of South Africa begins with the observation that the initial purpose of white settlement in the region was to provide a source of fresh provisions to the ships of the Dutch East India Company. It is also generally agreed that, owing to a combination of factors, such as the nature of shipping demand, the price of grain in Europe and Batavia, the inferior quality of Cape wines, the aridity of the Cape hinterland and the difficulties of transport (1), the prime importance of the Cape to East Indian commerce, apart from its strategic position, lay in its role as a supplier of meat. But what is now under dispute is the extent to which the market for meat and other pastoral products conditioned the expansion and social organization of white settlement in the interior of the Colony.

S. D. Neumark has argued that there was a direct relationship between the pace of colonial expansion and the fluctuations in shipping demand at the Cape, and hence, by implication, that the settler economy was highly responsive to market forces. (2) Leonard Guelke, by contrast, argues that frontier expansion depended on demographic pressure rather than on market demand, that market forces were weak in the interior (3), and that this, combined with the ready availability of land, created an egalitarian and homogeneous settler community. (4)

Clearly an analysis of the background to the Khoikhoi rebellion of 1799 will be seriously lacking unless the questions raised by this debate are answered, for the rebels were servants of stock-farmers on the eastern frontier; but I would contend that an answer adequate to this specific purpose must await a detailed examination of the economies of individual farms and farming localities in the region concerned, such as has not yet been attempted. Pending the attempt, it must suffice to say that the market for livestock and other pastoral products (and products of the hunt) was an ever-present factor in the frontier economy and that, while it may not have been a sufficient cause of expansion, it did affect "the way in which men, women and children were set to work". (5)

I

During the first 40 to 50 years of the Colony's existence, the bulk of the Company's livestock requirements were met by the Khoikhoi of the western Cape. The Company's initial intention was that the free burghers should supply arable products rather than livestock: it is well known that cattle barter between burghers and Khoikhoi was strictly prohibited. However, the exchange between Company and Khoikhoi, which became overtly coercive in the later years of the 17th century and which was

accompanied by direct intervention in Khoikhoi politics, initiated a process of economic decline which eventually reduced the western Cape Khoikhoi to poverty and permanent dependence on the Colony. (6) The official trade in itself was not of sufficient magnitude, in relation to the size of Khoikhoi herds, to bring about irrevocable impoverishment (7), but the official trade was supplemented by the seizure of cattle and sheep as tribute or booty in war, and, by the late 1680s and 1690s, by an escalation in illegal trading and robbery on the part of freemen. (8) The impact of this increasing drain of livestock was the greater because cattle and sheep in Khoikhoi society were owned by families and individuals, not by the community as a whole. (9) The loss of breeding stock could have very serious consequences for a family with a small herd, and political disintegration made it difficult to recoup stock losses in battle.

Against this background of Khoikhoi impoverishment the Company opened the stock trade to freemen (in 1700) and, for the first time, allowed the expansion of white settlement into the hinterland north of Drakenstein. (10) Thus was the moving white cattle frontier encouraged and given sanction. Thenceforth, Khoikhoi in the line of the graziers' advance were to suffer from dispossession of their pastures and watering places and loss of their stock on a scale unknown in the 17th century. Under these condition, the boundaries between Khoikhoi herders and San or Sonqua hunter-gatherers, which had always been flexible (11), became still more blurred. Some impoverished Khoikhoi or "Khoisan" waged drawn-out guerilla campaigns against the invading settlers (12); others retreated inland with their herds; but many became employees or, more rarely, labour tenants, on white-owned farms.

It could be argued that the Company's acquiescence in the displacement of its Khoikhoi suppliers by white graziers involved more than capitulation to the importunities of the free burghers - that it implied a tacit recognition of differences in the modes of production of Khoikhoi communities, on the one hand, and Boers, on the other, and a realization that the latter were better equipped than the former to aid the Company in its pursuit of commercial gain. Kate Crehan has made a thorough and perceptive analysis of these differences, which can only be briefly summarized here. (13) First, she has shown that, in the early stages of colonization, Boer social units were dependent upon commodities acquired through exchange (on the monetized market of Cape Town) to an extent which the Khoikhoi were not. (14) Boer herds were thus regarded by their owners as repositories of exchange value, though they also served as use-values in domestic consumption. For the Khoikhoi, livestock were first and foremost use-values, though some were exchanged against other goods. Second, she has shown how the institution of private land ownership in Boer society allowed for its division into a class of land-owning non-labourers, on the one hand, and landless labourers, on the other. (15) On the basis of this division, she argues, the colonists were able to appropriate a tradeable surplus of livestock on a scale which was impossible in Khoikhoi communities where land was communally owned.(16)

