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THEORIES OF MILLENARIANISM CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO CERTAIN SOUTHERN AFRICAN MOVEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The early recorded history of the Cape of Good Hope, from the time of the founding of van Riebeeck's revictualling station on the slopes of Table Mountain in 1652, until the power of the African chiefs was finally broken in the nineteenth century, was one of almost constant strife among the people who came to settle in this part of Southern Africa. At first the contest was between the European colonists and the indigenous Khoisan-speaking peoples of the Cape, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century, far more redoubtable contestants in the form of Negro peoples, speaking Bantu languages, were to enter the field. It was not until the power of the Bantu African chiefs was broken that the Cape Colony was to enjoy comparative peace. Ironically, their power was not destroyed by force of arms so much as by what seemed to all observers a self-engendered religious movement. This movement cost the lives of an estimated 117,000 people.

A further irony is revealed in the fact that it was not, in the first place, the policy of the Dutch East India Company, which founded the re-victualling station at the Cape, to colonize it. Colonization was discouraged by the Company, and it was only due to the restlessness and dissatisfaction of the early burghers with Company rule that the hinterland was entered. New and freer pastures were sought, and it was this passion for freedom of a highly individualistic kind, so strong that it was almost an abhorrence of social life, which first, indirectly

brought the white man into conflict with the black. As the 'free-burghers' moved further from the Company's pursuing borders, they tended to follow the fertile and well-watered coastal 'corridor' to the east, avoiding the arid plateau beyond the escarpment. In the meantime, the Africans, migrating from the north, pursued the same policy, finding the warm and fertile coastal belt well suited to their pastoral economy. This thesis is directly concerned with these people of negroid descent among whom the Cattle-killing and related movements arose, and who now live in the area of the Republic of South Africa which is known as the Eastern Cape Province. They are referred to by South Africans of European descent as Africans or Bantu (or more perjoratively as 'natives' or 'kaffirs'.) Since people in Southern Africa with whom I am not concerned also fall into the categories of African or Bantu, these terms are unsuitable for my purpose. A short ethnographic description of the area is necessary, in which I will define my use of such terms as Xhosa, chiefdom, and nation.

Social anthropologists have used the term Cape Nguni to refer to the Bantu-African people who inhabit the eastern sea-board of the Cape Province from the Natal border in the north, to approximately a line drawn just west of Port Elizabeth in the south. All are Xhosa-speaking, and number approximately two and a half million. The majority (one and a half million) live in what is known as the Transkeian Territories, an area currently undergoing political changes of some magnitude, between the Kei River and Natal. West of the Kei,

in the area known as the Ciskei, and comprising ~~of~~ the districts of Kingwilliamstown, Peddie, Keiskamma Hoek, East London, Herschel and Victoria East, are large tracts of land which have been set aside as reserves for further numbers of Cape Nguni. Scattered between these areas, in towns and on European-owned farms, are to be found the remainder.[1.]

Although all the people of the area speak dialects of the Xhosa language, they can be grouped into a number of mainly unrelated clusters, each with its own history, customs and strong sense of distinctiveness.[2.] There are twelve of these clusters, namely Xhosa, Xesibe, Thembu, Mpondo, Mpondomise, Bomvana, Bhaca, Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi, Mfengu and Ntlangwini. Each of these is divided into a number of independent chiefdoms, the chiefs of which are related to each other through membership of a royal patrilineage. Social anthropologists have used the terms tribe or chiefdom interchangeably to refer to the political unit. I shall use the term chiefdom throughout. The term cluster is used for a structure of associated chiefdoms, usually genealogically related, but including tributary chiefdoms. It corresponds in this context to what is sometimes referred to as the nation in the Cape Nguni context, and the two terms are here used interchangeably. Thus the Xhosa cluster or nation comprises the independent chiefdoms of the Gcaleka, Ngqika, Ndlambe, Dushane, Qhayi, Dange, Gasela, Ntinde and Hleke. The Thembu cluster contains three independent Hala chiefdoms, as well as the Jumba, Hlanga, Tshatshu and Ndungwana. In some cases,

the cluster also contains unrelated chiefdoms which have become tributary to the paramount chief of the cluster. Among Xhosa, the Gqunukhwebe fall into this category, as do the Hegebe and Qwati among the Thembu, and the Ngutyana and Tshangase among the Mpondo.

Van Warmelo has distinguished between the clusters which he calls 'Cape Tribes Proper'* who have been long established in the Cape, and those clusters which have immigrated in comparatively recent times, and generally speaking, Cape Nguni can be distinguished in these two main groups.[3.] The first group immigrated into the Cape from the north-east some time at least before 1550. The immigration was a slow one, as the clusters moved down the coastal corridor with their cattle in search of new pastures. The land into which they moved had been occupied by wandering Bushman bands, and small groups of nomadic Hottentots. The 'Cape Tribes Proper' include Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, Mpondomise, and Bomvana. The Xhosa and Thembu clusters, who are also the most southerly, appear to have been the first, and they were followed by the Mpondo and Mpondomise somewhat later.

The second group consists of the more recent immigrants. They were driven from their homes in the north by the rise to power of the Zulu despot Tshaka, and by the Ngwane chief Matwane in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. These broken clusters, consisting of

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* Van Warmelo uses the term 'tribe' to denote what I have called a 'cluster'.

remnants of Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi, Bhaca, Xesibe, Ntlangwini and Mfengu, followed a precarious route down the same corridor, and finally settled in their present localities.

This, in broad outline, was the ethnic situation presented to the successive European Governors of the Cape Province during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period during which European settlement spread rapidly towards the eastern district of Kaffraria (as the frontier area became known.) The first recorded meeting between the two races came as early as 1702, and although the first serious clash did not occur until 1778, subsequent meetings were not friendly.[4.] The arrival of the English Governors at the Cape after its cession to the crown in 1795 served only to complicate matters. Not only had European settlement expanded in advance of ordered government, but relations with the Xhosa by both settler and government were conducted for the most part in ignorance of the nature of Xhosa institutions.

The Xhosa systems of thought, religion and government, land tenure and tribal law were considered to be barbaric, uncouth and invalid, compounded of ignorance and superstition. It was not until the twentieth century, after a long period of contact and conflict, that Xhosa institutions became the object of detailed and sympathetic study and investigation. Early European society in South Africa, blinded by religious prejudice, and an overwhelming ethnocentrism, saw mainly the unattractive aspects of their life. They failed to see the rational

structure of Xhosa society, the protection which could be afforded the individual, the mental comfort he enjoyed, and the surveillance which, through appropriate social institutions, was kept over the distribution of food and land. European society condemned as heathenish and ignorant a way of life in which happiness, contentment and security were usually not difficult to find. Soldiers and magistrates, missionaries and settlers, all appeared to be determined to destroy these institutions. A modern Government commission sums up the position as follows:

> 'The process of Europeanizing the African by destroying all his institutions as a preliminary, deprives him of the sheet-anchor of self-confidence, and substitutes for it an inferiority complex engendered by the acquired belief that everything which is peculiarly his own is worthless, and a hindrance in the path of progress.' 5.

What might be true in modern times appears to have been as valid during the period when the battle for superiority was being waged. On the recommendation of those who were set up by the government as advisors or 'agents', the Governors were urged that in order to bring about the desired end in Kaffraria, which was the subjugation and conversion to Christianity of the 'heathen tribes',

> 'the sword must first - not exterminate them, but - break them up as tribes, and destroy their political existence -.' 6.

Thus was the use of force rationalized in order to break down stubborn resistance, and so vigorously was this policy deployed that it led to results far beyond the expectations of its makers. These took the form of a movement of the type which social anthropologists

today distinguish as 'millenarian', and is the central point of interest in this thesis.

This thesis falls into two Parts. In Part One, Chapter 1 gives a rather full description of the movement as it occurred among the Xhosa in British Kaffraria during the years 1856-57. This description has been constructed from a number of sources. Up to the present time, although the movement has been well documented by historians, social anthropologists have chosen either to ignore it, or else give it the most fleeting of references. Even among historical references, no single, fully detailed, published account exists, and recourse has been made to official papers and documents in order to make as accurate a reconstruction as possible.

The questions concerning any millenarian movement which immediately puzzle the research worker are, as Lawrence has pointed out, those of motivation, means and effect.[7.] They necessitate careful analysis of the total setting in which the movement grew up - the interaction between the people's traditional socio-economic background, and the situation created by European occupation. The purpose of Chapter 2, which gives a detailed consideration to the political antecedents of the Cattle-killing, is an attempt to determine among these antecedent events the 'predisposing' causes of the movement, inasmuch as it can be accepted that the advent of Europeans, by changing the traditional way of life, produced strains in the Xhosa social system.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the political theories of European

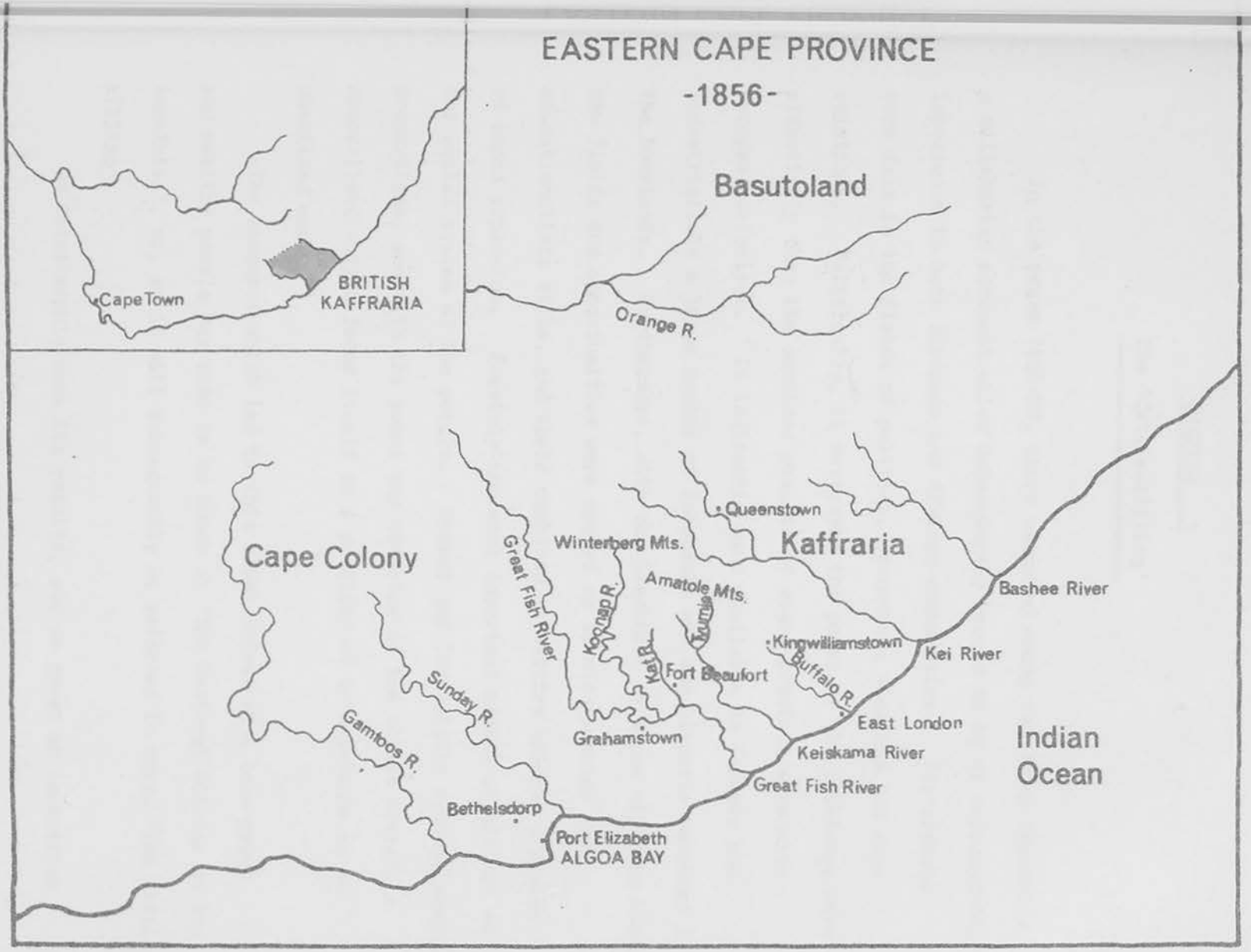
and African historians with regard to the Cattle-killing. It attempts to show how these theories have been based for the most part on unsubstantiated evidence, and are consequently unacceptable.

In the second part of the thesis, Chapter 4 attempts to place the Cattle-killing movement in context with regard to other such movements in Southern Africa. I then consider theories of millenarian movements by certain social anthropologists, and attempt to apply them to the Southern African material, with particular reference to the Cattle-killing. This leads me to the final chapter, in which, in an analysis of what has been revealed regarding Kaffraria, I deal with the remaining questions of means and effect.

By having referred to the changing way of life in Kaffraria, I do not wish to imply that Xhosa were ever faced with total social or cultural disintegration as were Bushmen or Hottentots. The vigorous state of their culture even at the present time is proof of this. Although there were great changes in their way of life, it can be shown that these were in fact superficial with regard to actual changes in the social system. The social system was strained, but not changed. In the economic and social field, the deprivation of material possessions at the hands of the Europeans, and the outlawing of important social institutions by the administration did not seriously affect the basic principles of traditional behaviour, and values associated with them. In the intellectual field, although what Lawrence would call 'the epistemological system' appeared to absorb aspects of Christianity,

this system preserved its original form, and provided as it were, the charter for action.[8] Although the people may have thought that they were creating a different way of life, it was old attitudes and concepts that primarily directed their actions. It is upon this precept that I base my final interpretation.

Since all the material concerning the Cattle-killing has been taken from historical sources, I have become involved in the marriage of data both from history and social anthropology. But at the same time, by applying contemporary social anthropological methods of analysis to this historical data, I have sought both to refute as invalid such theories on the Cattle-killing as have already been put forward, and to replace them with a more acceptable social anthropological interpretation.


EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE
-1856-
Basutoland
Orange R.
Cape Town
BRITISH
KAFFRARIA
Cape Colony
Great Fish River
Winterberg Mts.
Queenstown
Kaffraria
Amatole Mts.
Bashee River
Kei River
Kingwilliamstown
Fort Beaufort
Buffalo R.
East London
Keiskama River
Great Fish River
Grahamstown
Sunday R.
Gamtoos R.
Bethelsdorp
Port Elizabeth
ALGOA BAY
Indian
Ocean

CHAPTER 1

The 'Cattle-killing'

In the years 1856-57, there occurred among the Xhosa chiefdoms a millenarian movement which subsequently proved to be of unprecedented importance to both European and African communities. Its effects were felt in the fields of politics, economics, missions and race relations. Politically, it destroyed the power of the chiefdoms more effectively than the combined results of eight previous wars with European colonists. It indirectly made available to farmers and industrialists a large number of labourers who had hitherto remained in the homelands. Furthermore, with the breakdown of Xhosa military power, new fields and opportunities were opened up to missionaries and educationalists alike, and their combined activities enjoyed a period of rapid expansion. Possibly the most important effect of all was on the social system of the people. Unrest and instability assumed serious proportions, and with the power and prestige of the chiefs broken, a demoralized nation found itself in a position of subservience to an unscathed enemy.

The movement which led to this final defeat of a once proud and wealthy people has come to be known as 'The National Suicide of the Ama-Xhosa', or, as it will subsequently be referred to here, 'The Cattle-killing'.

So catastrophic were its results, and so great an impression

did it make on the people, that to this day the details of the movement live on in folklore, legend and song.[1.] The details have also been well documented by contemporary observers, and the cause and effects of the movement have excited much speculation among administrators and historians. It is strange that so little attention has been paid it and subsequent movements by social anthropologists. Passing references are to be found in the works of Hunter,[2.] Worsley,[3.] Soga,[4.] and Shapera,[5.] but these authors did little more than state that the Cattle-killing did occur, and not much attempt has been made by social anthropologists to investigate its implications. Since the Cattle-killing and related movements occurred either in the nineteenth century or else in the early years of the present century, it is perhaps understandable that they have been overlooked or overshadowed by contemporary movements in the world which have been open to first-hand study.

It is difficult to understand why Sundkler, in investigating the specific problem of sectarianism in South African Bantu Churches, has neglected these early religious upheavals.[6.]

Most historians writing on the subject have attempted to explain the causes as seen by them, mainly in political terms. These explanations are interesting in that they are largely accepted in one form or another by the teachers of history and politics in South Africa today. A social anthropological interpretation of the facts is clearly needed, and this would lead, as I hope to show, to different conclusions from those at present popular.



Nongqause's grave in the Alexandria district, Eastern Cape



The pool on the Qara river where Nongqause received her messages

The Cattle-killing.

In March, 1856, the most renowned of Xhosa 'prophets' arose. He was Mhlakaza, a councillor to Kreli, Paramount Chief of the Xhosa. Mhlakaza's gospel was based on the revelations of his young daughter, Nongqause. A reconstruction of these revelations, and of the events surrounding them, follows.

One morning, Nongqause returned from drawing water at a stream which ran near her father's kraal to inform him that she had seen by a pool in the stream some men who differed greatly in appearance from those to whom she was accustomed. They had told her that they had come from the land of the dead with a message, and that she was to call her father. On approaching the pool, Mhlakaza could not himself see the strangers, but, under the direction of his daughter, he could see their shadows in the reeds which grew at its edge. They nonetheless spoke to him, and told him to return to his kraal, to purify himself for three days, and then, on the fourth day to sacrifice an ox and return to them. Nongqause was to be the medium of communication, the channel through which instructions would henceforth be given. If the people were to accept the assistance shortly to be offered them, 'strange things were to be done, stranger than had ever been done before.'[7].