Nevertheless, these differences in the mode of production of the two groups cannot be used to explain the process of displacement and subjugation of the one by the other, under the aegis of merchant capital. Such an explanation would involve an unjustifiably static approach to modes of production. In the first place, while Khoikhoi dependence on commodities may have been slight in the 17th century, it increased with time: 18th century travellers and the colonists themselves exchanged a variety of manufactured goods against cattle (17); Khoikhoi illegally bartered horses from the colonists after this was prohibited. Indeed, by the 18th century the limited range of goods exchanged for Khoikhoi livestock in the official trade was a reflection of the Company's avarice as well as the wants of the Khoikhoi. Secondly, one cannot assume that the relations of production in Khoikhoi society were destined to inflexibility in the face of market forces. Even within the "traditional" scheme of things individuals were able to accumulate large herds: Klaas and Koopman, 17th century Chainouqua Captains, did so as middle men for the Company (18); Scipio of the Peninsulars had more than 200 cows and 2,000 sheep in 1712. (19) As the colonists advanced, pushing the Khoikhoi from their lands, opportunities for the development of social differentiation within Khoikhoi society were inevitably curtailed, but they emerged and were utilized in the frontier communities of the Kamiesberg and Transorangia.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the class divisions characteristic of Boer society were not given, but made. The colonists' assertion of private control over land and hence over the labour of its inhabitants was the product of constant struggle between themselves and the indigenous people. It has been remarked that this struggle was less violent than in similar situations elsewhere (20), because of the mobility and low density of Khoikhoi and San populations and the fragmentation of Khoikhoi leadership in the face of manifold pressures. However, while military resistance to colonization was confined to border areas until the eastern rebellion of 1799, Khoikhoi resistance to proletarianization took other less dramatic forms, such as stock theft, desertion and migration, the effect of which was the bewildering variety of social relations in frontier areas. In the last resort, however, force was the guarantor of colonial social relations. Whatever the historian's judgment, there was no doubt that in the eastern Cape at the turn of the 18th century this was how both colonists and Khoikhoi had come to see their situation. The eastern rebellion came after more than 30 years of interaction between whites and Khoikhoi in the lands east of the Gamtoos River and south of the Sneeuwbergen. What follows is an account of these years.

II

Neumark has argued that the number of foreign ships calling at the Cape was particularly important in stimulating the expansion of settlement, since the meat contractors were allowed to supply them at prices higher than those set by the Company. (21) The late 1760s saw the beginning of an unprecedented rise in the number of foreign ships (see Appendix I), and it would seem likely that the rapid eastwards expansion of white settlement along the south-east coast beyond the Gamtoos River and along the mountains bordering the Great Karroo into the plains of Camdebo and the Sneeuwberg range was stimulated thereby; though Guelke has shown that a marked increase in the annual number of loan-places issued occurred in the 1760s, before the shipping boom began. (22)

In 1770 the south-eastern boundary of the Colony was moved to the Gamtoos river, but by this time a number of colonists had begun to graze their cattle in the exceptionally rich pastures between the Gamtoos and the Zwartkops rivers. Among them was Sebastiaan van Reenen of Cape Town, "one of the richest and most progressive burghers in the Colony" (23), who kept cattle at the Loerie river in the charge of Khoikhoi. (24) Jacob Kok of Swellendam, another "progressive" farmer, was pasturing his cattle on van Stadens river and Jacobus Scheepers had land on the Gamtoos river some time before it became the official boundary. (25) Not long after, Gerrit Scheepers and a number of others took advantage of the Stellenbosch authorities' confused knowledge of the geography of their vast domain and established themselves legally on the Zwartkops river. (26)

In March 1775 the white inhabitants of Swellendam petitioned the Company to extend the eastern boundary once more. They wrote that

> unless they can procure more pasture than is to be found in the present confined limits their prosperity will suffer a severe shock, and the revenues of this Colony ... instead of increasing will be still further diminished.

Not content with the coastal lands between the Gamtoos and Bushmans rivers, which they dismissed as too dry and heavily wooded and on that account not capable of forming more than 20 farms, the petitioners asked that Agter Bruyntjes Hoogte, "being nearly all good useful pasture land", be included as well. (27) Perhaps swayed by the allusion to its budgetary deficit, the government moved with surprising alacrity and in November 1775 proclaimed the Bushmans River to the south and the Great Fish River to the north as the eastern boundary of the Colony. By 1779 there were at least 22 white families settled between the Zwartkops and Bushmans rivers, among them the three Ferreiras, Stephanus, Solomon and Pieter Hendrik, living near the shores of Algoa Bay. (28) In that year began the first clashes between them and the Zuurveld Xhosa, and by September most had fled with their livestock to the Zwartkops.

The movement of colonists into the Camdebo and Sneeuwbergen began in the late 1760s. (29) By 1774 they had spread eastwards of Camdebo as far as Agter Bruyntjes Hoogte. By 1778 there were upwards of 33 settler families in Camdebo and Bruyntjes Hoogte alone. (30) The Sneeuwbergen, Bruyntjes Hoogte and the lands behind were exceptionally well suited for the raising of livestock. Barrow described the Sneeuwbergen in 1799 as "the grand nursery of sheep and cattle, particularly of the former", and Bruyntjes Hoogte as "the best division in the whole district for horses and horned cattle" and equal to the Sneeuwbergen in the quality of its mutton. (31) Though the new settlers' flocks and herds were small in the early 1770s (32), it was perhaps with an eye to the prospects of this region in relation to expanding shipping demand that Governor van Plettenberg confirmed its annexation in 1778, saying that it "would contribute much to the general advantage of this Colony, by rearing cattle and producing butter". (33)

The areas into which the colonists had moved had been Khoikhoi lands for many centuries. The first written accounts of Khoikhoi settlement in the eastern Cape date from the 17th century, but linguistic and archaeological evidence suggests that they had occupied the Ciskei since pre-Nguni times. (34) In 1689 Ensign Isaq Schryver named five tribes living south-east of the powerful Inqua. Furthest to the east were the Gonaqua, from whom the Inqua bartered dagga. (35) In 1702 the Gonaqua were again visited by Dutch emissaries, who obtained from them 1,800 cattle and 3,000 sheep. (36)

Using the oral evidence transmitted by John Knox Bokwe to Alfred Kropf in the late 18th century, Harinck has pieced together the early history of the Gonaqua.(37) They had their origins in an amalgamation of the Khoikhoi chiefdom of Hinsati with the followers of Gandowentshaba, who had unsuccessfully challenged the succession of the Xhosa King, Tshiwo, in the late 17th century. Hinsati was at this time located in the area which was to become Bruyntjes Hoogte. (38) Gandowentshaba had sought sanctuary from Hinsati, but subsequently rejoined Tshiwo at the Bashee river, after the two had led a joint attack on Hinsati's people and plundered their cattle. But some of Gando's Xhosa adherents remained behind in Hinsati's territory and others returned later. "From the union of these Xhosa with Khoi emerged the Gonaqua chiefdom, under Cwama" (39), son of Hinsati and grandson of Gandowentshaba. Eighteenth century travellers often described the Gonaqua they met as "a mixture of Hottentots and Caffres, as their language had an affinity with that of both these nations". (40) They were said to be taller and darker-skinned than the Khoikhoi and, according to Sparrman, they practised circumcision and were "in some sort tillers of the ground" (41), though Harinck disputes both these points. (42)

The history of the Gonaqua in the early 18th century is obscure; it seems that they occupied extensive areas between the Fish and Kei rivers and were pushed back on the Keiskamma as the Xhosa moved westwards. By mid-century they had regrouped between the Fish and Keiskamma, where Beutler found them in 1752. (43) Haupt's account of relations between the Xhosa and Gonaqua ("voor knegten en in oorlog tyden ook wel voor soldaten dienen") has been distorted by 20th century writers, notably by Maingard, who described the Gonaqua as being "in a state of virtual slavery". (44) Ruyter, the Hoengeyqua Captain, told Beutler that the Gonaquas "altemaal onder de Caffers woonden en haar dienden", but it seems that the relationship was in actuality far more complex. Intermarriage was frequent, but Gonaqua communities appear to have retained a distinct identity; some were administered by Gonaqua, while others came under the influence of Xhosa dignitaries. (45) One such was Tshiwo's counsellor, Khwane, whom tradition holds to be the founder of the Gqunukhwebe nation. (46)

Beutler found the Khoikhoi communities to the west of the Gonaqua in a state of considerable disarray. Wars amongst themselves and with the San and Xhosa had reduced many to dependence on hunting and gathering. (47) Several of the old tribal names had fallen from use. However, Beutler identified three major groups on the south coast between the Gamtoos and Fish rivers: the Damasquas, between the Gamtoos and van Stadens rivers, the Damasonquas between the van Stadens river and the Zwartkops, and the Hoengeyquas under Ruyter (or Dorha) between the Bushmans and Fish rivers. It seems that the social disruption of the area had been caused by the eastwards retreat of Khoikhoi and San, who had been displaced by the advancing colony, as well as by periodic incursions of white stock thieves in the early 18th century (48)

and by the westwards pressure of the Xhosa. (49) These troubled times were the forcing bed for the growth of the Hoengeyqua state under Ruyter, who is said to have come as a fugitive from the Roggeveld, where he had been in service. (50) Ruyter collected together

> a party of Boshies-men, or roaming Hottentots. At the head of these he subdued several other tribes, and afterwards had the art to make them take up arms against the Caffres, by exciting in them a high opinion of himself ... that they could not possibly do without him; especially as he supplied them with plunder, and taught them a method of rearing their cattle better in both cases than ever they had been accustomed to. (51)

Ruyter himself told Beutler that his territory extended from the land of the Damasonquas to the Keiskamma. (52) The Hoengeyqua appear to have held control of this area until the Gqunukhwebe, led by Shaka, crossed the Fish river in the 1760s.(53) Gqunukhwebe tradition holds that the Hoengeyqua agreed to their settlement in the Zuurveld, between the Fish and Kowie rivers, but Ruyter's descendants disputed this.(54) It seems rather that there followed a prolonged struggle between the two groups, in which the Hoengeyqua were the eventual losers. Sparrman wrote in 1775 that Ruyter had been much reduced by conflict with "the Caffres" and that his following had by then dwindled to "about 200 people" - "a less considerable and less free society". (55) Sparrman did not visit him, but on his map he showed "Koning Ruyter's kraal" between the Fish and Bushmans rivers. The aged leader was at that time preparing another assault on his unnamed Xhosa enemies. (56) Almost certainly he was defeated, for in 1776 Pieter Cloete found him living west of the Bushmans river with a group of Khoikhoi who called themselves Gonaquas, as well as a number of "Kaffir-Hottentot bastards". (57)

Thus the Khoikhoi east of the Gamtoos had been under peculiar pressure for some years before the permanent settlement of Europeans in their territories. This may partly explain the apparent lack of centrally directed resistance to colonial encroachment. Also, during the first decade of colonization, the effects of settler penetration were by no means uniform and probably strengthened the centrifugal forces already in operation.