Mhlakaza, having complied with the directions of the strangers, returned on the fourth day, and saw a number of black people, among whom he recognized his brother, some years dead. Then for the first

time, he learned the purpose of their visit. The eternal enemies of the white man, they announced themselves as having come from the battle-fields beyond the sea, from Russia, where they had been fighting against the English, and with whom they would wage perpetual warfare. They had taken pity on the Khosa, and had now come to aid them with their invincible power in driving the English from the land.* Before anything could be done, however, they were to put away witchcraft, and to kill their best cattle and feast.

Kreli 'hailed the message with joy.'[8] He instructed his people that the command of the spirits was to be obeyed, that the best of all the cattle were to be slaughtered and eaten. Not only were the cattle to be slaughtered, but the spirits had given further instructions that no new crops were to be planted, and that the grain pits were to be completely emptied, and the food scattered so that the land 'shall be clouded with the dust of the chaff driven by the wind.' According to Theal, all Kaffraria was instantly in a state of commotion.[9] Certain of the chiefs sent people to investigate at first hand. These returned with various accounts. Some claimed to have arrived at the pool where Nongqause saw her vision and to have looked into the pool with their own eyes.

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* The tribesmen were later very much surprised when told by Brownlee, the Gaika Commissioner, that Russians, against whom the English had been fighting in the Crimean War, were not black, but white like the English. Brownlee, Op. cit., p. 138.

> 'What we saw there were the faces of our ancestors, troubling the waters as if they would come out, but they are not able to do so, because the people are not united in fulfilling the conditions desired by their ancestors.' 10.

Others returned claiming to have seen nothing, and advised that they should flee with their cattle. Thus the nation was divided between believers and unbelievers, those who were willing and those who were not willing to slaughter. The believers were called the Ama-Tamba, the unbelievers the Ama-Gogotya.[11.] Sandile, chief of the Gaikas, was influenced by Commissioner Brownlee, and witheld from killing.[12.] The majority of Gcalekas were believers, and only Chief Sigidi refused. Among other Xhosa chiefdoms, Mhlakaza's messengers found ready converts; Maqoma, Mhlala, Pato, Stokwe and many other men of note joined with Kreli and commenced to kill.[13.]

The European administration soon came to hear of these activities, and attempts were made to put a stop to them, but to no avail.* In the meantime, the revelations communicated through Mhlakaza and Nongqause grew from day to day:

> 'The girl, standing in the river in presence of a multitude of deluded people, heard strange unearthly sounds beneath her feet, which her father pronounced to be the voices of the spirits holding high council over the affairs of men. The first order was to slay cattle, but the greedy ghosts seemed insatiable in their demands. More and more were killed, but still never enough. And thus the delusion

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* The seat of European administration at the time was Kingwilliamstown, centrally situated in Kaffraria. This administration had European 'agents' or 'commissioners' living among the tribes.

> continued, month after month, every day spreading wider and embracing fresh victims in its grasp.' 14.

After ten months of feasting, Mhlakaza's last order was given, the fulfilment of this order was to be the final preparation of the tribesmen, after which they would be worthy of the aid of a spirit host:

> 'Not an animal out of all their herds must be left living, every grain of corn in their granaries must be destroyed. But what a future of glory and wealth was predicted for the faithful and obedient! On a certain day, myriads of cattle, more beautiful than those they were called upon to kill, should issue from the earth and cover the pastures far and wide. Great fields of waving corn, ripe and ready for eating, should in an instant spring into existence. The ancient heroes of the race, the great and the wise of days gone by, restored to life on that happy day, would appear and take part in the joys of the faithful. Trouble and sickness would be known no more, nor would the frailty of old age oppress them, for youth and beauty were to return alike to the risen dead and the feeble living. Such was the picture of Paradise painted by the Kaffir prophet-.' 15.

Furthermore, on that day, a blood-red sun was to rise in the East, turn at its zenith, then set again in the East. At the same time, a terrible whirlwind was to sweep all unbelievers and white men into the sea.[16] Others were to be turned into frogs, mice and ants. When the white man had been successfully driven out, an age of eternal peace would fall upon the land, and men would live in huts of flowers in valleys where the grass was eternally green. They would fight, hate and steal no more, and the laughter of friendship would be heard all over the land.[17]

Despite every effort on the part of the administration to

prevent the wholesale destruction, it grew in velocity from day to day. With difficulty, some 3,000 bags of corn were purchased and stored in Kingwilliamstown.[18] Brownlee, the Gaika Commissioner, was in the field 'night and day', often at great personal danger, in an attempt to dissuade the people from their belief. Under his influence, Sandile, the Gaika Chief, had, as we have seen, already agreed not to join in, but he was one of the few, and his inactivity too, was soon to end. 200,000 cattle had already been slaughtered by the other chiefs.[19]

As the great day approached, reports of marvellous sights witnessed near Mhlakaza's village filled the country:

> 'The horns of cattle were said to be seen peeping from beneath the rushes which grew round a swampy pool near the village of the seer, and from a subterranean cave were heard the bellowing and knocking of the horns of cattle impatient to rise. Kreli declared he had seen a celebrated horse of Mhlakaza's long since dead but now alive. A child of the prophet had also come back from the dead. There were those who said they had actually seen the risen heroes emerge from the Indian Ocean, some on foot, some on horse-back, passing in silent parade before them, then sinking again among the tossings of the restless waves. Sometimes they were seen rushing through the air in the wild chase as of old. Then again they were seen marshalled in battle array. The horrors to befall the unbelievers were enlarged upon-.'[20]

Dead men, years in the grave, had been seen, who sent pathetic appeals to their kindred not to delay their coming back into life by refusing to obey the prophet. Furthermore, shortly after the beginning of the predictions, a boat, sent by a man-of-war to the Kei mouth was upset, the gold-laced cap and some other garments of the officer and

crew of the boat were washed ashore - these were exhibited from place to place, showing that the spirits had indeed already destroyed some of the English.[21.]

The early months of 1857 were filled with feverish activity as fresh corn-pits were dug or old ones cleaned and enlarged. New cattle-kraals were built and old ones repaired in order to enable them to hold the new herds, and enormous sacks were made to contain the milk, which was shortly to be as plentiful as water.[22.]

Even the huts were being re-thatched to resist the storm and whirl-wind which was to drive the unbelievers and white men into the sea.

At last Nongqause named the exact time; the day after the first full moon in December.[23.] Excitement mounted to fever pitch. Rumours came down from the north that Moshesh, the Basuto leader had killed his cattle, and that he had already been rewarded and the unbelievers destroyed.[24.] Brownlee describes at first hand the scene on the morning of the day the prophesy was to be fulfilled:

> 'At the dawn of the great day a nation, many of whom had doubtless not slept, rose joyfully, decked themselves with paint, beads and rings, to welcome their long-lost friends. One of the saddest sights was that of an old woman wizened with age, and doubly wizened by starvation, decked out with brass rings jingling on her withered arms and legs. They had kept on their ornaments hoping against hope, till too weak to remove them. The sun rose and made the circuit of the heavens closely watched by the expectant hosts in vain. It set in silence in the west, leaving the usual darkness over the earth, and the black darkness of a bitter disappointment in the hearts of thousands.'[25.]

Mhlakaza's first reaction was to blame those who had not joined in for the failure of the prophecy. Sandile, chief of the Gaikas, had so far witheld his people from indulging in the slaughter, but now, under the coercive influence of the disillusioned hosts, and the entreaties of his brother, Maqoma, he gave the order that the cattle of the Gaika be slaughtered as well.

By this time, the plight of the people had become acute, and they streamed out of the famine-ridden homelands in their thousands. The objective of most was the administrative seat of Kingwilliamstown, the one place in British Kaffraria where small quantities of food had been stored. Brownlee's wife, who was at the time living in Kingwilliamstown, records the plight of the refugees:

> 'Those who reached us were most pitiable figures, breathing skeletons, with hollow eyes and parched lips. The innocent children looked like old men and women in miniature, some only a few days old-. Day after day, day after day, as these spectres came in crowds and crawled along, one might have imagined that the prophet's prediction had come to pass, and that the dead had indeed risen from their graves.'[26].

Of Sandile's tribe: 27,000 out of 31,000 perished; of Mhlala's: 16,500 out of 23,000; and of Kama's: 3,600 out of 13,000. The total dead for British Kaffraria alone was estimated at 67,000.[27]. This was in the territory adjoining the colony, and with Kingwilliamstown as its centre, where food was distributed to thousands. Calculations of the casualties among Kreli's people in Gcaleka country, where the movement was founded, which had no such storehouse and from which flight was not

possible, were not recorded, but calculations range from 25 - 50,000.[28]

From this blow the Xhosa nation was never to recover. For a long time the bulk of its young men and women remained in service among Europeans in the frontier towns and on their farms. As a military nation, their power was completely broken. In the meantime, missionaries and educationalists made haste to fill the void, and in the fields of education and ministry, unprecedented development soon took place.

CHAPTER 2

The Political Antecedents of the Cattle-killing

Before any interpretation of the Cattle-killing and the related Southern African movements can be attempted, it is necessary to examine fairly fully the antecedent events in Kaffraria.

Although contact between Europeans and the indigenous Bushmen and Hottentots had been made as early as 1652, it was not until 1702 that an exploratory party of Europeans met the first of the southward migrating Xhosa chiefdoms near the Gamtoos River in the Eastern Cape Province. From the start it was clear that trouble was bound to arise between the two factions. Both were rough and ready agriculturalists, both essentially cattle-farmers, both migratory, and both greedy for land. The ownership of land has been the central point of conflict from that time up until the present. In 1778, Governor van Plettenberg of the Dutch East India Company visited the frontier. He found the two races, black and white, opposing each other in the 'no-mans-land' which lay between the Cape and Kaffraria. Having made an 'agreement' with some minor Xhosa chiefs that the upper Fish River was to be the dividing line between the Colony and Kaffraria, he returned to Cape Town. This was the earliest application of a physical apartheid policy in South Africa. It did not have the slightest chance of success. Apart from the fact that such a policy could only have been enforced by

officials, troops and numerous white settlers, all of which were lacking, the policy itself ran dead against the expansive traditions of the trek-boers on the one hand, and the whole social and political system of the Xhosa on the other. It is essential that both these aspects be clearly understood, for herein lies the answer to practically all the unrest on the frontier which first exploded in 1778. Seven more wars followed within the next seventy years. In 1856 the climactic Cattle-killing changed the face of the frontier. It is in the events of these seventy years that the predisposing forces behind the movement are to be sought.

Expansion and Isolation

In the early stages of European expansion from the Cape into the interior, the centre of gravity remained within the colony, and there was, as yet, no very marked tendency on the part of the cattle-graziers to lose touch with that centre. In its turn, the central government would recognize its obligation, to supervise, control, and protect the graziers, by a system of military posts. Expeditions against the marauding Bushmen consisted of freemen under an official of the garrison.[1.] But other forces were coming into play; discontent with Company rule, and the vagaries of the economic situation at the Cape caused the outward expansion of Freemen to become, in an ever increasing degree, a dispersion which spread in all directions over a vast area of land. Furthermore, the lack of any significant market for agricultural produce, but a steady

demand for beef, led to the adoption by the farmers of large-scale cattle ranching which required extensive pastures.

The dispersion continued until 1779, when it reached the Upper Fish River in the east and the Kamiesberg in the north. This dispersion over such a large area at a rate unprecedented in South African history created a situation that would give rise, in time, to a host of economic, political, racial and social consequences, which were to modify profoundly the experience of those who were affected by them. Very different demands were made upon the individual compared with those in a more or less stabilized agricultural colony.[2.] The mode of life to which the stockfarmer was committed, by its very nature, cut him loose from the social system that had developed at the Cape, and to which he had been attached. What evidence exists on the type of race relations on the frontier indicates that the Hottentots did not enjoy the same leniency in treatment as the slaves in the settled districts. The harshness of frontier life was not conducive to humaneness. Bushmen and Hottentots were pushed back, shot or taken as servants, and the attitude of the Boers towards coloured people outside the European community became increasingly hostile. The 'frontier' model of white and coloured relations within the European community was, as in the settled agricultural districts, basically paternalistic, but much more harsh. Those who fell outside the community, and who were not reduced in status to servants, were considered enemies.[3.] This attitude became firmly entrenched among frontier farmers, and has survived even

up to the present time.

It cannot be too clearly grasped that until quite late in the nineteenth century, white South Africa, like the United States of America, usually expanded, not by reason of newcomers passing through and beyond existing settlements, but by sections of the resident population faring forth into the wilderness.[4.]

As the Freemen advanced across the mountain barriers into the interior and committed themselves to their new way of life, they were at the same time extending the boundaries of European occupation into new territory. They were living on a constantly advancing frontier, and thus remained frontiersmen, and while there was no obstacle to their advance, the frontier was, to use Turner's phrase of the American case, 'the outer edge of the wave - the meeting-point between savagery and civilization',[5.] and this constituted an environment entirely different from that found in the settled area from which the stock-farmers originally derived. This environment, lacking the refinements of life, stamped the farmers indubitably as its products. Outside of this environment the farmer felt inferior and ill-at-ease, but on the frontier, in familiar surroundings, he suffered from no feelings of inferiority. He claimed a status that placed him infinitely higher than those by whom he was surrounded. These ways of life, as MacCrone points out, had become incorporated as habits and fixed modes of thinking, feeling and behaving. These in their turn were conditioned by his experiences, and enabled him to come to terms with, and to adapt himself to, his new

environment.[6.]

Furthermore, the frontier-farmer emanated from a community organized on a basis of slavery, and this slave-owning mentality was carried over into the new environment. It played some part in shaping the attitudes, and determining the behaviour, of the individuals concerned in further racial contacts on the frontier. This slave-owning tradition, even when reconditioned by the environment, persisted as a mental background against which racial attitudes more directly determined by his immediate experience would be developed. A further factor concerns the status of Hottentots; for in the farmer's old social environment, Hottentots had already occupied a status even below that of the slaves, and were regarded by Europeans as inferior people with no rights of their own. Further contact with them, or with Bushmen, under frontier conditions could be expected to accentuate existing race attitudes to what MacCrone calls 'an almost morbid degree.'[7.]

In the meantime, farmers were engaged over virtually the entire frontier area in a merciless war with Bushmen. They developed the efficient and ruthless 'Commando' system which was later to play an important role in their dealings with Xhosa. The fact that Bushmen refused to submit as easily as Hottentots, but struggled bitterly against the farmers, was in their eyes a cardinal offence. Consequently the farmers never rested until they had driven out or exterminated these people from the frontier districts.

The question of frontiers was the earliest phase of the South

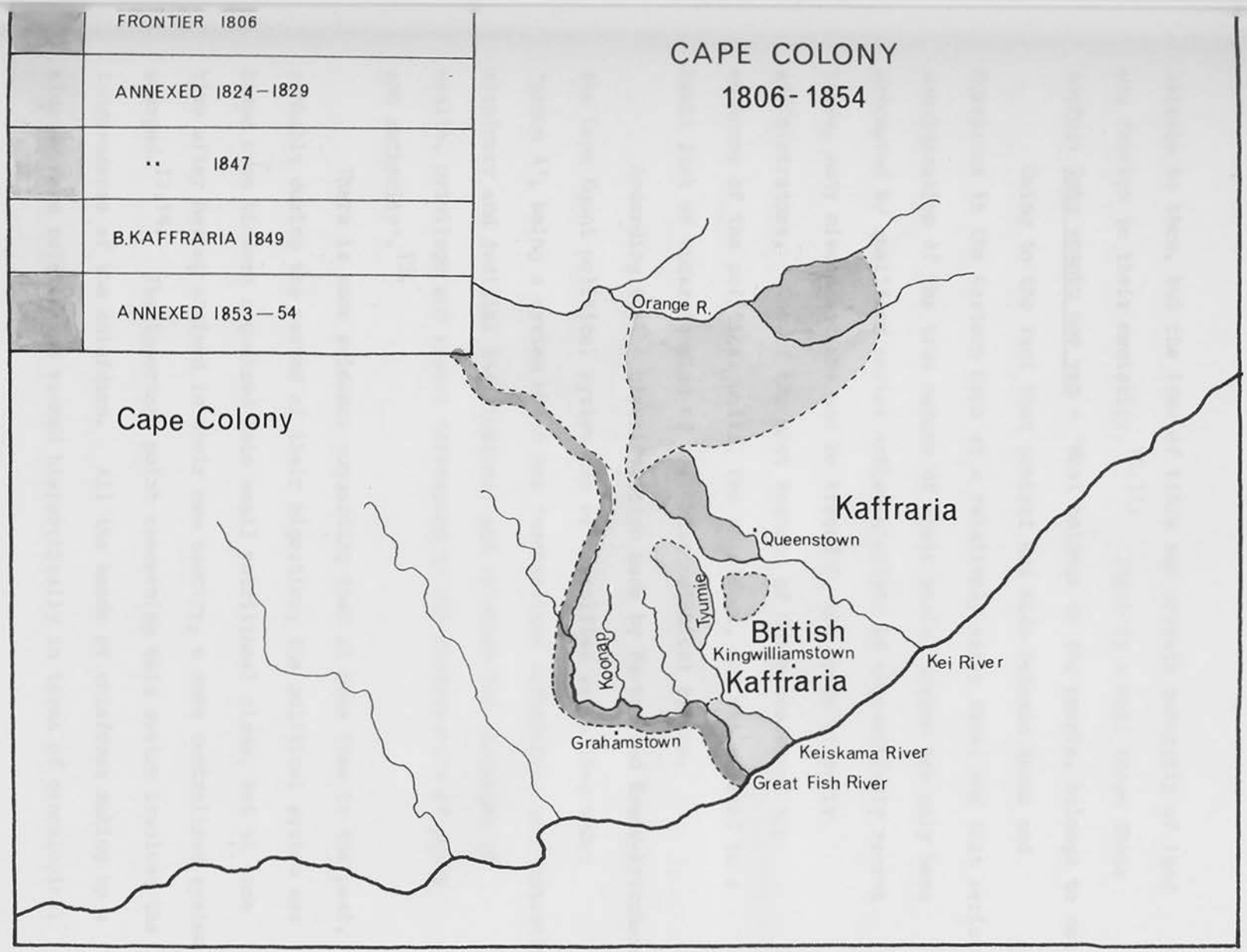
African 'Native Problem'. It was not so much the fixing of the boundary as its peaceful maintenance that was the problem. This problem assumed serious proportions when the main body of European settlers met the Xhosa on the borders of Kaffraria in 1778. The Xhosa were so real a danger in a military sense, that South African Europeans from the beginning have thought in terms, if not of armies, then at least of a quasi-military police force as the first essential for a secure African policy.