In the early 1770s the Company's agents in Swellendam still regarded the Khoikhoi beyond their borders as a source of livestock independent of the colonists. This was in contrast to the situation in Swellendam itself, where "few or no Hottentots any longer reside in the kraals, but for the greater part with the inhabitants", who prevented them from bartering their cattle to the Company. (58) But by the mid-1770s a number of Khoikhoi east of the Gamtoos were living, as individuals or in groups, on land claimed by the colonists. Some may have done so voluntarily (59) and this perhaps explains the distinction made in colonial correspondence between Khoikhoi living "with" the Boers and those who belonged to them ("Jan Klaas <u>of</u> Salomon Ferreira ... Snel <u>of</u> William Prinsloo", etc.). (60) At Gerrit Scheepers's place, on the site later to be occupied by Uitenhage, Sparrman found "a small society of Gunjemans Hottentots ... [who] now lived on friendly terms with the farmer above mentioned". (61) They were apparently not in service, and one of them, a widow, owned 60 breeding cows. By 1776 Jacob van Reenen had acquired a loan-farm on the lower Gamtoos, but the mouth of the river was reserved for the occupation of Khoikhoi, from whom the government bartered up to 300 cattle per annum. (62) Scattered along the southern rivers were other groups who thus far had maintained a precarious independence. Near the ford on the Gamtoos lived Kees, who, with the approbation of the Swellendam authorities, "exercised control over half a hundred people" (63); a group of Damasquas and some 200 Gonaquas were found by Sparrman on van Stadens river (64), and on the Little Sundays river he met a clan of "Hottentot-Caffres" who had "a great quantity of cattle". (65)

The proximity of the settlers had, however, already introduced a number of less subtle pressures. In 1770 Joris, who had lived with Kees on the Gamtoos, was ordered to decamp with his people "as he had too many cattle and thus injured the pasture of the inhabitants". (66) In 1778 van Reenen's lands were granted to one

Hilgert Muller, a wealthy corn-farmer, and Heemraad of Swellendam, and the Khoikhoi at the mouth were evicted. Among them was Klaas Stuurman, foremost among the rebel leaders in 1799. (67)

As the Colony closed in, it may be that many Khoikhoi had little option but to accept terms of service. But the colonists were unwilling to wait. The practice of enslaving women and children was particularly marked on the north-eastern frontier, where Khoikhoi and San waged a guerilla war for nearly 40 years (68), but there is evidence that it occurred on the south coast as well. Sparrman met a pathetic group of elderly "Boshiesmen" on the Lower Sundays river, who said that the farmers had been with them and carried off all their young people, and at the encampment on the Little Sundays he found a Khoikhoi servant who had captured three San women with their children and was taking them "home to his master for slaves".(69) Even Ruyter appears to have collaborated in this business, perhaps because he sought support against the Gqunukhwebe. (70)

At Bruyntjes Hoogte, the situation rapidly became far worse. It is not clear whether the Khoikhoi at Bruyntjes Hoogte in the 1770s were descendants of Hinsati's people. Sparrman called them "Chinese Hottentots" - the Houzouanas of Le Vaillant's Travels or d'Gauas to other Khoikhoi. (71) However, these people are usually said to have lived in Camdebo, the Sneeuwbergen and further east around the Bamboesberg, and did not speak a Khoikhoi language, though they kept cattle. (72) In 1774 a correspondent from Agter Bruyntjes Hoogte wrote of the poverty of the colonists there and added "there is here peace and quiet with the Hottentots". (73) However, one year later Sparrman depicted the "lazy and pleasant life" of the Boers in this division:

> With pleasure, but without the least trouble to himself, he sees the herds and flocks, which constitute his riches, daily and considerably increasing. These are driven to pasture and home again by a few Hottentots and slaves, who likewise make the butter; so that it is almost only with the milking that the farmer, together with his wife and children, concern themselves at all. (74)

As for the Hottentots, they had

> originally ... lived peaceably with the Christians ... They used likewise to perform the kindest services for the latter ... but at length they had withdrawn themselves, and now live concealed in holes and corners up and down this part of the country, like other Boshiesmen. Yet, being fewer in number, they are not altogether so bold and daring. (75)