A factor that escaped the consideration of colonial administration was that from the earliest days, 'frontier settlements' affected the total social and economic life of the Xhosa far more than that of their harassed colonial neighbours, the Hottentots and Bushmen. As the colonists advanced upon the Xhosa, there came a period of unsettlement, with cattle-thieving, raids and counter raids, till some more than usually serious incident culminated in a 'war'. The war would be followed by a fixing of boundaries, usually a little further east and deeper into Xhosa territory than before. This confiscation of land, together with the seizing of cattle, was considered the obvious punishment for a tribe guilty of murder or 'theft'. But the more land Europeans thus annexed at Xhosa expense, the more Xhosa were driven into precisely those straitened circumstances from which the colonists were striving to escape. Colonial governors, almost all of them professional soldiers, habitually ignored this fact. Time after time, to secure a suitable frontier, whole chiefdoms were transplanted, or chiefdom hurled back upon chiefdom. When

in consequence, Xhosa were driven to war among themselves, as at Amalinde in 1818, or to retaliatory raids on the colonists cattle, or even to attacks on the colony itself, the inevitable reaction was to drive off more cattle, confiscate more land, and fix yet another boundary, so completing the vicious circle.

A rationalization prevalent at this time was that the less land Xhosa had to abuse by their wasteful agricultural practices, then the more they would be available to increase the supply of cheap labour to the farmers.[8.]

Invariably, in European history and in legend, the frontier story has been presented as nothing more than a long series of raids by 'thieving Kaffirs' on the fat herds of hard-working, inoffensive white farmers.[9.] The wide difference between European and Xhosa ideas of law, property and government made friction inevitable, but no claim to the use of land by the Xhosa was ever recognized by the colonists as valid. The social institutions of the Xhosa kept them together in groups, while colonists, in their independent way, spread themselves far and wide, claiming <u>property</u> in a way foreign to Xhosa thinking. It was an unsocial and exclusive claim not merely to use land, but to appropriate it, and to bar all others from a share in its enjoyment. The fixing of a boundary implied to Europeans the idea of annexation, with exclusive rights of control to that point. Xhosa custom on the other hand knew only <u>usufructory</u> rights in land. Xhosa habitually granted the use of land, in return for cattle, to men who then became


FRONTIER 1806
ANNEXED 1824—1829
" 1847
B.KAFFRARIA 1849
ANNEXED 1853—54
CAPE COLONY
1806-1854
Cape Colony
Orange R.
Kaffraria
Queenstown
Tyumie
Koonap
British
Kingwilliamstown
Kaffraria
Kei River
Grahamstown
Keiskama River
Great Fish River

clients to them, but the idea of title and private ownership of land was foreign to their mentality.[10,11] There is a well known Xhosa saying: Into yomntu nge yam - 'What belongs to the people, belongs to me.'

Owing to the fact that contact was made between Xhosa and Europeans in the Eastern Cape at a relatively early date, and that serious consideration of the true nature of their social system has only been attempted by qualified social anthropologists in comparatively recent times, many misconceptions can be traced in the works of early administrators. One of the most serious of these concerned the autonomy of the political units, the chiefdoms, and was related to a basic lack of understanding of the Xhosa political system.

According to the classification made by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, the Cape Nguni political system can be classified as falling under 'group A', being a system which has 'centralized authority', administrative machinery and judicial institutions, and in which the cleavages of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority'.[12]

There is some evidence suggesting that at some time in the past, probably during the period of their migration, the political system was based upon kinsmen organized into small patrilineal clans, but at some time after having arrived in their new country, a more centralized system emerged.[13,14] The important point concerning this system involved the independence of the chiefdoms. All the heads of chiefdoms making up a cluster were related and ranked hierarchically in terms of genealogical

status within one chiefly lineage. In this respect, equality was not absolute, but in all other respects, however, they enjoyed precisely equal status, and were entirely independent of one another, and were free to manage their internal affairs without external interference. It was this freedom from external control, even that emanating from the paramount chief of the cluster, that was not understood by early white governments, and which caused so much ill-feeling on the frontier. Time and time again, the paramount chief of a cluster was held responsible for the activities of the constituent chiefdoms in his cluster, over whom, in actual fact, he had no legitimate authority whatsoever.[15.]

The earliest misunderstanding of this nature was made by Governor van Plettenberg during his tour of the frontier districts. Whatever the nature of the treaty he negotiated with the minor chiefs west of the Fish River, it is almost certain that no reference had been made to any of the greater chiefs in the area. But even if van Plettenberg had approached the contemporary Xhosa paramount, Rarabe, he himself would not have been able to cede land on behalf of any other chiefdom. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that from the Xhosa point of view, the treaty contained any grant of private ownership. It is clear that both Europeans and Xhosa applied different concepts to the situation, and not much effort was made to arrive at a real mutual understanding.

To complicate matters even further, the 'Fish River', although sounding definitive, was so imprecise as to be the endless source of disputes. Except in times of seasonal floods, it was no barrier at all,

being fordable along the entire length of its course. Furthermore, there was always a certain vagueness about what was meant by the Fish River line. For a matter of forty miles, from near Fort Beaufort to the sea, the line of the river might serve, but above that point the main stream ran west to east parallel to the coast, almost at right angles to any dividing line between Colony and Xhosa, so that to follow the river was to take Xhosa territory some considerable distance nearer the European settlements, and, what was more important, to make the ownership of a large and fertile tract of land disputable.

The treaty of 1778 was from the first unsatisfactory. As has been indicated, not only was no single chief capable of binding the whole of the Xhosa cluster to any political treaty, but there was no attempt to make clear to Xhosa chiefs the European's conception of a boundary, or of land ownership. The anomaly was, however, appreciated by a few men of understanding, such as the 1820 Settler leader, Thomas Pringle. Writing in 1829, he states:

> 'Nominally, the Governor had the consent of some of the Caffres, but not of the Chiefs. The Ghonaquas who inhabited the land between the Gamtoos and the Fish were never even considered. The Boers were left to deal with them as they had dealt with their bethren already extinct.' 16.

Such opinions as these went unheeded by the administration, whose attitude was now one of assertive ownership, and the next move was to drive Ndhlambi, one of the Xhosa treaty-makers, forcibly across the Fish River and 'out of the Colony'.

The Clearing of the Zuurveld

Reprisal raids by Ndhlambi led to a wholesale offensive by Boer commandos to 'clear the Zuurveld' (as the territory became known). By 1781 the Xhosa had been driven out of the Zuurveld, and a number of their cattle were confiscated by the commandos. These were divided among the victorious Boers. Soon the Boers were petitioning the newly-arrived General Craig in Graff-Reinett for land 'unto the Konab, (Koonap) or it may be unto the Kat River'. This fertile and well-watered area had long been coveted by Boers from the arid Karoo. Writing to Dr. Phillips of the London Missionary Society, Thomas Pringle claimed that 'The Kat and Koonap (are) the finest part of the Colony - and highly eligible for a missionary settlement.' When Dr. Phillips himself came to travel through it, he described it as '- the finest country I have ever seen - all the riches and beauty of the finest English scenery spread over the barren mountains, deep valleys, and picturesque ravines of the Scotch Highlands.'

Due to internal strife at that time, Boers had been unable to follow up their claim to the territory, and by 1803, the Xhosa had returned to the Zuurveld in larger numbers than ever before.[17.]

After the resumption of British rule in the Cape in 1806, the stronger British government turned its attention to the eastern frontier. Its officers, seemingly without over-scrupulous inquiry into all the circumstances, appear to have been readily persuaded that the Xhosa were responsible for all disorders in the Zuurveld, and were trespassing in

a part of the Colony in which they had no right to be. A report submitted to the Governor, Earl Caledon, recommended that in order to make the eastern farms more secure, and also to relieve the pressure of the farmers clamouring for more land, the border be extended to the Koonap. This would serve to exclude permanently from the Zuurveld the troublesome Ndlambi and his people. Caledon however, was reluctant to take this step, and it was not until he had been succeeded by Sir John Cradock in 1811 that the plan was put into operation. In the early months of 1812, Colonel Graham clashed with Ndlambi near Coega on the Sundays River, and after a fierce skirmish, Ndlambi was pushed back into Gaikaland.[18].

This forcible 'clearing' of the Zuurveld was the first overt act in a long drama which can be said to have culminated in the policy of territorial segregation advocated by the present South African Government.

MacMillan is one of the few historians whose vision is broad enough to see the implications of this move in their true perspective. He writes:

> 'The significance of all this is perpetually missed. It is preposterous to pronounce as though it were the righting of a wrong that 20,000 Ndlambis and Gunakwebis were driven out of the Zuurveld across the Fish River. Ndhlambi's protest, reported from the Sundays River in 1811 - 'This land is mine. I won it and intend to keep it -' shows clearly that land and not cattle-stealing was always the Kaffir's first concern. A boundary which banishes and excludes all the original inhabitants of a district is an anomaly-.' [19].

Annexation of a country normally carries with it an obligation towards existing occupiers, but now the Ndlambis, the obvious occupants of the Zuurveld, were driven out of their traditional home and forced back on top of their rivals, the Gaikas, who were neither able nor willing to accommodate 20,000 immigrants.

The Spoor Law

In their efforts to keep the Zuurveld 'clean' the Boers fully recognized the effectiveness of their 'Commando' system, so successfully employed against Bushmen, and in times of danger, they stood readily together to punish Xhosa whenever they thought it necessary. Before British succession in 1806, these commandos saw little point in waiting weeks for official ratification of their plans to come through from the Cape, and so acted independently of any authority. The greater military strength behind the British Government of 1806 made no significant difference to Frontier security. On the contrary, it appeared to encourage 'strong' action in the 'clearing' operations. Cattle-driving and kraal-burning continued incessantly, this in turn being an incitement to further cattle-stealing and 'depredations' by the tribesmen.[20.]

In 1817, Lord Charles Somerset came to an agreement with the Chief, Gaika, to apply the primitive practice known as the 'spoor-law' in an attempt to stop the cattle stealing. It now became the practice for owners, accompanied by 'patrols' of troops, to follow the spoor of stolen cattle to the kraal at which it ended, and there either to retake

the cattle or else to recoup themselves at the expense of the kraal.[21] Sometimes an equivalent number was taken, and sometimes an equivalent and arbitrary value. Furthermore, reprisal raids were sometimes conducted, whereupon a force of Boers and soldiers would march to the kraal suspected of being most deeply implicated in the robberies, and there secure compensation. No effective check was kept on the number of beasts alleged to have been stolen, and accounts of abuse are numerous.[22] It must be borne in mind too, that the only 'agreement' which had been reached was with Gaika, who, as has been indicated, was not in a position to enter into contracts on behalf of the other frontier chiefs.

In their opposition to the oppressive institutions and practices of Europeans, certain of the Gaikas and Ndlambis, traditional rivals, appear to have found a common cause for unity. When the Gaika prophet, Makana, failed in his attempt to unite the two chiefdoms completely, he and his followers declared themselves to be on the side of Ndlambi. In 1818, Makana led the Ndlambi in an attack on Grahamstown. Despite the exhortations of Makana, the Ndlambi warriors were heavily defeated, and driven back across the Fish.

The Spoor-law survived for many years, and as late as 1830, Brownlee wrote:

> 'It is highly desirable that a better understanding should be established between the Colony and the Caffre nation. The custom is still maintained by some colonists, of making reprisals for cattle stolen from the Colony by sending armed patrols into

> Caffre-land, attacking and plundering different sections of the country for supposed guilt of one or more kraals. In most cases, the guilty escape with impunity, while the innocent are deprived of the means of support and reduced to want and misery.' 23

After the Grahamstown attack, three retaliatory commandos under Stockenstrom, Willshire, and Fraser proceeded to 'scour' the entire territory from the Winterberg to the sea. On the 15th August, 1819, Makana voluntarily surrendered, stating that he did so in order to procure peace for his people who were starving. He claimed that the war was an unjust one, and to Landdrost Stockenstrom he made the following statement:

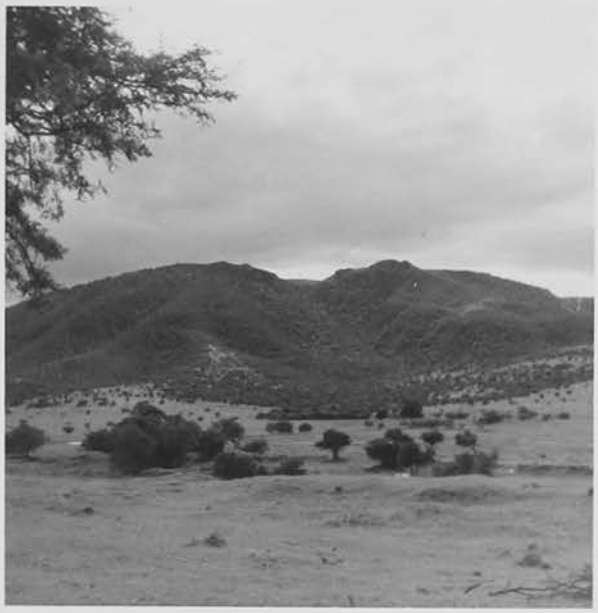
> 'We wish for peace, we wish to rest in our huts, we wish to get milk for our children, our wives wish to till the land. But your troops cover the plains, and swarm in the thickets, where they cannot distinguish the man from the woman, and shoot all.'

During these uneasy years of constant friction, the 'Neutral Belt' plan was formulated. This change of policy by Lord Charles Somerset set in motion a train of events of the greatest subsequent importance.

The Neutral Belt Policy

Having defeated Gaika, Somerset obtained from him a verbal 'treaty' whereby he would vacate the territory between the Fish and Keiskama Rivers.[24] This would then, according to the agreement, become neutral territory, uninhabited by either black or white.

The scheme was doomed to failure from its conception. Somerset



The site of Gaika's kraal in the Amatoles



British Kaffraria from the Koonap Heights

persisted, as he had done previously, in refusing to deal with any chief but Gaika. Gaika himself protested that he could not speak for the other chiefs.[25] Besides this, he had been defeated by Ndlambi a year earlier, and his prestige among other chiefdoms was thus at a low ebb. All these factors Somerset could not or would not understand.

On the day the agreement was made, Somerset reported in 'The Cape Gazette' that, by a bargain with Gaika, the country between the Fish and Keiskama was to be thoroughly cleared, and expressed the hope that 'as the boundary is completely freed from Kaffirs, repose and security will be the results of the late operations.'[26]

Somerset's true intention with regard to the so-called 'neutral-belt' is manifested in a report despatched to London.

'The country thus ceded is as fine a portion of ground to be found, and, together with the still unappropriated lands in the Zuurveld, it might perhaps be worthy of consideration with a view to colonization.'[27]

The territory had thus already come to be referred to as the 'ceded' territory, and before Somerset's suggestions regarding colonization could receive the attention of the administration, the territory began to fill up rapidly with European farmers. Plans were even discussed to settle Hottentots on the Kat River in order to strengthen the boundary.

Maqoma, eldest son of Gaika, himself took advantage of the precedent thus created, and moved back to his father's old territory on the upper Kat River Valley, together with his brother Tyali. The clamour

of the colonists for farms caused further extensions of the boundary, until by 1829 the colonial boundary was definitely extended to the 'heights west of Chumie', and with this extension ended whatever had remained of the neutral-belt. The only point not debated during these proceedings was whether Xhosa had as good a right to return to their own homes in the neutral-belt as colonists to have it portioned out to them in farms.

During this period, cattle-stealing continued, and raids, reprisals and commandos made the frontier life a dangerous one. Incidents worthy of mention at this time include Somerset's so-called 'blundering commando' of 1825 which twice in succession destroyed the wrong village with loss of life, and the retaliatory raid of Duncan Campbell, Civil Commissioner of Albany. Writing to Pringle, after some of his cattle had been stolen he vowed to take vengeance with a commando 'to teach them.' He at the same time objected to 'the absurd ideas prevailing with regard to "conciliation". 'Powder and ball, by G-d is the only means of civilizing them.'[28]. Later, on becoming the responsible magistrate for this frontier district, his views earned for him the name 'Powder and Ball' Campbell.

In the meantime, Gaika, having been confronted by Somerset and Major Dundas, declared his intention of petitioning the King to give him land in England where he might live in peace.[29].

With the failure of the neutral-belt policy, and the resentments it perpetuated, there developed a climax of unrest, manifesting itself in a state of virtual war. In this new crisis, it was Maqoma who

appeared as the prime trouble-maker. The causes and implications of the unrest appear too sophisticated for the powder-happy administration to have understood. The Xhosas were at this time suffering increased pressure on two fronts. To the north-east, the wars of the Zulu despot, Chaka, had the whole area in turmoil. Xhosas were directly involved in the disorder by the irruption among them of the refugee Tembu, Fingo and Bhaca. A further group, the Tambookie, invaded the small area occupied by Maqoma.[30] Maqoma, already insecure in the 'neutral' belt, reacted against this fresh invasion of his diminishing pasture lands with force. Unfortunately for Maqoma, the Tambookie, a weak chiefdom, had already approached the government with a request for protection, and aggression against the Tambookie was interpreted as aggression against the government. On the 6th February, 1829, the Colonial Secretary instructed Somerset 'to punish the atrocity and insolence of Maqoma's proceedings - the well-grounded conviction that he has long forfeited any claim to favourable consideration having at length determined His Excellency to take steps for ridding the Colony of the neighbourhood of this most troublesome and dishonest chief.'* [31].

In May, these orders were implemented; Maqoma's cattle were impounded, his kraals burnt, and he and his followers driven out into the eastern territories. Europeans were not slow to take advantage of his absence. Writing from the Koonap in 1830, Dr. Phillip comments:

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* Maqoma is described by MacMillan (p. 70) as 'one of nature's gentlemen.' When in 1835, Sir B.D'Urban pronounced Maqoma and others as 'irreclaimable savages', one of the missionary ladies protested 'If only he could meet Maqoma'.

> 'This morning about 5 o'clock some farmers passed us going to Beaufort to meet Mr. Stockenstrom to solicit farms in this country formerly belonging to the Caffres, and now to be divided among the colonists. This craving for land on the part of the Boers, and the means taken by Governments to gratify (it) call for some strictures in this place.' 32.

A large portion of the land, however, was given to Hottentots, thus doing a belated service to them at the expense of the Xhosa, although the ulterior motive was to make the Hottentots a 'buffer' between Europeans and Xhosa. Of the effect of the expulsions from the Ceded Territory, the missionary James Clark, now moved to the Keiskama, wrote:

> 'There is no doubt they will be quarrelling among themselves about the want of pasture; as they are now thronged upon each other, their cattle will be in such great numbers that the first drought they will find themselves poor and dying with hunger.' 33.

It must be stressed that neither Maqoma nor Tyali owed allegiance politically to Gaika, and neither of these two chiefs were bound to recognize whatever treaty had been entered into by Gaika. Although they were his sons, they had, as they were entitled to, split away from him, and had formed their own independent groups. The act which removed their lands from them was therefore regarded by them as being a doubly immoral deed. Its direct result was the war of 1835. The end of this war marked the beginning of the brief period of philanthropic rule which came to the Cape with Lord Glenelg as its sponsor. An idea of the controversy which was raging with regard to the administration and its policy can be gathered from extractions from a rare pamphlet printed in London in 1836, claiming to give a summary of the war of 1834-5. It has

been liberally annotated by the editor of the 'Zuid Afrikaan', and was published in Cape Town in 1836. This document provides further evidence of the 'frontier mentality' prevalent at the time, and of the elaborate rationalizations which were everywhere put forward in order to condone the administrative policy, an example follows:

'According to the information of those best acquainted with the subject, the incitements which led them to make this hostile aggression (just cause they had none) were these:-

> first, the hope that the Regent Chief Macomo entertained of being enabled by a sudden and unexpected invasion to re-possess himself of his hereditary domain at the source of the Kat River, whence he had been driven by the Colonial Government, for gross misconduct, in 1829. Secondly, the inordinate cupidity and licentious rapacity of these people for cattle, and thirdly, the tampering of a political Missionary of the London Society, of the name of Phillip - who, under the garb of sanctity and philanthropy, wished to ingratiate themselves with the mass of Aborigines of Southern Africa. The Kaffir Barbarians were led to believe by these Polemics that they had been unjustly stripped of some of their lands by the Colonial Government, which had been converted by a regular treaty with the the late chief Gaika into a tract of Neutral Territory.' 34.

The editor, in order to clarify and endorse the first of the points made in the summary, has annotated the following paragraph:

> 'This is clearly inferible from the evidence given by all those of local knowledge and experience before the Committee on Aborigines, respecting the character and feelings of Macomo. Colonel Wade, the late acting Governor of the Colony, stated, that two months before the war, Macomo asked him emphatically, "When am I to have my country again?" The colonel replied - "What country?" he said, "This country where we are, and that country," pointing to the Hottentot Location;

> and on taking leave he reiterated in a very marked and peculiar manner, "But we are to have our land again!"
> The result of the war blasted Macomo's hopes; but since Lord Glenelg has justified the atrocious invasion, his mad expectations of obtaining possession of his paternal inheritance are revived, and nothing short of the restitution of the Kat River to his family, will now satisfy this ambitious, turbulent and dangerous chief.'

The presence of the 'political missionaries' on the frontier, and of their persistent 'tampering' were to have important consequences to subsequent policy.

The Frontier Philanthropists.

The missionaries appear to have been the only people capable of appreciating that the true cause of frontier unrest was the pressure, both economic and social, under which the tribes were suffering, and that this unrest was not likely to be quietened until the chiefdoms were given justice and security. After his first journey through the heart of Kaffraria in 1830, Dr. Phillips sums up the position in a letter to the Paris Missionary Society, advising them to avoid the area:

> 'The Caffre frontier has been for some years in a very troublesome state. Since 1812, three districts have been taken from that nation and added to the Colony, (the last not later than 1828). In consequence of these curtailments the Caffres have been driven back upon the territory that is still left to them, and several of the chiefs, with their people, are without any fixed residence; and while they profess themselves willing to receive missionaries, they profess they cannot protect them nor afford them the opportunity of instructing their children by settling in any one place.' 35.

The Xhosa Chiefs, Maqoma and Tyali, recognizing in Dr. Phillips one who appreciated their predicament, approached him with a view to his helping them by representing their grievances to the government. The burden of their complaint being almost exclusively that of the loss of their lands, of the wrong done by the treaty of 1819, and of faulty and corrupt interpreters. Phillips refused however, to interfere directly, but kept others informed in his correspondence. The Commando system in particular excited his indignation:

> 'The thieves on the borders have been represented as those who have been robbed in the interior and brought down to the frontier by their necessities. This is not the fact. The people who infest the bush on the frontier are those who have been robbed by the colonial commandos - Some of these commandos have taken ten or sixteen thousand head of cattle from the Caffres --- Nineteen out of twenty who have been plundered were innocent --- Stockenstrom stated that he could mention fifty cases when Boers had gone on Commando <u>having lost no cattle</u> - says, too, it is exceedingly difficult to trace spoors, but Somerset and others can do it in any quantity when they lead to a kraal that has good cattle in it.' 36.

The fierceness of Dr. Phillips criticism was directed against the commando system as being the only remedy attempted by Boers for their losses. There was an utter disregard of elementary safeguards of justice, as exemplified in the failure to require reasonable proof of losses sustained. A blatant example occurred in 1826, when a commando under Somerset, finding three branded cattle with one of the chiefs, confiscated the whole herd. The three were afterwards proved to have been legitimately obtained by an exchange with a trader.

Thus there was neither civil control nor legal check upon the exclusively military treatment of what was in essence a social disorder, and as MacMillan states, events were, unhappily, soon to prove that despite the accusations levelled at Phillips by the Colonists, it needed no philanthropist to give the Xhosa a sense of grievance.[37.]

Eventually the representations of Dr. Phillips and the other philanthropists prevailed. A new Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, was appointed, and in 1834 he sailed for the Cape, carrying with him the injunction of the British Government to devise other methods for the protection of the colonists. He too declared his intention to see that both sides were to be treated with fairness and justice.

Sir Benjamin D'Urban.

D'Urban's appointment did not meet with the approval of the philanthropists.‡ He landed at the Cape in January 1834, and within four days of his arrival, exchanges between him and Dr. Phillips had begun. Phillips submitted to D'Urban a full memorandum to assist him in coming to an opinion about the Frontier. This D'Urban accepted cordially enough, and proposed to Phillips that he leave Cape Town in April, to make a personal inspection of the situation.

For a time, the disturbances of the 'Great Trek' brought about by the proposed emigration of dissatisfied European colonists occupied his attention, but soon even they were overshadowed by the political storm brewing in the East.

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‡ Cf. Appendix G.

D'Urban at this time showed what proved to be a fateful faculty for procrastination. He arrived in January 1834 with definite instructions to attend to the deteriorating conditions on the frontier. Following his promise to Phillips to visit the frontier in April, an announcement of this impending visit was made by Phillips to the chiefs. The chiefs, trusting Phillip's word, promised in turn to stay their hand until their meeting with him. But only on the 31st May had 'the time now come' to give the matter his attention. Then, he hoped to go in August. In August, Mrs Phillips, who had stayed on in Cape Town, was given a definite date, the 15th September. On the 12th September, Somerset was told to expect him 'early next month', as was Mrs Phillips. By the 3rd October even Mrs Phillips had begun to express doubts as to the Governor's firm intentions of visiting the frontier. On October 20th., she 'had no certain news of the Governor's plans', but had heard that it might be the 15th November. Finally, Lady D'Urban herself said it would be about the 10th December.

This inexcusable tardiness rendered all Phillip's efforts on the frontier vain. The time had been spent by him drawing up possible points of agreement which might be reached with D'Urban such as the abolition of the commando system and the written agreement of boundaries, but these were to await the advent of a more energetic Governor than D'Urban. While D'Urban dallied in Cape Town, the frontier remained in the unrestricted control of Colonel Somerset, who was now only concerned with 'reprisals' and cattle-raids.

The philanthropists looked on in despair. On the 9th December, James Read, a fellow missionary wrote Phillips:

> 'Somerset is now clearing the country from Willshire to the sea, all Eno's people and Congo's people. The old thing all over again; for the act of one man punish hundreds, and now again just in the time of harvest while the corn is in the fields. Can this be Sir Benjamin's order? or would they dare take such a step without orders?. I am sorry for the case at the moment, as the chiefs will think we have deceived them.' 38.

This action of Somerset's, together with D'Urban's inertia must be held responsible for the war which was sparked off by one of Eno's chiefs, Xoxo, being wounded by a commando. During the last ten days of 1846, the combined armies of Eno, Maqoma and Tyali swept through the frontier districts of Somerset and Albany. 800 farmhouses were pillaged and burnt, 161,000 sheep, 114,000 cattle, and 5,000 horses were raided, and the area devastated from end to end.[39].

At last D'Urban was stirred into action, within three weeks of the war, he had reached the frontier. (Smith, departing from Cape Town immediately on hearing the news, covered the distance in three days.) On his arrival, and on witnessing the devastation, D'Urban appears to have forgotten his earlier promises of reform, and fair play for all. A week on the frontier was apparently enough to have allowed him to absorb the traditional precepts of frontier policy. He came down heavily on the side of those whose chief faith was in 'powder and ball,' and even began to toy with the idea of extending the boundary from the Fish to the Kei. His immediate objective, however, was the punishment of the

guilty chiefdoms, and the recoupment of stolen livestock. A powerful force under D'Urban and Smith set out, but the Xhosa were now by no means eager to show themselves in force. This negative resistance reduced the expedition to something of a farce. Smith complained that the only possible warfare was 'a kind of Smithfield Market cattle-driving.' 'You gallop in' he said, 'and half by force, half by stratagem, pounce upon them wherever you find them, frightan their wives, burn their homes, lift their cattle, and then return home in triumph.' [40.]

Unsatisfied with these guerilla tactics, and spurred on by his belief that Hintsa, the Xhosa paramount, was 'the chief instigator of the mischief,' [41.] D'Urban, determined to punish and 'subdue' him, pushed forward over the Kei and entered Hintsa's territory.[42.]

The Subjugation of Hintsa.

Due to D'Urban's ignorance regarding the nature of the Xhosa political system, and his belief that the paramount chief of the nation could be held responsible for the actions of other chiefs in his cluster, he not only held Hintsa responsible for the misdeeds of Maqoma, Eno and Tyali, but he sought to reduce the military power of the Xhosa nation by breaking the authority of their senior paramount.

Despite Hintsa's protests of uninvolvement with the affairs of other chiefs, and despite the fact that his chiefdom, to prove its neutrality, was unarmed, D'Urban, together with Smith and a powerful force of soldiers entered Gcalekaland and presented Hintsa with an

ultimatum. This ultimatum demanded Hintsa to effect the return of the 'branded cattle' which had been stolen by Maqoma and the others, and at the same time to hand over the culprits for punishment. This was, of course, beyond Hintsa's political or judicial powers. The ultimatum expired, and Smith proceeded into Gcalekaland, capturing 15,000 head of cattle. In the meantime, the Thembu, having been used as messengers by Smith and Durban, were aware of Hintsa's predicament, and were not slow to take advantage of it. They themselves raided 4,000 cattle. Similarly Basutos from the North captured a number of cattle. Being unarmed, the Gcaleka could not retaliate, and Hintsa offered himself and his eldest son, Kreli, to Smith as hostages, so that a peaceful settlement might be reached. Smith demanded an overall compensatory payment of 500 horses and 50,000 head of cattle.[43.] Fearing that he was to be imprisoned in Grahamstown as well, Hintsa attempted to escape. He was pursued and killed by one of the commandos, and his ears cut off as souveniers. His son Kreli, now paramount, was forced to cede all the territory between the Keiskama and the Kei Rivers to British Authority before his release. All members of his chiefdom were to remove beyond the Kei. Kreli, according to Soga, was much embittered by the ignominious killing of his father, as were all Xhosa. Not only had the 'father of the nation' been killed and his body dishonoured, but his son, while mourning his father's death, had been forced into an unjust and improper agreement. 'Henceforward,' as Soga puts it, 'iron entered his soul,' and the administration found him

intractable.[44]

It is hardly surprising, in view of these and subsequent circumstances, that it was in Kreli's CHIEFDOM that the Cattle-killing originated.

The death of Hintsa had a profound and unfortunate influence on Xhosa opinion. D'Urban was now pleased to declare peace, while sentencing Maqoma and Tyali as 'treacherous and irreclaimable savages' to be 'for ever expelled from the land west of the Kei.'[45]

In a communique to Downing Street, D'Urban reports:

> 'Our losses were under 1,000, theirs over 4,000 of their warriors. There have been taken from them also - besides the conquest and alienation of their country - about 60,000 head of cattle, and almost all their goats; and their habitations are everywhere destroyed and their gardens and cornfields laid waste. They have been, therefore, chastized - not extremely but perhaps sufficiently, and will, I think, have such a a salutory recollection of what they have suffered as to prevent a recurrence.' 46.

In 1838 D'Urban was recalled, and Sir George Napier sent out to replace him.

The End of the Treaties.

On his very first trip to the frontier in 1838, Napier seemed to accept unreservedly the prevalent colonial views, absolving the farmers and administrators from all blame while holding that Xhosa had 'no excuse for their continued and daring depredations.' The chiefs too, it was claimed, did not co-operate in checking them. In

accordance with his military training, he too conceived the problem as a task for soldiers who were to serve also as a police force.

At the same time, however, owing to agitation by the Humanists and Philanthropists, an attempt was made to draw up practical treaties with Xhosa Chiefs. During this short period of enlightenment, even Xhosa need for land was recognized as valid, and a period of comparative peace and prosperity followed. This was due in no small measure to 'Glenelg's treaties' as they became known. Unfortunately, no further progress was made; the reasons for the breakdown of the treaties are a good deal more complex than the derisive colonial hostility by which they have always been condemned would allow. Napier, who had been recalled to England, was replaced by a local man, Lieutenant-Governor Stockenstrom. Pressure soon built up on Stockenstrom to take action regarding the theft of cattle from the colonists. Despite the cessation of hostilities, cattle-raiding had continued unabated.

The universal delusion of the time was that cattle-raiding was the fundamental, rather than the incidental cause of the whole long tragedy of the Kaffir Wars. As the Gaika Chief, Sandile, protested to Sir George Grey in 1835: 'The patrimony of a chief is not cattle, it is land and men.'[47].

Stockenstrom supported the treaties, and because of what was considered to be a 'liberal' policy, he soon became unpopular with the colonials. On the fall of his sponsor, Lord Glenelg in the British Parliament, Glenelg's successor, Lord Normanby, decided that Stockenstrom's

extreme umpopularity made his replacement desirable. This was carried out in 1839, and met with much opposition from the Humanitarians. They attempted to save the one official who could be trusted to give their policy a fair trial, but their efforts were in vain. Stockenstrom was superseded by a very ordinary soldier, under whom the independence and prestige of the Lieutenant-Governorship steadily declined. The new Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Hare, had no special qualifications for his highly administrative task. Being a professional soldier, he was convinced of the necessity of coercion, but without the wider aims that were an essential part of the treaty policy as it was conceived by Glenelg and Stockenstrom. The treaties had been conceived in a moment of unusual Humanitarian ascendancy, but after the fall of Stockenstrom the pendulum began to swing strongly in the opposite direction.

To aggravate matters, the Colony now entered a period of prolonged drought. Although statistics both of cattle theft and of rainfall are too unreliable to detail, there is evidence that, throughout the period, occasional dry years were years also of unusual unrest and cattle-stealing.[48] According to Xhosa belief, the ancestor spirits, if displeased with the people, witheld the rain. Much capital was undoubtedly made out of this belief by the fomentors of the unrest. The drought now gripping the Colony proved to be of unusual duration, its effects were aggravated in 1842 by devastating swarms of locusts. In 1845 and 1846 the crops failed, and the position was aggravated by

unprecedented cold and snow in 1845. The drought served to make Xhosa acutely conscious of the pressure of population, and their fears grew that they might be expelled from the 'ceded' territory. All this, together with their other misfortunes, impressed upon them their elemental need of land.

The prolonged unrest in Kaffraria, and the influx of refugees from the Tshaka wars had severely disarranged the conformation of the original Xhosa chiefdoms. In the devastating drought that followed and strained even further their disorganized social system, it was difficult for tribesmen to live together in unity - far more to adapt themselves to the strangers who were thrust upon them.