Though one may wonder at the apparent suddenness of the transformation in relations between Boers and Khoikhoi, the general direction is clear: as the former increased in number and their herds became larger, their labour needs grew faster than the number of Khoikhoi who were willing or constrained by loss of strock, pastures and game, to enter their service. Thus, by 1775, some Khoikhoi in Bruyntjes Hoogte had already been made "good serviceable slaves" and the others were in constant danger of meeting this fate. (76) Some may have fled northwards to join the d'Gauas between the Brak and White Kei rivers, but Boer commandos had begun to operate in this area, too, by the late 1770s. It is impossible to deal here with the conflict between settlers and Khoisan on the north-eastern frontier - it seems that there were few, if any, organizational links between the robber bands of the north-east and the rebels of 1799. (77) But the contradictory roles of Khoisan servants in the northern conflict should be emphasized: those who accompanied their masters on raiding expeditions or were sent in their place greatly strengthened the commandos; those who deserted brought guns to the mountain bands. (78)

The history of conflict between colonists and Xhosa prior to the rebellion is likewise too complex to be dealt with here, and has been discussed in depth

elsewhere. (79) In sum, it can be said, first, that as white settlement spread eastwards after 1780 conflict over land was inevitably exacerbated. Its focus throughout this period was the Zuurveld, though by the mid-1790s some Boers in Agter Bruyntjes Hoogte had begun to abandon their farms. During the 1780s the number of loan-farms granted east of the Bushmans river increased rapidly. By May 1793 there were approximately 150 white families established in the Zuurveld. (80) The Xhosa population of the area may also have increased following the drought of 1786, and thereafter the Gqunukhwebe were pushed westwards by Ndlambe and Langa. (81) The simmering conflict erupted in 1793: following an attack by a Boer commando, the Zuurveld Xhosa retaliated and the Boers fled west to the Zwartkops river. Some families returned, but white occupation of the Zuurveld was to remain precarious for a further 30 years. Second, it appears from the record of the conflict that the capture of Xhosa cattle was as important to the settlers as the acquisition of new pastures or the defence of old. (82)

At this stage in the history of Graaff-Reinet (established as an administrative district in 1786) there can be little doubt that the increase in the number of white settlers and the slaves and stock they owned was, at least in part, a function of the development of new commercial opportunities at the Cape.

The white population increased from 2,592 in 1788 to 3,108 in 1793 and 3,937 in 1798 (83), surely faster than the natural rate of population increase in the Colony. Over the same period the number of male slaves more than doubled, as did the total slave population, yet by 1798 the average price of a male slave was between 400 and 500 rix dollars (see Appendix 2). The figures for livestock are far less reliable, but indicate a 400% increase in the number of cattle, and an increase in the number of sheep of about 333%. (84) It is at least noteworthy that the Boers' renewed ardour for commandos against the Xhosa manifested itself at a time (1789) when foreign shipping was again on the increase after a lull in the mid-1780s. On the other hand, the war of 1793 coincided with a severe depression at the Cape and attempts by the Company to enforce payments of rent arrears in the interior. In October 1795 the burghers of Graaff-Reinet, who had ousted their Landdrost earlier that year, wrote to the new British administration explaining their quarrel with the former government. Surprisingly, they emphasized commercial problems rather than the unsettled state of the frontier. They complained of the low prices attendant on the monopolization of the meat market by the Company's contractors, of the prohibition on private trade with foreign ships and of the government's failure to exchange the depreciated paper currency in which they had been paid for base coinage. As a result, they complained "they" had been forced to sell their fixed assets in order to buy their necessaries and were now threatened with insolvency. (85) The new government hastened to reassure them of its concern for their prosperity. Its concern was genuine; not only did it consider that the best chance of improving its revenues lay in fostering commerce (86), it was also well aware of the importance of Graaff-Reinet:

> It may be necessary to observe that the district of Graaff Reinet is of the utmost value and importance to the Colony, as being the great Magazine ... of cattle and sheep, from which we are almost entirely supplied. They would indeed have it in their power to starve us nearly, though, on the other hand, unless they reverted to a state of nature, it does not appear that they could themselves exist without a communication with the Cape Town. (87)

From 1795 to 1799 commercial prospects in the Colony as a whole were extremely favourable. Restrictions on internal trade were lifted immediately after the British took over, and from May 1797 foreign neutrals were allowed to trade freely with the Cape, provided they did not infringe the monopoly of the British East India Company. The annual average of ships was higher than in any previous five-year period and the prices of most pastoral products more than doubled. (See Appendix 2.) By 1800 there was a garrison of 5,000 men (88), whereas the total Company establishment in 1795 had barely exceeded 2,000. (89) In 1797 alone the squadron stationed at the Cape consumed 1,085,995 lbs. of fresh meat. (90)

The manner in which these developments affected social relations in Graaff-Reinet is difficult to gauge with certainty at this stage. But Giliomee has shown that by 1798 considerable disparities of wealth had emerged among the colonists. Of 972 "inhabitants", only 252 (26 per cent) held registered farms, and of these 174 held one, 62 held two, 14 held three, and 2 held four. (91) Together, "this 26% owned 75.2% of the slaves, 56.6% of the cattle, 55.8% of the sheep, and 51.3% of the horses". (92) The remainder were owned mainly by landless kinsmen and bywoners, though some may have belonged to occupants of unregistered farms. Between 1,300 and 1,400 Khoikhoi (males?) (93) owned 140 horses, 751 cattle and 30,557 sheep between them. (94) The animals were unequally distributed - a few individuals owned herds and flocks more than sufficient to support a family, while the majority did not. (95)