In a letter to Dr. Phillips, Henry Calderwood, a missionary, showed proper insight and understanding of the situation. He summarized the points which he felt deserved serious consideration:

1) Among all the vexatious questions between the Colonial Government and the Caffres, the most vexatious is what may be styled the land question. The Caffres are evidently so sensitive on this point that they cannot and will not consider any question calmly, when that is mixed up with it.

2) The Caffres are, either from ignorance or design, exceedingly disposed to mix up the land question with every other between them and the Government. Thus the movements of Government are rendered much more intricate and liable than they otherwise would be.

3) The agitation of the land question is a powerful engine by which the war party can walk upon the feelings of the more peaceably inclined and thus effectually endanger the peace of the country.

4) It is equally clear that the Government in all their interviews with the Caffres have by their language

> fostered this feeling in the Caffre mind by <u>always threatening</u> the <u>expulsion</u> of the Caffres from their country, if the demands of the Government were not complied with. The difference between the neutral territory and any other territory is only one of words, and at this moment the <u>mind of the nation</u> is in a perfect fever in the land question. There never can be a really sound understanding between the Caffres and the Colony until this is set at rest and that for ever. 49.

By this time, however, the influence of the philanthropists had reached its lowest ebb. The new Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, had, it appears, already been won over to the side of the colonists. In a letter to a friend in 1846, John Mitford Bowker, a former Resident Agent for the Fingo tribe, and influential farmer, writes:

> 'In spite of what you say of injudiciousness, I sometimes flatter myself that I have done the state some service by my anti-missionary tirades. They (the Missionaries) were the Governor's councillors last war, and among them they perpetuated both his ruin and ours, and on Sir Peregrine's first visit to this frontier, he unbosomed himself to none but Shaw alone. Now he don't send for the missionary, he sends for Thomas Biddulph! (a farmer) have I not a right to flatter myself?' 50.

Even had steps been taken immediately to rectify the situation, it would have been too late; within weeks, the 'War of the Axe', sparked off by a trivial incident, had started. On the 21st. March, Colonel Hare decided to take action, and by the 1st of April, the Governor had sanctioned the declaration of war.

This war again followed a guerilla-type pattern. Xhosa were never an organized offensive military power, and a long series of 'Smithfield Market cattle-driving' expeditions followed, which met

with little active opposition. Against organized military attack, the Xhosa fell back on a policy of non-resistance. The troops, instead of being met by warriors, were confronted by crowds of women and children begging for food, 'usually in return for bundles of fuel or thatching.' Most of the chiefs not having been involved in the 'Axe' incident, protested as Maqoma had done in 1835, that they 'were not fighting, would not fight, and asked only for peace.' But the administration was intent on conclusively 'breaking the power' of all the chiefdoms, regardless of their protestations. Furthermore, since the 'treaty' extracted by Smith from Kreli after the death of Hintsa, British rule was extended to the Kei River. Included in this territory were some six hundred square miles of land which was to be 'cleared'. The Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland had decided that the land thus cleared was to be settled or 'filled' with Fingos and Hottentots. These people were to act as a human buffer between Xhosa and European. The territory involved included the entire 'ceded' territory with the mountain fastnesses of the Amatole cherished home of Gaika. The Chiefs whose land was involved, including Gaika, embarked on a policy of 'passive resistance', and refused to move. To this, Maitland replied by launching a series of 'systematic devestations' till the offenders should cross the Kei where, he maintained, there was plenty of land for them. A month later he had hopes that famine would compel their surrender. Stockenstrom, who had remained in the army in a purely military capacity, declared himself unprepared to continue serving in

an army whose intent was not administration, but conquest and extermination, and resigned his commission. With Stockenstrom's second departure from the frontier, 'the flame of philanthropy which he had tried to keep alight, after a last flicker, finally died.'[51].

In time, the authorities found that these extreme measures were impracticable, and reverted instead to small-scale deprivation of land as punishment, gradually encroaching on the territory till it had degenerated into the congested 'Ciskei', as it is known today.

But even worse was to follow. In 1847, Maitland was succeeded by Sir Henry Pottinger, who pursued the frontier policy with unwonted zeal and unprecedented ruthlessness. His first act was to move against the ill-fated Sandile who was held responsible for the theft of fourteen goats. Sandile only partially complied with the demands made upon him, whereupon Pottinger ordered his arrest and sent a patrol to capture him. Sandile, mindful of the fate of Hintsa, fled into the bush, leaving behind a 'peace-offering' of twentyone head of cattle. But Pottinger was not to be so easily placated. Sandile was declared a rebel, and, in order to encourage the enlistment of volunteers to track him down, it was announced that cattle were to be kept by their captors as booty. Any cattle that could not be driven off were to be killed. Within a month Sandile had surrendered. Pleased with the success of the new policy, the troops now proceeded to employ the same tactics against Pato. Stockenstrom was moved to protest to Earl Grey that the loot policy was 'worse than commandos - which at least professed to recover

stolen property.' This new action allowed theft and murder. He warned Grey that the result would be to leave 'four or five times fifty thousand robbers on their hands,' with the Chiefs in the penal colony on Robben Island and the cattle in the colony.[52] At the end of this operation against Pato, Pottinger retired, and his position was filled by Sir Harry Smith. Arriving at Kingwilliamstown on 31st December, 1850, Smith promulgated the following 'Government Notice'.

> '-- and His Excellency does most ardently hope that the Colonists will rise en masse to aid her Majesty's troops, and the reinforcement of men and guns which will shortly arrive at East London, to destroy and exterminate these most barbarous and treacherous savages, who for the moment are so formidable.' [53]

His next move was to make a definite proclamation annexing 'British Kaffraria', and to dictate his own terms of peace. The Xhosa, faced with threats of 'extermination', now had no political freedom and no power to exercise political rights. Smith's system was martial law. At a meeting of the chiefs in Kingwilliamstown, he tore up Stockenstrom's treaties in front of them, scattering the pieces, and declaring that to be the end of all treaties. He then caused a wagon-load of dynamite to be detonated near at hand, avowing it to be a demonstration of what he would do to them if they failed to obey his orders. Writing to Grey (7 January, 1848) he declared: 'I make no treaties. I say the land is mine.' The chiefs were given to understand that their 'locations' would be where they were sent. Furthermore they were at the same time forced to bind themselves to

the 'repudiation of witchcraft' and the 'sin of buying wives.' On behalf of their people they were called upon to acknowledge no chief but the Queen of England. Schools were to be built and English taught to the total exclusion of Xhosa.

With regard to the European community, Smith authorized the creation of three new villages, Auckland, Woburn and Juanasburg. These were to be built in the Chumie Valley, Gaika's old home, and settled by retired soldiers. They occupied the choicest sites in all Kaffraria.

The Xhosa chiefdoms were now in a desperate position. The upheavals, together with enforced European laws, had disturbed their whole way of life. Unrest and instability were indicated in the reports of the Commissioners. Calderwood, the Gaika commissioner, reported widespread breakdown of loyalties; many Xhosa had taken up residence on one chief's land while still professing allegiance to another. Two years later, in 1849, a census of the Gaika, who, in 1836 were estimated at 55,000, showed that their numbers had shrunk to 30,000. Many left to seek work in the colony owing to 'the scarcity of food.'[54].

In 1850, Grey annexed Tambookieland, otherwise known as Albert in the north-eastern districts. This plan was a 'financial expedient.' Frontier farmers having, generally speaking, acquired large fortunes by the war expenditure, they were prepared to pay large prices for these lands.

The summer of 1849-50 saw the reappearance of the drought which had persisted throughout the decade, and once again a rash of cattle-

stealing broke out, aggravated doubtless by numbers of people who had drifted to the colony in search of work. In 1850 the Governor called a general meeting of chiefs at Kingwilliamstown, but this was boycotted by most of the chiefs, including Sandile. For this offence, Sandile was summarily deposed, and a European, Charles Brownlee, was declared by Smith to be the 'Paramount Chief of the Gaikas.' Sandile was to be 'fetched' for punishment. On Christmas Eve the fetching party was ambushed in the bush of the Boomah Pass, with heavy loss of life. On Christmas Day the villages of Auckland, Woburn and Juanasburg were attacked, the soldier-settlers murdered and the villages themselves razed to the ground.

Smith reported that his attempt to civilize the 'perfidious, treacherous and bloodthirsty Kaffirs' had been 'an awful failure.' The news of the war, when it reached England, raised a storm. Sir William Molesworth denounced the attempt to civilize 'such barbarous and sanguinary wretches,' and Mr. Gladstone joined in the attack on a policy which 'for no benefit to South Africa -- ensures the recurrence of wars with a regularity which is perfectly astounding.'[55].

Smith was now recalled, and Sir George Cathcart, the last in a long line of soldier governors, was sent out to replace him. The policy now aimed at was a reconciliation with the Boers by the abandonment of the Orange River Colony and Transvaal. This would, it was hoped, serve to cement a defensive alliance of British and Boers against Bantu, who had, long since, become to be regarded as 'the enemy'.

> 'If we could obtain the co-operation of men trained in and accustomed to Bush Warfare, the Caffres would no longer appear such dangerous enemies. No time should be lost to repair the errors that have made these men (Boers) our enemies instead of friends and invaluable allies.' 56.

While these negotiations with the Boer leaders had been proceeding, Sir George Cathcart had been left to deal with the Xhosa problem as he saw fit. His guiding principle was to create 'an effective barrier against Barbarians - without an expensive military establishment,' and his policy was to reduce the chiefdoms to impotence by systematic invasion and confiscation of lands and cattle.[57] Troop reinforcements arrived and active operations commenced. The object of these operations was to force the Gaika across the Kei into Kreli's country, but because the 'enemy' refused to enter into a pitched battle, 'the forests and jungles they occupied were scoured, several of their strongholds were stormed, and many of their warriors killed.'[58] In December 1851, two columns were directed into Kreli's country, since the Gaika had sent their cattle across the Kei to avoid their confiscation. The object of this invasion was to both punish Kreli for 'assisting the rebels,' and to deprive them of their sources of supply.[59] Despite stubborn opposition at the ford across the Kei, in which a hundred of Kreli's warriors were killed, the troops entered Kreli's country and proceeded to 'scour' it, doing great damage to the crops and kraals. On several occasions the Gcaleka were repulsed 'with considerable loss'. In January 1852, Somerset returned to Kingwilliamstown with the principal column together with 30,000 head of cattle and 14,000 goats. The

other column left Butterworth in the same month, bringing out '7,000 Fingo with 15,000 head of cattle.' [60].

Christmas Eve, according to Theal, was kept as a day 'of solemn humiliation and prayer before God, in respect of His judgement of war upon the land.' On this day, the Tembu were defeated by a burgher force, when a great number fell, and some fine herds of cattle, horses and sheep, as well as several stands of firearms, were captured.[61].

In the winter, the campaign was resumed in earnest, Kreli's principal kraal was burnt and 10,000 head of cattle captured. It was not long before the hunted chiefs sent messages to say that 'their strength was gone, they were beaten and driven from their country, and only asked that a place might be assigned to them where they could rest in peace.[62].

In 1853, the Governor announced his terms. The best of the ceded Territory was now 'forfeited for ever', and was to be settled with Fingos who had remained loyal to the Crown. The Gaika, having thus lost their rich Amatole valleys and most of their cattle, were to be settled in 'locations' east of the Kei. What remained of the ceded territory was allotted on military tenure. A large part of Tembu country around the newly created centre of Queenstown was similarly dealt with, the object being to place a buffer between Kaffraria as it was now constituted and the Colony. Not content with the buffer of Europeans on the border, Cathcart planted 1000 men of the German legion newly freed from the Crimea in the heart of Kaffraria itself, creating

the town of Stutterheim.

British Kaffraria 1854-1856.

The two years preceding the cattle-killing were important years. During this period, the injustices and evils of fifty years of military rule were exemplified in the newly created 'locations'. The stage was set for the last act of resistance to be offered by the broken and dislocated chiefdoms.

In January 1854, British Kaffraria was still very much under military control. Sir George Cathcart, in a letter to Colonel Maclean stated his views concisely: 'military control, not colonization, is the principle of policy which has induced me to advise the retention of Kaffraria as a separate government.' To assist his military rule, he enlisted the aid of 2,478 officers and soldiers scattered about at different posts, with 2,228 others to support them.[63].

At the request of Commissioner Maclean, the Tambookie Commissioner, Mr Warner, drafted a series of notes on policy which were to act as a guide to newly appointed commissioners.[64]. These notes provide an invaluable record of the attitude of the administration towards Xhosa law and custom during the months prior to the Cattle-killing.

Regarding Xhosa law, Warner shows himself to be aware of some of the principles underlying the stability of Xhosa society:

> The grand principle of Kaffir Law is its collective responsibility, and on this principle depends in a very large degree, the peace and safety of society.

> Do away with this, while the Kaffirs still continue in the present clannish and barbarous state, and they would immediately become unmanageable.' 65.

Yet under his notes on Xhosa customs, Warner openly advocates the destruction of the political system as 'an impediment to the civilizing influence of Christianity'. The section is quoted in full, since it conveys perhaps better than any other historical document, the current mood of the administration:

> 'If my views are correct, then all who have studied the subject must come to the conclusion, that the present pagan form of political government found among the Kaffir tribes is, as I have before stated, inimical to all improvement, and that the sooner it is overthrown the better. - As so many untoward events have, however, happened in connection with our intercourse with these people, and so many clashing interests now exist; and as the Kaffir tribes have become so thoroughly imbued with hatred to the "white man", and appear so resolutely determined on his destruction, or to lose their political existence in the struggle, and above all, as they have so resolutely and perseveringly refused to give the gospel even an attentive hearing; it seems to me that the only way, on which they themselves are so obstinately bent, is the one which God will make use of to bring about this desirable object; and that the sword must first - not <u>exterminate</u> them, but - break them up as tribes, and destroy their political existence; after which, when thus set free from the shackles by which they are bound, civilization and Christianity will no doubt make rapid progress among them -' 66.

The transplanting of whole chiefdoms of Xhosa to their new and uncongenial homes continued. No heed was paid to the protests of the people. It was not enough for Grey to apportion sections of land as 'locations' for the resettlement of chiefdoms. In the eyes of the

people, the land was neither Grey's to claim nor to give, either for himself or for his Queen. It was not theirs to receive. A move could in any case only be sanctioned by their ancestors, and if such a move was made in the knowledge that the ceded homeland was to be settled by Europeans and Hottentots, then every opposition could be expected from the ancestors, the true owners of the land. The physical body of a man could be transplanted, but it was not the body of the individual which mattered, it was the corporate body of the chiefdom, and this included not only the living members but the dead. If the living body of the chiefdom were removed from its spiritual home, unheedful of the ancestors, it was left naked and unprotected in its new environment. It could not hope for either blessings or protection from the guardian spirits who called for a return to the old cattle kraals and the old homesteads. All of this was reflected in Sandile's protest on being forced by Grey to move:

> 'I do not know the land beyond the Kei. I have not grown up there - what have I sinned that the Government will take from us?'67.

Such a cry must have been echoed a thousand times over by the chiefs and their people who subsequently found themselves in the same position as Sandile.

There were other considerations besides those of belief and the alienation of the ancestors. Economically, the people were being put at an extreme disadvantage, yet no attention was given by the Governor to their clamours for more land, induced by overcrowding in

the 'locations'. Sandile, Maqoma and Botman had between them 500 square miles. As Sandile alone had over 30,000 followers, this meant a population of over 60 to the square mile. Under their agricultural system, the land was capable of sustaining 10 or 12 to the square mile.[68]

Heartened by the uneasy peace during these manoeuvres, Grey was encouraged to accelerate his policy of breaking the power of the chiefs together with such institutions as he felt evil or immoral. Having inspected the various locations in Kaffraria, he proceeded 'to direct a succession of vigorous blows at the very heart of heathenism there.'[69]

Ambitious schemes for schools and hospitals were instituted. School-teachers and doctors were to supplant elders and 'witch-doctors'. Conscious of the power and prestige of the chiefs in the eyes of their followers, Grey was determined to undermine this power, and attempted to remove from the chiefs the privilege of levying contributions from their subjects. They were forced to surrender their judicial powers in all important cases. In return for relinquishing these rights they were to be paid a salary.

As though these misfortunes were not enough, a new threat, in the form of an imported cattle disease, struck at the remaining herds. Spreading from the European areas, it entered Kaffraria and swept through the herds. This disease coincided with the arrival of the thousand German Legionnaires in August whom Grey had decided to settle in the heart of Kaffraria. Grey himself was disturbed by the seriousness of the position, and reported to the Secretary for State as follows:

> 'I have also reported - that a very terrible disease has appeared amongst the Horned Cattle in this part of South Africa, which within the limits of the Colony alone has carried off 100,000 head of cattle, and which was now sweeping off the cattle of the Kaffirs with frightful rapidity, and in so sudden and mysterious a manner that it was probable they might not only be seriously alarmed as to their future prospects, but that their superstitious feelings might be roused into activity. So long as this fearful disease was confined to British Kaffraria, we could in some degree alleviate the alarm of the Kaffirs, who depend almost entirely on their cattle for their subsistence, by affording them employment either on public or private works, but it was impossible to foretell what would happen when it stretched on into Kaffraria proper which was entirely beyond our control.
> At the same time, anxiety, in connection with some of the circumstances to which I have above alluded, has probably been excited in the minds of the Kaffir Population, on account of the expected arrival of the German Legion.' 70.

The anxiety in the minds of Xhosa was however, being expressed in a form which Grey was not to recognize. Before his letter had reached its destination, new reports were coming out of Kaffraria. The ancestors had manifested themselves to Nongqause, and had given her a message. They had promised assistance in driving the European tormentors from the land. In obedience to their instructions the first of 200,000 head of cattle were being slaughtered. Countless tons of grain had been destroyed, none was being planted. Only the timely intervention of the promised Golden Age could avert a disaster such as the country had never seen.

On the appointed day the blood-red sun failed to rise. The myriads of cattle and the corn 'ready for eating' did not appear. The

whirlwind failed to rise up and blow all white men into the sea. Within weeks, over 100,000 Xhosa men, woman and children had died of starvation. Thousands more were trekking out of the famine-ridden homelands in search of food. Far from having rid themselves of Europeans for ever, the Xhosa now became dependent on them for their own existence.

CHAPTER 3

Political Theories of European and African Historians

The Cattle-killing episode has, from its inception, excited much speculation among historians. Each in turn has attempted to provide some sort of explanation for the event. The importance of these theories lies in the fact that they are currently accepted in academic circles in South Africa, and are taught by historians in schools and universities. Part of the intention of this thesis is to refute what I consider to be merely unsubstantiated assertions, and to introduce more valid social anthropological interpretations.

As will be indicated in the chapter devoted to the 'prophetic tradition' in South Africa, Xhosa 'prophets' are known to have been active in movements before 1857. Historians have invariably blamed these prophets for instigating crises of this nature among the people.

The most popular explanation involves the theory of a plot: chiefs, it is alleged, were involved in a secret and subversive plot to break, by desperate means, the power of the white man. Historians are divided among themselves between those who believe the plot to have been local in character, involving only Xhosa chiefs, and those who believe the plot to have been more widespread in nature, involving the Basuto paramount, Moshesh, as well as the Xhosa chiefs.

The earliest of these theories involves not the actual 'Cattle-killing' but the last of the eight Kaffir Wars, which occurred five

years prior to it in 1850. Godlonton[1.] maintains that amid the apparent calm of the time, there was a 'secret conspiracy' at work:

> 'The notorious Sandile was instigating his chieftains and followers to unite in driving the Colonists out of the country.' [2.]

At the same time, the prophet Umlangeni rose to prominence, and Sandile is said to have soon made him "subservient to his purpose," which consisted in working upon the 'superstition' of his followers.

Thus was the 'prophet and plot' theory born, and when the Cattle-killing commenced five years later, historians and administrators were quick to seize upon it.[3.]

Theal, one of the most eminent of the early historians, is careful not to commit himself directly, but considers that Kreli was 'perhaps, as many of the colonists suspected, the instigator of the whole scheme'.[4.] Kidd is less cautious, and states that there was 'no doubt the (Cattle-killing) was a plan of the chiefs to force the people, by means of starving, into a combined attack upon the Europeans'.[5.]

Soga, himself a Xhosa, lays the blame at Kreli's feet entirely.[6.] He believes that Kreli, embittered by the injustices he had suffered, and angered by the death of Hintsa, his father, sought 'a plan to discomfort the Europeans and to drive them back into the sea from whence they had come.'[7.] By this plan, Xhosa could be brought to fight in unity, and by concerted action, precipitate themselves against the Europeans in a last desperate bid for freedom.

Walker, a modern historian, goes even further than Theal, Kidd or Soga, and implicates Moshesh, the Basuto leader, who lived some four hundred miles to the north of Kreli. Moshesh is reputed to have been in touch with Kreli, and Walker names him as having been the instigator of the Cattle-killing.

> 'For Moshesh was behind the cattle-killing. He believed that war was coming between his Basuto and the Free Staters and, if war was to come, he proposed to prevent the Cape Colonists from helping the republicans by giving them something to occupy them on their own borders.' [8].

So adamant are Walker and others,[9] that this is the correct solution, and that the movement represented nothing more than a plot by a gang of ring-leaders who sought to play upon the superstitions of their ignorant tribesmen in order to achieve their political aims, that a more detailed study of it is justified.

Walker's theory is, in fact, no more than an adoption of the explanation put forward by the Governor of the Cape in 1856 in his official despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Writing on the 24th April, 1856, the Governor, Sir George Grey, states:

> 'I, however, believe that Moshesh, finding himself threatened with an attack from the people of the Free State who expect to be largely aided by volunteers from their countrymen in this Colony, is very probably striving to save himself by encouraging the Kaffirs to attack us at the moment he is himself attacked by the people of the Free State, hoping that by thus keeping the Inhabitants of this country employed in providing for their own safety, he will prevent them from aiding in the expeditions which are likely to be made by the people of the Free State against himself. Whether he

> will succeed in these plans is doubtful, even whether he has yet taken such overt steps as to enable us fairly to implicate him in a proceeding of this kind is also doubtful.' 10.

Because Walker appears to have accepted Grey's main assertion unquestioningly, he disregards Grey's own misgivings. Besides the uncertainty voiced at the end of this first report, Grey, in a later despatch written on the 14th July, 1856, contradicts his first despatch. Having possibly also been influenced by a letter ‡ from Moshesh, and an important statement of policy which he had just received, he now says:

> '--I had the honour to bring under your notice the rumours in circulation of a general combination amongst the Kaffir race to unite in an attack upon the Colony. I at the same time reported my own disbelief in these rumours. Having now just returned from the frontier, it is in my power, from personal observation of the state of affairs there, to inform you that I feel quite satisfied that none of the chiefs of the Kaffir or Basuto races are united in any designs against the Colony, nor do I see any imminent danger of the peace of this country being broken.' 11.

Thus what Grey reported earlier as his 'belief' in a general alignment being formed between Moshesh and his neighbours, now becomes 'rumours under general circulation.'

Grey's hopes of peace were short-lived, however, for within the same month, the prophesies of Mhlakaza had swept through the frontier tribes, and in his despatch of August 16th, Grey reports the prophesies and again seizes upon the 'rumour' which he had just refuted in order

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‡ Cf. Appendix A.

to explain it.

> 'I cannot help, at present, believing that (Kreli) was encouraged to do this in order to be prepared to support Moshesh - if he is attacked by the people of the Free State.' 12.

At the same time, Grey claims knowledge of what he terms 'constant communications' between Kreli and Moshesh. This knowledge appears to be based on a report from the Tambookie Commissioner, Warner, relayed via the Chief Commissioner Maclean, in which Warner tells Maclean that he has 'reason to believe' that Kreli is in constant communication with Moshesh[13]. together with a report from the Gaika Commissioner, Brownlee, in which Moshesh is claimed to have established friendly relations with Kreli.‡

The validity of these rumours and reports is made questionable by Moshesh's own attitude with regard to communication between his own tribe and those to the south. On 2nd September, albeit after the alleged communication had taken place, Moshesh sent a letter to the Resident Magistrate of Aliwal North on the boundary between Basutoland and Kaffraria, informing him that in order to secure 'tranquility and good order' on the frontier, he had decreed that no Basuto was to be allowed to cross the Orange River into the Cape, and that Basuto chiefs on the frontier had been instructed to punish severely anyone who infringed upon this order. The magistrate together with the Basuto Commissioner was requested to co-operate in punishing offenders.[14].

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‡ Cf. Appendix B.

Evidently in ignorance of this self-imposed ban, Grey, on the 27th September, a full three weeks after its implementation, makes further reference to the 'continual passage of embassies' between Kreli and Moshesh, and in a letter to Moshesh, accuses him directly of having contrived the Cattle-killing, and directs him to

> 'send forthwith a message to Kreli, telling him to stop his people from killing their cattle and destroying their corn, and explain to me what now looks so doubtful in your conduct.' 15.

Moshesh's reply‡ is an explicit denial of any complicity in a plot, and points out that he was sufficiently inconvenienced by the Boers to obviate any desire on his part for further trouble. In a letter to the President of the Orange Free State‡‡ Moshesh requests that the President intervene on his behalf in order to convince the Governor of his innocence. Neither Austen, the Superintendent of the Wittenbergen Native Reserve (Basutoland) nor Brownlee, Gaika Commissioner, could give substantial proof, on Grey's request, of Moshesh's complicity in a plot.‡‡‡ Although they do confirm the belief that messengers were passing between the nations, neither has proof of any subversive plot.

Grey's theory is thus, to a large extent, based on the reports of his Commissioners regarding the exchange of messengers between the two nations. A perusal of these reports, however, reveals that if they

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‡ Cf. Appendix C.

‡‡ Cf. Appendix D.

‡‡‡ Cf. Appendices E and F.

were indeed directed towards the enlistment of aid, it was Kreli, rather than Moshesh who was the instigator, and that the 'aid' was nothing more than an attempt to encourage Moshesh to join in the Cattle-killing.[16.]

That the contact between the nations was for the purpose of formulating any kind of plot, military or otherwise, is entirely unsubstantiated. Furthermore Brownlee, the Gaika Commissioner, and the man best qualified to comment on Kreli's involvement, himself refutes the idea of a plot. Although he gives evidence regarding intercourse between the nations, he, in his 'reminiscences', argues against the plot theory as involving either Moshesh or any of the other chiefs.‡ According to Brownlee, the only evidence in support of this theory is the alleged statement made by Kreli on being warned by the Chief Commissioner to desist from killing his cattle. Kreli is alleged to have gathered his people together, told them of the message, and said that the Commissioner was only seeking an occasion for war - that it would not be as it had been in previous wars where men, instead of fighting, ran about looking after their cattle, for everyone would fight now.[17.]

In his fruitless attempt to dissuade the Xhosa from their belief, Brownlee had spent months in the field, and having an intimate knowledge of the contemporary state of affairs, could speak with authority on them. He maintains that, besides the obvious difficulty of explaining how any army leader could hope to fight a battle with a starving army,

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‡ Cf. Appendices B and E.

historians do not explain why there was no attempt whatever on the part of the chiefs to gather the cluster together at one central point, from which a powerful concerted military offensive could be launched. There are no reports of any kind which indicate a military build-up in any part of the country. Furthermore, Brownlee maintains that, after thirty years, some news of such a plot should have leaked out, since it must have been known to a number of people. No one who took an active part in the killing had admitted that there was a plot. All had asserted that the Cattle-killing was made in the full belief in the predictions of Umhlakaza. The assertion that Umhlakaza, on his deathbed accused Kreli of having led him to make the predictions with a view to the destruction of the white man had not been sufficiently substantiated.[18.] It would hardly be likely that a matter which must have been known to so many persons could, to the time of his writing, be still buried in mystery. Although a further seventy years have elapsed since the time of Brownlee's writing, there has still been no further revelation, nor indeed, is there likely to be one.

A modern historian and politician, Majeke, too, rejects the plot theory.[19.] Inasmuch as Majeke is an African, rather than a European commentator, his contentions have added significance.

The Cattle-killing, according to Majeke, happened because the people were in a profound state of demoralization, and the movement marked the final triumph of the British military machine that had been 'battering at tribalism' for more than fifty years.[20.] The particular

form in which that demoralization expressed itself was, in his opinion, due to the influence of the missionaries, in fact, directly due to their teachings. Majeke considers that the more desperate a people become, the more prone they are to call upon supernatural aid. They seek deliverance from an intolerable position.

Up to this point, much of what Majeke says has the promise of being welded into a far more powerful argument than any so far advanced by historians, but he goes on to state that the Cattle-killing was directly instigated by the Europeans. He accuses the British of having directly employed warfare against Xhosa so that the Christian message of peace would gain a willing hearing; the British hoped that the people, demoralized by defeat, would then turn willingly to Christianity. The teachings of the missionaries enabled Xhosa to identify themselves with the Israelites who were led out of bondage by their prophet. The impact of the white man's religion, according to Majeke, was capable of producing just such an act of blind faith as the Cattle-killing involved, for here was an appeal to the supernatural to which the people were all too ready to respond. Before the unknown forces of nature, says Majeke, the tribesman's only weapon is the magic rite, and confronted with the military force of an unknown civilization, he would seize upon those elements in the Christian gospel which seemed most likely to offer him protection, the belief in miracles, the resurrection of the dead, the promise of peace and plenty after tribulation and sorrow. It is in this sense that Majeke says that the Nongqause Cattle-killing

was missionary inspired. But Majeke goes on to make an even more serious accusation: Sir George Grey, the Governor, is himself suspect as an instigator.

> 'In trying to assess how such a national tragedy occurred, it is legitimate to be guided by a judgement of its results. At one stroke, Sir George Grey's labour requirements were satisfied beyond expectation. The cattle had been slaughtered and the corn-pits were empty, but his labour bureaux were filled to the brim.' [21].

Majeke makes no mention of the efforts undertaken by the administration in an attempt to prevent the Cattle-killing. The Gaika Commissioner, according to reports,[22] worked unceasingly in the field for months, often in the face of hostility and great personal danger, in a vain attempt to stop the killing. As a result of his exertions, the nick-name of Nakapade - 'Never-man' was coined for him by the people, 'never' being his unvarying reply to their description of the coming millennium. The Governor himself, attempted to bring pressure, albeit misguided, to bear on Moshesh to stop the killing.[23] Furthermore, the Governor issued orders to the effect that all surplus grain was to be bought and stored against the day when famine would surely strike the land.[24]

Neither can we accept unquestioned the assertion that the particular form the movement took was directly due to the teachings of the missionaries. While it cannot be denied that certain of the claims of Mhlakaza, such as the resurrection of the dead, show an affinity to the teachings of the Christian gospel, it will be shown in the chapter

devoted to the prophetic tradition in South Africa that the central features of the movement, the influence of the prophet and the propitiation of ancestors in time of trouble, were represented before the advent of missionaries among the frontier people.

The most valid and interesting of Majeke's observations concerns the effects of the administration's policy with regard to the 'breakdown of tribalism'. Majeke is able to appreciate the extent of demoralization among the people. European commentators invariably represent Xhosa as being incorrigible and bloodthirsty warriors, undaunted to the end. That this was not so, and that it was desperation rather than a love of fighting that drove them to war, Majeke makes clear.

The latest published commentary on the Cattle-killing is by Mutwa, a Zulu-speaking South African who is both a successful author and a qualified nyanga or PRIEST-DIVINER among his people.[25.] Mutwa claims that his position as nyanga has put him in the unique position of having access to the secrets of his people, and his decision to publish these secrets has now made available to Europeans information which has hitherto been witheld from them. On the question of the Cattle-killing, he claims to have waited thirty years to throw light on the event.[26.] His explanation, however, is basically an extension of the same theory as put forward by Majeke, namely that Europeans were directly responsible for formulating the event, and indeed were the actors in it. He is less cautious than Majeke in laying the blame on Sir George Grey, the Governor, and states;

> 'In the year 1857 the Xhosa fell victims not to their own superstition, but to a vile and grisly practical joke, born in the ingenious minds of intelligent men - a cold-blooded murder, - the cleverest piece of psychological warfare the world has ever seen.' 27.

He advances the following argument as the most outstanding proof Xhosa have that the whole tragedy was 'conceived' in the mind of a 'shrewd white man (Grey)'. Xhosa believe in the transmigration of the soul, in reincarnation. Resurrection, one of the foundation stones of the Christian doctrine, is a concept which has never entered the minds of the Xhosa at any stage of their history. It was, claims Mutwa, the part of Nongqause's message that 'the chiefs would rise up from their graves,' and the describing of the figures in the reeds who were obviously physical, 'but from their graves' that most caught the imagination of the people. 'It was the Christian idea of Doomsday or Judgement poorly translated into a Bantu idiom.'[28]. Furthermore the most outstanding non-Bantu aspect was the future prediction of the millennium. The idea of a calander by which predictions could be made, was completely foreign to them.

Mutwa's contentions regarding Grey, since they are essentially similar to those of Majeke suffer from the same weaknesses. Most criticism can be levelled at his theory regarding the foreign elements in the movement. Mutwa disregards the possibility that these may have been accepted by the Xhosa at an earlier date than 1856, as indeed some probably were. We are told that Xhosa prophets had, in some instances, been eager followers of the mission schools, and had themselves gone out

and claimed the power to resurrect the dead.[29] As early as 1814 a prophet near van der Kemp's mission station had attempted to raise the dead on a certain day. Thus the doctrine which Mutwa claims had never 'entered the minds' of Xhosa at any stage of their history, had in fact been preached by prophets at least fifty years before the actual Cattle-killing took place.

It is interesting that Mutwa and Majeke, both Zulu-speaking Africans, together with Soga, a Xhosa, all subscribe to views which are more or less similar regarding the Cattle-killing. In the modern context of relations between the races in South Africa, the significance of this lies less in whether or not Grey was to blame, than in the fact that the Xhosa believe he was. An analogous situation exists between English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans; whether or not the British Administration could be held responsible for the 20,000 Boer women and children who died in British concentration camps in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer war is less important than the belief of the Afrikaners that the British were in fact responsible.

A different interpretation of the Cattle-killing is taught in schools and universities. The Xhosa leaders themselves are held entirely responsible for the movement. In a history book prescribed specially for Bantu-speaking school children, the author states that after having heard Nongqause's prophesy, 'Kreli used this message to make war again'.[30]

The theories and explanations of administrators, historians

and politicians alike have changed but little over the past century. Writing in 1956, Walker has merely adopted the administrative conjecture of Grey as put forward in 1856, itself based on unsubstantiated evidence. This has come to be accepted, by European South Africans at least, as the truth.

An attempt by a social anthropologist to give a new interpretation of this movement would appear to be justified.

Part Two

CHAPTER 4

PROPHETS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

This chapter has a two-fold purpose: it attempts to show the presence of a 'prophetic tradition' in Southern Africa, and it attempts to place the Cattle-killing movement in context with regard to this tradition. A brief study will be made of selected millenarian movements from both inside and outside the borders of the Republic of South Africa. This chapter does not seek to provide an interpretation of these movements, but is concerned rather with establishing the Cattle-killing as part of this wider prophetic tradition. It stresses therefore that the Cattle-killing movement cannot be dealt with as an isolated phenomenon, as has been implied by some accounts of it.