It is surely fair to assume that the expansion of commerce brought with it intensified demands on Khoikhoi labour and that the increasing landlessness among whites indicated that by the late 18th century there were few places outside the already crowded areas of Xhosa settlement where Khoikhoi could maintain themselves as pastoralists independently of the Boers, had they been allowed. As early as 1775 Sparrman had observed the deterioration of the veld in areas of white settlement, as a result of over-grazing, and by 1799 the game in the district was all but hunted out. (96) Nevertheless, many Khoikhoi did abscond from service. A common factor in the majority of desertions was the desire to escape from wretched conditions and violent treatment. Evidence concerning the latter is so abundant as to convince the reader that, at least by the 1790s, relations between Boer masters and Khoikhoi servants in Graaff Reinet rested more upon violence, or the threat of it, than upon anything else. Indiscipline or negligence were often punished by flogging. (97) In April 1799 Barrow met a farmer near Algoa Bay who had kept a small boy in leg-irons for 10 months because "he had always been a worthless boy; he had lost him so many sheep; he had slept when he ought to watch the cattle ...". (98) The wives and children of Khoikhoi were forcibly prevented from leaving the farms - in 1794 the family and livestock of Ruyter's grandson were detained in this way by C. F. Bezuidenhout (99) - and deserters, especially those who took with them their masters' guns, were sometimes shot or beaten to death. (100)

In a situation so fraught with tension, it is difficult to distinguish cause from effect; but a number of general points can be made. On the one hand, unless one assumes with Barrow and Le Vaillant that the tyrannical conduct of the Boers was inherent in their character (101), one must locate the roots of their behaviour in those structural features which had produced forced labour and its attendant brutality in other colonies. In this case, although the colonists may, by the 1790s, have held a near monopoly of land in some parts of the district, Khoikhoi could, and did, find refuge among the Zuurveld Xhosa. Moreover, there was intense competition for servants among the Boers themselves - in 1798 Graaff-Reinet introduced a pass law to curb its effects. (102) On the other hand, had conditions of service been better, desertion might have been less frequent. In the absence of adequate data, it is impossible to make a sure assessment of these conditions. Some Khoikhoi must have been paid in stock (103), yet in 1793 a number of Boers objected when the Khoikhoi who had served on commando against the Xhosa were each given one or two of the captured animals. (104) In the late 1780s, Maynier, then district secretary, had been accused by Landdrost Woeke of being "the 'ruin' of the Hottentots" because he paid them 12 rix dollars a year or more. (105) Barrow's evidence is contradictory: at one point he recorded that, unlike San captives, Khoikhoi were paid wages, but elsewhere he wrote that they received "nothing but meat, tobacco and skins for their clothing". (106) Clearly conditions varied with the bargaining power of the respective parties (107), but one may ask whether by the end of the century the expansion of commercial opportunities had not increased the reluctance of whites to allow Khoikhoi grazing rights on their farms. (108)

Lastly, it is clear from the behaviour of some deserters that more was at issue than the conditions of service. In the case of many who took their masters' guns and horses and fled to the Xhosa (109), or collected together in bands in the woods and mountains (110), whence they plundered the settlers' herds and flocks, it was colonization itself which they resisted. Desertion to the Xhosa became frequent during the escalation of hostilities in the late 1790s and, despite the earlier animosity between the Hoengeyqua and the Gqunukhwebe, the fugitives were well

received. (111) During and after the war of 1793 there were reports that Khoikhoi were "daily absconding" to join the Xhosa (112), and in 1794 it was suggested that "discontented Hottentots" rather than the Xhosa were the initiators of cattle thefts in the Zuurveld. (113)

An indication of the extent of tension between masters and Khoikhoi servants by the end of the century can be found in the rumour of rebellion which agitated the constituted district government in 1795. Captain Kees, by then a prisoner at the Cape, was said to have escaped and to be preparing a colony-wide uprising in which all white males, except three, would be killed and their wives distributed among the victors. (114) However, the fragmented resistance of the 1790s did not erupt into full-scale rebellion until 1799, when the district authorities were in a state of chaos and the military weakness of the Boers was further exposed by their capitulation to a force of British dragoons and men of the Hottentot Corps. If the motives of deserters had been unclear in the 1790s, they became clear in 1799:

> 'Restore', said Stuurman, 'the country of which our fathers have been despoiled by the Dutch, and we have nothing more to ask. We lived very contentedly before these Dutch plunderers molested us, and why should we not do so again, if left to ourselves?' (115)

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Notes

(1) S. D. Neumark, Economic Influences on the South African Frontier: 1652-1836 (Stanford, 1957), pp 16, 42; C. R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire: 1600-1800 (Pelican, 1973), p. 282.

(2) Neumark, op. cit., passim.