All the known millenarian movements in Southern Africa up to and including the Cattle-killing, occurred within the comparatively restricted area of British Kaffraria. I shall describe certain comparable movements from as far afield as Botswana and Zambia to the north. But even though this evidence might indicate a far wider distribution of this type of movement, it might suggest that such movements were, in some way, associated with some peculiar political features of territories under British rule. I have therefore also discussed a case occurring even further to the north and outside British control. This is the 'Kibanguist' movement of the Congo. I

shall then return to the Xhosa, and consider firstly those recorded movements which occurred in Kaffraria before the Cattle-killing, and proceed to a description of certain movements which have since occurred in or around the same area.

Movements occurring outside Kaffraria.

In 1925, a prophet who became known as the 'Bechuanaland Christ' arose among the Bathlaping people of Taung in Botswana. He caused much excitement by claiming not only that he was inspired by ancestor spirits, but that he was a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. He commanded all people to leave their gardens untilled for a season as a mark of obedience, and promised that this obedience would be rewarded at the end of the season by the expulsion of all Europeans. The excitement which followed was cut short by the intervention of the administration, who had the prophet and his followers arrested and committed for trial on a charge of sedition.[1.]

A similar movement occurred among the Ila of Zambia in 1909. Prophets appear to play a most important part in the life of the Ila. As the mouthpieces of the deities, they are the legislators of the community, and accordingly enjoy great prestige.[2.] Some of these prophets have a wide reputation, and their names have been handed down for generations. The 1909 movement was led by such a prophet, whose name was Chilenga (or 'Creator'). He announced that he would destroy a grub that was destroying the crops. In obedience to his commands,

the people brought him specimens of the grub, which he burnt amidst incantations. This did not have any effect on the plague, and Chilenga proceeded to make even more startling claims. He said that in a short time he would turn the sun black for six days, destroy the bridge over the Kafue, tear up the railway, and cause all Europeans to leave the country. To enable all this to happen, the people were to destroy their cattle. The Twa, to whom he first gave the order, killed what cattle they had. Before the movement could proceed any further, Chilenga was arrested and imprisoned.[3].

In the same year, another prophet, Mwana Leza (or 'Child of God') arose among the people at Manzela in the same country. At the time, a period of remarkably heavy rainfall was threatening to destroy all crops. After his appearance in a village, he instructed the chief to have built for him a special hut. After this, grain was to be brought to him, and he would then pray to Leza so that the floods might cease. Believing in him, the people built the hut and brought him grain. Unsatisfied, he demanded more. The same procedure was followed in a number of surrounding villages. Grain was scarce at this season, yet the villagers did their best to produce quantities sufficient to satisfy him. Mwana Leza demanded in addition shirts, cattle and goats. When at last he did offer up his prayers, the rains did not cease, Mwana Leza declared that it was against Leza's will, and that there was to be a great flood that year.

This lack of success does not seem to have tarnished Mwana Leza's

prestige at all, for late in the year 1906 there was general mourning because he had died. It appears that a certain man had been out hunting one day, whilst he was following a wounded wart-hog, a bright dazzling object appeared before him, reaching from the earth to the sky. The man prostrated himself in fear, and heard a voice saying 'Have you not heard that it is taboo to eat the flesh of the wart-hog?' The voice further instructed that the man warn others against eating wart-hog flesh, and ordered that the death of Mwana Leza be mourned throughout the land. Two villagers who scoffed at the hunter's story died suddenly, and general mourning soon commenced.[4.]

The earliest reference to Mwana Leza can be traced to 1895. This was the time of the rinderpest, the great cattle disease which swept through the continent, exterminating herds and inducing a general state of famine. The Rev. A.Baldwin gives an account of a story in circulation at that time:

> '-- wonderful story heard at Masanga's today. A woman belonging there was out in the forest getting roots for food, and in the midst of her digging she looked up to find herself confronted by a big man. She had heard no sound of his approach and could tell neither how nor whence he had come. Naturally she was afrighted, whereupon he told her not to be afraid, for he was Mwana Leza who had come to make a revelation to her. She was to pick up her basket and hoe and follow him. On and on he led her, far away, until they came to a kloof (valley) overspread with beautiful white sand. He bid her look down into it, and she saw all the cattle that had died of the disease - thousands of them, all alive and healthy. He asked 'What are these?' She replied, 'Our cattle which have died' 'Yes,' he went on to say, 'you are right. I have taken

> all your cattle away from you. I am not going to allow you Mashukulumbwe to have any more.' Again he called her to follow as he left the kloof, and on they went. At last they sighted a town, but nearing it, she discovered that what she thought were huts were granaries, and he told her that this was where he kept his stores. He then showed her grain of all kinds - in such abundance as she had never seen before. She had carried her few roots in her basket all this time, and now he told her to throw them away, and filled her basket with corn. Then he commanded her to return home and tell the people all she had heard and seen, and that he promised they should have an abundance of food this next harvest.' 5.

The third important prophet among the Ila arose in 1913 in the neighbourhood of Nanzela. His name was Mupumani, and he was a leper. According to his own account he was not given to dreams, and had only the one vision -- He had been awoken one night in his hut, and, looking up, had seen a man's leg dangling down from the roof, then a body, and at last the person reached the floor and stood by his side, but he could not see his face. He was then lifted onto the shoulders of the man and carried off to a strange place, where he found himself in the presence of the Creator. The first thing the Creator did was to take Mupumani's leprous body and throw it away, and then begin to mould a new body with complete fingers and toes. At this stage another figure intervened, and pointed out that if Mupumani were to go back to earth with a new body, people would die of amazement to see him. So the Creator desisted, and gave Mupumani messages to take back to the people. Mupumani's fame spread, and people travelled from far and wide to meet him.[6].

Another Ila prophet whose experiences revealed a similar pattern was active in a time of drought in 1911. He lived near the Nambala mission station, and prophesied that there was going to be a lot of rain and an abundance of fish of all kinds; they would be found on the banks of the river, and some would be already cooked. He called the chiefs of the district to him, but they refused to go, and nothing further came of his predictions.[7.]

Movements occurring outside British territories.

I wish to consider briefly the Kibangu movements, which, although having occurred among different people and under a different administration, show many similarities to those so far discussed. They occurred in the Congo in 1921.[8.] Simon Kibangu, a villager from Wathen on the lower Congo, and a professing Christian, claimed to have experienced a strange revelation. He had fallen into a fit and remained unconscious for a time. During this period of unconsciousness, he had been visited by a stranger who had endowed him with powers of healing. After apparent success in healing a sick child, people flocked to him in ever increasing numbers. He prayed and touched them and they were 'healed'. To cure the blind, he spat and made clay, and told the blind person to go to the river and wash. As his fame spread, Kibangu took on an assistant. Soon prophets began to appear all over the country from the river Congo in the north to Portugese territory in the south. All these prophets adopted the same procedure; there was

involuntary shaking of the body, voices were heared, requests had to be interpreted by an intermediary, and often they entered houses in order to learn 'God's will'.

Visiting Baptist missionaries could find no evidence of successful healing among Kibangu's patients. Upon pointing this out to Kibangu, they were told that the cures were as God willed, and that Kibangu did not profess to cure all. Furthermore, Kibangu neither asked nor accepted payment, and insisted that all assistance given in carrying sick to him should be gratuitous. Prayer and praise, denunciations of fetishes and sin, and exhortations to trust the Saviour, were prominent in his work, and in healing he used the formula, 'In the name of Jesus Christ'. A form of the millenium was promised; the Lord was to come immediately and no gardens need be tilled; God would drive the white man from the Congo, and give it back to the Congolese, who ought no longer to work for Europeans, nor to pay taxes to the State. Fearing an uprising, the Belgian officials arrested the leader of the movement, but many of those who were subsequently punished posed as martyrs, and claimed that they suffered joyfully for Jesus' sake.

The Prophetic Tradition in Kaffraria - Before the Cattle-killing:

Since the Kaffrarian prophetic tradition is clearly the most relevant to this study, I shall firstly consider those movements which occurred before the Cattle killing, and then proceed to a discussion of the succeeding movements.

One of the earliest references to a 'prophet' or 'priest' in Kaffraria was made by Thomas Pringle, the 1820 Settler leader. He used the term to describe Makana, the Xhosa priest-diviner* who initiated the attack on Grahamstown in 1828.[9] It was not until after the Cattle-killing, however, that serious attention was paid to them. Even at this time they were popularly referred to as 'false prophets' by historians and administrators alike. This term implied that they were in some manner the dupes of the chiefs, who used them merely to gain their own political ends. It would imply also that their status in society was in question. An analysis of their achievements belies these implications.

Theal, writing in 1908, makes reference to four 'prophets' whose activities have been recorded.[10] At least three of these were active before the Cattle-killing commenced in 1897. The first was active in 1814 near van der Kemp's mission station at Bethelsdorp. Very little is known of this man, and his name has gone unrecorded. He is important in that he is described as having been 'an attentive listener' to the missionaries, whose teachings made a great impression on him. He one day announced that he was going to raise the dead. People came to him from far and wide to have their relatives and ancestors resurrected. On the appointed day they were gathered together

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* I explain the reason for my use of this term in the Xhosa context at the end of this chapter.

and ordered to perform certain rites, such as hopping on one leg in circles. Despite their exertions, the ancestors did not appear, and nothing more was heard of him. Whether or not the theme of the resurrection was part of the folklore of the people, or whether it had been learned from the missionaries is difficult to ascertain, although the latter case does appear to be likely. Whatever the origin however, the idea seems to have achieved widespread publicity, and was likely to influence the content of succeeding prophesies.

In 1818 there arose a priest-diviner whose inspired works were of far greater political importance. His name was Makana, son of a low-born Gaika. His mother had been held in respect as a wise woman who was 'acquainted with mystical uses of plants, and who had skill in divining events'. Not only did Makana appear to have inherited his mother's abilities, but as Theal relates, he added to the knowledge possessed by his countrymen with that he had acquired from Europeans with whom he had come in contact, 'especially from Dr van der Kemp, one of whose addresses upon the resurrection of the dead, which he had heard at Bethelsdorp, leaving a lifelong impression on him.[11.] Although he did not profess to be a Christian, he claimed as a priest-diviner, to be in communication with the spirit world, and undertook to resurrect the ancestors. His believers were to go to a hollow rock called Gompo on the beach near the mouth of the Buffalo river, where the waves 'make a great noise' at high water, and at a certain time he would join them, when they would see their dead relatives living again. At the

appointed time, the believers assembled, and Makana appeared, but although the dead did not arise, his prestige was not affected. Indeed, Makana's influence in time grew enormously; on many occasions he announced events that would shortly take place, and these announcements, so his countrymen believed, always proved correct. Theal's remarks regarding Makana are significant:

> 'Possessed of great powers of mind, Makana had framed a creed for himself by combining what he could learn of Christianity with different native superstitions, It was he who taught them to bury their dead, for before his time the corpses of common people were merely dragged out from the kraals and exposed to be devoured by carrion birds and beasts of prey. His bearing was that of a man who claimed superiority even over chiefs, and who knew that his orders would be obeyed.' 12.

In 1816 Makana was so powerful that the missionaries of the London Society were for a time doubtful whether it would not be more advantageous to establish a station at his kraal than at that of Chief Gaika.[13.]

Xhosa were reluctant to pronounce the name Makana, and he was referred to by them as Nxele, 'the left-handed one'. The Dutch equivalent was Linksch, and eventually this became corrupted into Lynx by English officials, and it is by this name that he is referred to in the colonial records.

In Makana's works appear what could be interpreted as the germ of a nationalistic movement. For some years after his rise to influence, he aimed at a consolidation of western Xhosa chiefdoms, namely Gaikas and Ndlambis, and when this scheme proved unsuccessful, although a

Gaika himself, he declared himself on the side of the Ndlambi.[14] Whilst doing this he succeeded in drawing together such small chiefdoms as had been broken up by the colonists, and thus turned the balance of power in favour of the Ndlambi. Gaika, despite the warnings of his seer, Ntsikana, attacked Ndlambi, and was heavily defeated. Makana, now at the head of the Ndlambi army, began to attack the isolated farms and mission stations. Makana sent messengers 'everywhere in Kaffirland', and called upon 'all true Xhosas' to take part in the fight against Europeans and Gaikas. Victory was promised to those who did their duty, and the wrath of the spirits was to descend upon those who withheld.[15]

Before the movement could gain further power, Makana was defeated at Grahamstown in 1819. As punishment, he was sent as a prisoner to Robben Island. After a year of confinement he attempted to escape, but was drowned in the surf. A generation passed before it was finally believed by his followers that he was indeed dead, and was not coming back to lead them to victory. It was only in 1873, fifty-three years later, that his mats and ornaments, carefully preserved during all that period, were finally buried and expectation of his returning ceased.

The third priest-diviner of importance, and one who rose to prominence in 1850, just six years before the Cattle-killing was Umlangeni. In the winter of 1850, rumours of yet another war swept through the frontier. The Gaika, at the instigation of Umlangeni,

who claimed supernatural powers, were preparing for another confrontation with the colonists. The Gaika chief Sandile patronized him, and because of his predictions, his prestige increased rapidly. Umlangeni claimed superhuman aid in his prediction that the white man would be driven 'into the sea'. Furthermore, his powers would make the warriors invulnerable to the musket balls of the soldiers, and charms which he would give them would cause cattle to follow them wherever they chose to lead.

Umlangeni's next move was to send out a message to all 'loyal Xhosa' to return to their homelands. Many of those who had been working for Europeans decamped immediately. Despite the fears of the colonists, the Governor, Sir Harry Smith, proposed to meet the chiefs in Kingwilliamstown. When none appeared, he deposed the paramount Sandile, and declared a European, Charles Brownlee, to be paramount in his place. After the inevitable war, soldiers were sent out to scour Kaffraria in retribution, and troops were detailed to destroy the growing crops. A good summer followed these raids, and the crops of maize and millet, thought to be dead, miraculously grew again. Umlangeni claimed the credit for this phenomena, asserting that it was a miracle he had performed himself, and his status became even greater among the tribes.[16.]

These three cases are sufficient to establish that there was in fact a 'prophetic tradition' in evidence in British Kaffraria well before the time of the Cattle-killing, and that the actions and words of Mhlakaza and Nongqause were consequently neither unfamiliar nor

illogical to those who heard them. Some of the main features of the Cattle-killing predictions, such as the resurrection of the dead and the driving of Europeans into the sea, were present in these earlier movements.

The Prophetic Tradition in Kaffraria - After the Cattle-killing.

The prophetic tradition does not end with the disasterous Cattle-killing; at least two more 'prophetic movements' have since arisen in Kaffraria. Although neither of these achieved the same range of intensity as the Cattle-killing, they nonetheless show significant similarities. A movement away from the 'traditional' type of movement can also be detected, and in these movements, it could be argued, can be seen the beginnings of true 'nationalistic' movements.

The movement known as 'The Bullhoek Israelites' began in 1909, when a dismissed Methodist preacher, John Maikinya, visited America, and returned to South Africa as 'Bishop' of an unspecified Negro sect. He was joined by Enoch Mgijima, a Fingo resident in the Bullhoek location near Queenstown. At this time, Halley's comet made its appearance, services were held, and Mgijima announced that the comet signified the wrath of Jehovah, and unless the people returned to their ancient religion, there would be disaster. Furthermore, Mgijama saw visions - one of which was a stone rolling down a mountainside and sweeping away those at the foot, and another was that of two white goats fighting,

while a baboon looked on and afterwards gathered the spoils of both combatants - visions which were widely interpreted as foreshadowing the overthrow of Europeans. Because of these visions and pronouncements, Mgijima was 'deposed' from the sect, and accordingly he founded a new sect, which he called the 'Ama-Sirayeli' or 'Israelites'. These people regarded themselves as the chosen people of Jehovah, and believed that Jehovah would miraculously deliver them from the Europeans as he had delivered their ancestors from the Egyptians. In order to bring this about, they were to be obedient to his will as it was revealed to the prophet.[17.]

Officials were bestowed with high-sounding ecclesiastical and military titles. An annual 'Passover' festival lasting eight days was observed. People who came to the Passover began to settle alongside the prophet. Their cattle, land and possessions were sold, and a Common fund instituted. Willoughby describes the proceedings:

> 'By 1920 the camp had become a cave of Abdullan for the restless and discontented; deafening blasts on horns took a prominent place in the fanatical excitement; heathen people came with their assegais, and a speedy interposition of Jehovah was expected.'[18.]

The Israelites numbers had increased to such a degree that they had overflowed onto adjoining Government land. When asked to move, they refused. The government then offered to pay their train fares to return them to their homes, but still they refused. Alarmed by reports of anti-European sentiments, it was decided to attempt to break up the colony by a display of force. An army of police was sent

to overawe them, but were given instructions not to fire. The force was resisted and accordingly withdrawn, leaving Mgijima to claim that an angel had been sent to turn the army back. It later transpired that a spy, working in the European administrative offices, had discovered that the police were under orders not to fire, and had made haste to inform Mgijima beforehand. Further efforts to disperse them were made through the Native Affairs Department and through influential local Africans, but all these were ignored. Finally an ultimatum was sent them in May 1921, and a force of eight hundred police was assembled, so large a force being calculated to overawe opposition and prevent bloodshed. Mgijima declared that Jehovah had commanded them to resist the dispersion, and had made them invulnerable to the white man's weapons. Accordingly they attacked the force, but withdrew after suffering heavy casualties. After the police had declared themselves willing to re-open negotiations, the Israelites themselves surrendered the prophet together with his second in command, and the movement was terminated.