(3) L. Guelke, "Frontier Settlement in Early Dutch South Africa", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, March 1976, pp. 25, 40-41. (I am indebted to Robert Ross for this reference and the next.)

(4) L. Guelke and R. Cole Harris, "Land and Society in Early Canada and South Africa", Journal of Historical Geography, 1977, passim.

(5) S. Trapido, "Landlord and Tenant in a Colonial Economy: the Transvaal, 1880-1910", JSAS 5, 1, 1978.

(6) R. Elphick, Kraal and Castle: Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa (Yale, 1977), passim.

(7) Ibid., pp. 168-9.

(8) Ibid., p. 171.

(9) Ibid., p. 39.

(10) Ibid., p. 225. The trade was subsequently forbidden again, but continued illegally.

(11) Ibid., chapter 2.

(12) S. Marks, "Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the 17th and 18th centuries", JAH, 1974.

(13) K. Crehan, "Khoi, Boer and missionary: an anthropological study of missionaries", MA, Manchester University, 1978, chapters 2 and 3.

(14) Ibid., pp. 51, 107.

(15) Ibid., pp. 90, 94.

(16) Ibid., pp. 55-59, 78, 90.

(17) See, for example, F. Le Vaillant, Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa; A. Sparrman, A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope ... From the Year 1772-1776, II, pp. 234, 228.

(18) Elphick, op. cit., pp. 141-148.

(19) Ibid., pp. 229, 230.

(20) Ibid., p. 236; Crehan, op. cit., p. 81.

(21) Neumark, pp. 43-56.

(22) L. Guelke, "Frontier Settlement ...", loc. cit., p. 40, Figure 4.

(23) Die Joernaal van Dirk Gysbert van Reenen, 1803, VRS, 1937, I.

(24) D. Moodie, The Record (Cape Town, 1960), III, p. 3. J. van Reenen owned several grazing farms in various parts of the Colony.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Sparrman, op. cit., II, 232; Moddie, III, p. 17.

(27) Moodie, III, pp. 47-8. In 1774 Bruyntjes Hoogte had been proclaimed the north-eastern boundary of Stellenbosch district, but in that year a number of Boers who had moved into the better pastures behind Bruyntjes Hoogte asked permission to remain there. (J. S. Marais, Maynier and the First Boer Republic [Cape Town, 1944], p. 3.

(28) Moodie, III, pp. 90-91; Sparrman, II, p. 238 n.

(29) P. J. van der Merwe, Die Noordwaartse Beweging van die Boere voor die Groot Trek (1770-1842) (Cape Town, 1937), p. 3.

(30) Moodie, III, p. 75.

(31) J. Barrow, Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa, II (London, 1804), pp. 373, 123.

(32) In 1774 "many of the inhabitants" of Agter Bruyntjes Hoogte were "not in possession of 100 sheep and 5 cattle" (Moodie, III).

(33) Moodie, III, p. 78.

(34) G. Harinck, "Interaction between Xhosa and Khoi: emphasis on the period 1620-1750", African Societies in Southern Africa (Heinemann, 1969), p. 151.

(35) L. F. Maingard, "The Lost Tribes of the Cape", SAJS, 28 (November 1931), p. 493.

(36) Ibid.

(37) Ibid., pp. 155-159.

(38) Ibid., p. 156.

(39) Ibid. These events took place before 1686, for in that year the survivors of the Stavenisse entered the Gonaqua chiefdom under Cwama. (Harinck, loc. cit., p. 163.)

(40) Sparrman, II, p. 15. C. P. Thunberg, Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia, 4 vols (London, 1793-5), II, p. 80.

(41) Sparrman, II, p. 18.

(42) Harinck, p. 158.

(43) E. C. Godée-Molsbergen (ed), Reizen in Zuid-Afrika, III, p. 291.

(44) Maingard,loc. cit., p. 494.

(45) Harinck, p. 159.

(46) J. H. Soga, The South Eastern Bantu (Johannesburg, 1931), pp. 93-95, 116-119.

(47) Godée Molsbergen, III, 292.

(48) Harinck, p. 165 n.

(49) Ibid., pp. 165-6.

(50) Sparrman, II, p. 123. However, Kaupt's account (in Godée Molsbergen, III, p.291) throws doubt on this - he recorded Ruyter's amazement at the sight of a mirror

and a "brand-glas" which he must surely have encountered before had he been in service.

(51) Sparrman, II, p. 124.

(52) Godée Molsbergen, III, p. 288.

(53) For the events which led to the flight of the Gqunukhwebe, see Harinck, p. 158, Soga, op. cit., p. 119, Moodie, V, pp. 9-10.

(54) Moodie, V, p. 10. The Zuurveld proper was the area between the Lower Fish and Bushmans rivers, but the colonists sometimes referred thus to all the land between the lower Sundays and lower Fish.

(55) Sparrman, II, p. 124.

(56) Ibid., p. 125.

(57) Marais, op. cit., p. 6.

(58) Moodie, III, p. 18 n.

(59) cf Elphick, pp. 180, 218.

(60) Moodie, III, pp. 73-4.

(61) Sparrman, II, pp. 233-235. These people would have been descended from Gonnema's branch of the Cochoqua. See Elphick, pp. 133-34.

(62) D. G. van Reenen, op. cit., pp. 84-5.

(63) Sparrman, II, pp. 11-13. For the role of government appointed Captains, see Marks, loc. cit., p. 76, and Elphick, chapter 9.

(64) Elphick, pp. 238-9, 15-17.

(65) Ibid., p. 32.

(66) Moodie, III, p. 3.

(67) D. G. van Reenen, op. cit.

(68) Marks, loc. cit., p. 74.

(69) Sparrman, II, pp. 27, 34.

(70) Ibid., p. 124.

(71) Ibid., p. 113; Le Vaillant, III, pp. 174, 178; Elphick, p. 28 n.

(72) Elphick, p. 28 n.

(73) Moodie, III.

(74) Sparrman, II, p. 130.

(75) Ibid., p. 113. See also Le Vaillant, III, pp. 174, 178.

(76) Ibid.

(77) But see Marais, p. 83.

(78) cf Marks, loc. cit., p. 75

(79) See Marais, passim, and Hermann Giliomee, "Khoikhoi, Colonists and Xhosa on the eastern frontier, 1770-1812" in H. Giliomee and R. Elphick (eds), The Shaping of South African Society 1652-1815 (Longmans, 1979).

(80) Giliomee, loc. cit.(draft copy), note 81; Marais, op. cit., p. 96.

(81) Giliomee, p. 19.

(82) Ibid. and note 70; Moodie, III, pp. 97, 112; Marais, pp. 10, 14, 24, 31, 43, 46-7, 50-52, 60-62.

(83) C. Beyers, Die Kaapse Patriotte, 1779-1791 (Cape Town, 1929), p. 348; WO 1/325, Colonial Sec. to Craig, July 1796; Barrow, II, p. 377.

(84) In 1778 there were c231,025 sheep in the district, and 32,468 cattle (Beyers, p. 348). By 1797 there were c780,274 sheep and 118,306 cattle (WOI/325, loc. cit.). These figures, of course, excluded the livestock owned by the Xhosa.

(85) WOI/324, Burghers of Graaff-Reinet to Craig, 27 October 1795.

(86) The deficit on the civil account was estimated at between £20,000 and £30,000 in 1797 (Theal, Records of the Cape Colony, II, p. 84). Land rents comprised the largest item of colonial revenue.
WOI/324, Burghers ...; WOI/324, Proclamation of 15 October 1795.

(87) WOI/324, Craig to Henry Dundas, 27 December 1795.

(88) Barrow, II, pp. 120-1: "Before the English brought in a garrison of 5,000 men, the head, the heart, the liver, etc. (of slaughtered stock) were all included among the offals, but ... these parts of the animal have, of late, been sold as well as the carcase.

(89) Moodie, III.

(90) Barrow, II, p. 241.

(91) Giliomee, p. 40.

(92) Ibid.

(93) Barrow gives the total Khoikhoi population of Graaff-Reinet as 8,947 in 1798. (II, p. 377)

(94) Ibid., p. 12.

(95) Ibid. According to Crehan (op. cit.) c35 head of cattle were required to keep a family of 8 in milk all year round.

(96) Sparrman, II, pp. 238-40. Klaas Stuurman to Barrow in Barrow, II, III.

(97) Marais, pp. 74-6; Barrow,II, pp. 96-7.

(98) Barrow, II, p. 97.

(99) Marais, p. 72. See also Marais, p. 97, Barrow, II, pp. 405-7.

(100) Marais, pp. 62, 76, 79; Barrow,II, p. 96.

(101) Barrow, II, p. 101; Le Vaillant, p. 178.

(102) Giliomee, p. 35; Marais, p. 72.

(103) See above. Moodie, III, pp. 42, 91; LMS, South Africa, Incoming letters, Box 2, 1A, Dr Vanderkemp to LMS, Graaff Reinet, 1 February 1802: "Most of the Hottentots have one or more cows, and afew sheep of their own."

(104) Marais, pp. 52-3.

(105) Ibid., p. 71.

(106) Barrow, I, p. 291, and II, pp. 96, 410.

(107) cf Crehan and Trapido, op. cit.

(108) cf van Reenen, pp. 85-87.

(109) Giliomee, pp. 20-21; Marais, pp. 25, 26, 27, 48, 49, 55, 62.

(110) Moodie, III, pp. 85, 112; Marais, pp. 55, 62, 83.

(111) On at least two occasions, Cungwa of the Gqunukwebe refused to hand over Khoi-Khoi deserters, saying it was not he who had enticed them away. It should be noted, however, that during the war of 1799 a group of Gonaqua under Captain Hans fought on the Boer side, and Hans in return received 280 captured cattle. This group may have been those whose presence among the Christians on the Bushmans river in the late 1770s had been cited by the Xhosa as a major cause of friction: see Moodie, III, pp. 90-91, 92.

(112) Marais, pp. 48, 62.

(113) Ibid., p. 62.

(114) Barrow, II, p. 116.