At Mgijima's trial, evidence was brought forward that Mgijima had preached to his congregation the doctrine that the hour of the black man was approaching, and that he had stated that the rifles of the police would fire water instead of bullets. According to the findings of the court, there was no proof that the Israelites had planned open rebellion, and in the opinion of the Native Affairs Commission, they were 'genuinely influenced by religious fanaticism' and the movement was

not of itself political.[19]

Another movement, 'The Wellingtonites', originated in 1921 in the Thaba'nkulu district of Pondoland. Its founder was Wellington Butelezi ('Bootlaces' to his classmates, and 'Dr Wellington' to his followers.) He was a Zulu who had failed to pass Std. VI (Form 1). He practiced as an inyanga or priest-diviner, and claimed to have come from America, but had also studied at 'the University of Oxford and Cambridge.' He pretended to know no Bantu language, and used an interpreter, but when excited, he had been known to break into Xhosa. He told the people of Garvey, and of the emigration of American negroes to Liberia. In his teachings he claimed that all Americans were Negroes, and that they were shortly coming in aeroplanes to emancipate Bantu in South Africa. Europeans would be driven into the sea, and payment of taxes would cease.[20] Through a crystal ball which he used, Wellington claimed that he could see the planes, 'too high for the human eye', already on their way. Furthermore, King George, when he had needed help during the war, had agreed on receiving it, that South Africa was to be handed back to the Africans as a reward. The promise had not been honoured, and the Americans were coming to see that it was fulfilled.

Sacrifices were also demanded; all pigs and white fowls should be killed, and, on payment of 2/6d, all those who followed him would receive a membership badge. Fire from heaven would descend to burn up all the pigs which had not been killed, their owners, and also those who had not yet brought their membership badges. Names of members

were recorded in a large book which was to be sent to America. Wellingtonites were urged to boycott European schools and churches, and to support the newly founded American 'schools' instead. Wellington ordained the ministers of his new 'National Church', and himself held services and dispensed the sacrament. People were encouraged not to pay their taxes, and not to send their cattle to be dipped at the European-organized dip-tank. In one district, Bizana, the people were promised that when the Europeans had been driven into the sea, Churches, magistrate's offices, and stores would all be run by Xhosa, and goods would be sold 'very cheap'.

Before long, the movement had achieved popularity throughout the Transkei. The Government, showing what Hunter describes as 'a singular lack of imagination', sent a group of aeroplanes over the territory as a display of force, only to have Wellington point them out as his American allies. Profiteers from other movements, as well as Wellington's agents continued to collect subscriptions, but with Wellington's expulsion from the Transkei, the movement gradually burnt itself out.[21,22] The only legacy of this movement is the 'National Church' which still survives in some areas.

Some aspects of the role of the prophet.

The most obvious feature of these movements is the prophet himself. No exact definition of the English term 'prophet' in its African context is to be had. The indiscriminate use of this term can

be misleading. When dealing with the Xhosa material, I have used the term priest-diviner, since this better describes the two-fold function of these people in Xhosa society. He is the chiefdom's 'high-priest' in all matters religious, and also a diviner and 'resolver of doubts'.[23] Under the jurisdiction of the priest-diviner are the subordinate officials or 'priests' who are responsible for the killing, skinning and offering of sacrifices. Normally among Xhosa these subordinate officials are the heads of households, and have no other religious duties. The two functions of high-priest and diviner are the peculiar attributes of Xhosa gqira. The term 'witch-doctor' as often used by uninformed observers to describe the priest diviner is obviously unsuitable, since the implication of the term is that his function is to doctor or cure the work of witches, whereas he does nothing of the kind. Insofar as witches are concerned, he merely acts as a diviner who, by incantation and divination discovers the evil influence, and exposes this when it is necessary. He will prescribe what is to be done in order to relieve the position, but does no actual practise himself.

The term prophet has generally been applied in Southern Africa to people who are thought to be in touch with the spirit world, thus enabling them sometimes to discern approaching events, or even to wield superhuman power. These people, as illustrated in the examples cited above, are dependent on a number of gifts for their success; some to an ability to read by means of divination the revelation of spirits in dreams, or in visions of ecstacy or trance, some to spirits that take

temporary or permanent possession of them, and some to a capacity for hearing voices that cannot be heard by others, or for seeing what is invisible to the eyes of the ungifted.

Prophets appear early in recorded Southern African history. It is claimed by Southern Africans that these 'foretellers of coming events' have existed 'from the beginning'. In the days before European contact, it appears that in some parts outside Kaffraria they were known by a variety of names, usually associated with the name of the deity whom they professed to serve. Elsewhere in Africa, distinctions have been made between priests and prophets. Evans-Pritchard, in his work on the Nuer, speaks of individuals whom he calls prophets.[24.] In his account of Nuer religion, he compares these prophets with Nuer priests, and illustrates how Nuer distinguish between them.[25.] Among Xhosa, there is no evidence of any such conceptual distinction being made. The power exercised by the prophet appears to have been through his ability to divine the cause of trouble. As diviner he was the discoverer of witches and sorcerers, and the interpreter of the wishes of the ancestor spirits. In a sense, he was the bulwark of the society's prosperity by protecting it from the destroyers of life and property, and by helping men to propitiate their ancestral spirits, upon whose goodwill prosperity depended. As interpreter of the will of the ancestor spirits, and a man versed in the use of medicines, the prophet might command that a traditional custom be modified in a certain way, or institute a new treatment of animals or crops, claiming as his

authority inspiration of his ancestor spirits, or knowledge of medicines.

Most of the renowned Xhosa priest-diviners seem to have become aware of their vocation after having experienced a crisis of some sort. This seems to be widespread throughout Southern Africa. Usually the crisis takes the form of a state of delirium followed by a comatose condition. During this time they claim to have been confronted by a deity, or to have been transported to the spirit-world, and sent back to earth with a message of great importance for the people. They may also claim to have been visited by spirits who then use them as mediums to convey their message to the rest of their people, and their power is consequently increased by the ability to have experiences of this nature.

Previous training does not appear to be necessary, although the child of a priest-diviner, quite often, may inherit his parent's powers. The fact that Nongqause was a girl does not make her in any way exceptional. Many priest-diviners, such as Makana's mother, appear to have been women. Lewis has shown literature on spirit possession to be 'studded with references to the frequent prominence of women in these cults'.[26] This appears to be true both in Africa and in other parts of the world. Lewis is critical of the usual line of interpretation which has generally viewed this prominent role of women as a compensation for their exclusion and lack of authority in other spheres. He believes that by adopting an epidemiological approach we can go much further than this in interpreting the social implications

of spirit possessions. He has attempted to show that the four contexts of Somali spirit possession are connected by the common theme of confinement and deprivation which occurs in different ways in all of them. A similar study among Xhosa might yield further insights.

Should a prediction be fulfilled by chance, a prophet's reputation is considerable improved. Smith and Dale give a good account of such fortuitous expansion of a prophet's fame among Ila.[27] A prophet had delivered a message from the deity Leza, commanding the people to cease scattering inconvenient rainclouds by waving the kamwaya bush, and immediately afterwards, a man, who had just flouted the expostulations of a believer, was killed by lightning while in the process of waving a kamwaya branch above his head. The Xhosa priest-diviner, Umlangeni, had his reputation similarly enhanced; after the British attack in the spring of 1851, a remarkable period of rainfall caused the crops which had been destroyed by the troops to miraculously grow again. Umlangeni claimed the credit for this saving of the crop.[28]

The prophet could call people to action, to sacrifice and to return to old loyalties. His ideal age was in the past, present troubles could only be healed by sweeping away new customs and returning to the old manner.* The prophet usually did not advance an argument

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* In 1918, a prophet in Botswana demanded that his followers should cease wearing trousers and using things made by Europeans.[29]

in support of his orders, nor did he appeal to any authority but that of the spirit which inspired him, thus giving his message a supernatural character. In form the message was a kind of African apocalyptic; full of symbolism, visions or coming tribulation, and fantastic happenings. This symbolism was well illustrated by the Zulu in 1906, when before the anti-European uprising all white pigs and fowls were destroyed. In Zambia, a prophet used the symbolism of a woman going to and fro in the earth, carrying a calabash of blood, which, if it should be broken and the blood spilt, would bring great trouble on the land.*

Prophetic promises were always material; harvests, rain, sleek and fertile herds, or even swarms of edible locusts in a time of great hunger, and their penalties for disobedience were of a like nature; drought, war, plague or cattle diseases. Few ventured to defy the prophet's orders, for to do so involved the risk of arousing the wrath, not only of the ancestors, but of the people also. There was therefore a strong coercive element to these movements.

All of these movements appear to have arisen at a time when the social system of the people was under stress. It is important to note that direct military pressure was not always present; famine, drought, and disease all provide predisposing circumstances. Although so little evidence has been discussed, it does seem possible to distinguish in a very general way between different types of movements. Such movements

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* The significance of symbolism in the Cattle-killing movement will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 6.

as appear to have been engendered by the vagaries of climatic or economic conditions are predominantly localized, transitory, and somewhat parochial in nature. Prophets such as the one at Nombala who forecast rain and an abundance of fish cooked and ready for eating during a time of severe drought illustrate this category well. An intermediate type between the small localized movements and nation-wide millenarianism can perhaps be recognized in movements such as those initiated by Chilenge, Mupumani and Mwana Leza. These movements had their beginning in the normal way, being concerned with pests, drought or disease, and then developing into far more important corporate movements, embodying anti-European sentiments.

Although the Cattle-killing was the most spectacular of the millenarian movements in Southern Africa, this should not blind us to the fact that it was only part of what could be termed a 'millenarian tradition', and that it was simply the most 'successful' in a line of related movements. Having seen the Cattle-killing movement in its Southern African context, it remains to consider it in the light of what is known about millenarianism in other parts of the world. I apply to the Southern African material, particularly that concerned with the Cattle-killing, certain theories of millenarian movements as advanced by a number of different social anthropologists.

CHAPTER 5

Theories of Millenarian Movements applied to the Southern African material.

This chapter does not attempt a critical review of all the interpretations of millenarian movements that have been published. It is concerned with an application of some of the more recent and important social anthropological analyses of the subject to the Southern African material. My object is, in part, to test the validity of these interpretations by means of a cross-cultural analysis, but more important, it is an attempt to find a suitable method by which to analyse the Cattle-killing and related movements.

A number of the earlier interpretations of millenarian movements, especially those concerned with Melanesia, have attempted to isolate a common factor or factors in the conditions out of which the 'Cargo cults' in Melanesia have arisen. As an extension of these general interpretations, there have been further attempts to isolate common and peculiar factors.

The first analysis with which I am concerned is that of Firth, who has published two studies of cargo cults.[1.] Firth is concerned with the 'functional similarity' of cargo cults which express 'natural dissatisfaction with existing conditions'.[2.] He sees the cults as attempts to get an adjustment through native means. A distinction is made between arguments which can be offered on a rational level by

those who seek to interpret the cults, and 'the other than rational elements' which enter the situation. He suggests that we can appreciate that the native thinks his share of European wealth inadequate, but we will find it more difficult to appreciate the moral fervour displayed in seeking a greater share of wealth. Cargo cults, he claims, should be seen not as examples of religious mania, but as 'a dramatic instance of misapplied productive effort'.[3.] Blocked on one side by the sheer inability to obtain the 'cargo' they desire, they seek their satisfaction in an imaginative projection'. Firth considers the work done in preparing for the arrival of 'cargo' as itself part of the satisfaction sought, being part of the symbolic validation given to the idea that the things wanted are morally justifiable.

Firth's view suggests then a further dimension to the idea which would see cults as 'moral protests' - that they can be seen not merely as revealing a resentment against the ungenerous behaviour of Europeans, but more positively that what they demand is right.[4.] This could be applied to the situation in the Kaffraria prior to the Cattle-killing. Calderwood, a missionary, found Xhosa so sensitive, for example, on the land question that they 'could not and would not consider any question calmly, when <u>that</u> was mixed up with it, the mind of the nation being in a perfect fever.'[5.]

Here we have resentment it seems, not so much at the fact that they have suffered materially from the loss of their lands, but from the

knowledge that their moral claim to the land had been abused by Europeans. The land in question had neither been 'ceded' by them as Grey claimed, neither would any chief have had the right to enter into negotiations for the disposal of the land.

It is interesting to compare the remarkable similarity between the work done by both peoples. While Melanesians built landing-strips, jetties and store-houses, Xhosas built cattle-kraals, granaries and containers for milk. They re-thatched their homes and decorated their persons. Firth's contention that this work was part of the satisfaction sought, and that it was part of the symbolic validation that their claims were morally justifiable can be applied in both cases.

It is difficult to understand Firth's division between 'rational' and 'other than rational elements' which enter into the situation. He could either be classifying certain activity as inherently rational or non-rational, or else he could be providing two kinds of explanation, rational (i.e. sociological) and non-rational (i.e. psychological).[6] In his first paper, Firth considers that the people create new illusions to counter disillusion and strain, in which case the Cattle-killing movement could be classified as inherently non-rational. I hope to show that within the Xhosa frame of reference at least, the Cattle-killing was anything but non-rational.

Of less importance is a psychologically orientated interpretation by De Bruyn, who was particularly concerned with the Mansren cults of Western New Guinea. He believes that cargo cults can be classified

with a number of religious movements in other parts of the world, by which it is presumed he means South Africa as well, and for which reason I include this discussion of his theory. De Bruyn maintains that the study of similar cults among other peoples makes it clear that outbreaks of this kind are psychological phenomena '-expressions of a people in distress, striving to find a new way of life in a world profoundly different from that of their old traditional culture'.[7] He considers that the Mansren cults represent 'a communal expression of the renunciation of the struggle for life', and that movements such as these 'alike in principle, but differing in their expression, are found in different parts of the world'.[8]

With his contention that cults are 'expressions of a people in distress', it is easy to agree, but the assertion that they represent 'an expression of the renunciation of the struggle for life' must be queried. Although Xhosa were reduced to a desperate position, it would seem a mistake to attempt to interpret as final despair their attempt to achieve their aims through ritual. To Xhosa, ritual, in the form of cattle-slaughter and propitiation of the ancestor spirits, was conceived as embodying the necessary power to bring about the desired end. It was not so much the renunciation of life as the passionate desire for a better life which led them to slaughter their cattle.

Out of these two interpretations, we can already extract one rather obvious assertion. It is agreed by these and other earlier

theorists such as Stanner,[9.] that millenarian movements express dissatisfaction with prevailing conditions, and that they are an attempt to gain relief from distress. Both these statements can be applied with validity to either Melanesia or South Africa, but statements of this kind do not reveal much about the nature of millenarian movements in particular. The most useful sort of general interpretation would be one which drew attention to factors which do not exist in areas of culture contact where cults have not arisen. Such an interpretation could involve Bushmen and Hottentots in South Africa and Aboriginees in Australia. All three of these groups have experienced ill-treatment of the same kind as suffered by Xhosa or Melanesians on contact with Europeans, but there has been no recorded movement which could be termed millenarian among them. There is however, one common aspect of their culture other than the lack of millenarian movements - they are all nomadic pastoralists or hunters, their way of life allowing no strong ties to be formed between them and the soil in the same way as agriculturalists, among whom the cults are found. This seems to suggest that while predisposing forces were sufficient to induce the outbreak of a cult, the 'means' were lacking in their culture. It suggests further that an investigation into traditional belief systems might be rewarding in this regard.

Having dealt with the more general interpretations, the theories of those anthropologists who have attempted to isolate the common and

peculiar factors in conditions which give rise to cults are considered. Under this section the theories of Belshaw and Guiart will be discussed.

The first problem Belshaw attacks is the extraordinary similarity of the Melanesian cults despite their distribution over many years and thousands of miles of ocean.[10.] These latter facts Belshaw takes as a refutation of the theory that the similarity could be due to diffusion. Instead he suggests that similar conditions have brought about similar cult activity, and divides the cults into two groups. The first group consists of the Baigona and Taro cults in Papua which Belshaw feels to be typical of the people's first reaction to the appearance of Europeans, whom they attempt to explain in their traditional animist way, and whose arrival they take as an opportunity to indulge in enjoyable cult-practices and ceremonial.[11.] The second group consists of those cults which have happened after prolonged culture contact, and which provide real difficulties in explanation.

There is an interesting parallel here between the Melanesian and Southern African movements, with the first group being represented in South Africa by the movements of minor importance which rose up around mission stations. Certain prophets 'listened with interest' to the words of the missionaries, soon movements such as that of the 'circle dancing' near van de Kemp's mission station were reported. These soon died out. It was a movement of the second or 'residual' group, growing after years of contact, that was of most importance in Kaffraria.

Belshaw's next step is to deal with the problem of causation. He begins by disposing of two widely postulated hypotheses. The first is the theory that the cults are due to the work of 'sorcerers', which in the Southern African context corresponds closely to the widely held European belief that the Cattle-killing and related movements were due to the work of 'witch-doctors' or 'false prophets'. But whereas in Melanesia the 'sorcerer' has no traditional power or sanctions, a more plausible argument could, at first sight, be made out of the 'witch-doctor' theory. This theory has already been dealt with in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Belshaw suggests that the common element in the conditions in which the cults have flourished is the fact that the people concerned have all been in contact with thriving European communities, but none of them have been able to participate in vigorous activity leading to a higher standard of life. Those untouched by white civilization, and those in thriving native settlements in or near such towns as Port Moresby, have little time or inclination to organize into cults.[12.] Therefore, says Belshaw, we may assume that the similarities in the cults are due to the position of the communities half-way between the old and the new ways of living, and that the differences are almost entirely due to particular historical circumstances. The Melanesian sees other people who possess a way of life he tends to envy. 'He has to find some explanation of European power in holding sway over multitudes; of the miraculous arrival of manufactured goods in ships and aeroplanes,

of strange European behaviour which sends away piles of raw materials; of the peculiar distaste with which Europeans treat him. On the one hand, this gives him an end of activity - he must strive to attain similar power. On the other hand it sets him an intellectual problem and gives him an emotional experience. His emotional experience is jealousy, sometimes hatred, of the European, who neither gives him these things as a friend nor initiates him into the mysteries of sale and production - indeed, tries to fob him off with biblical education. His intellectual problem is, first, to explain European success, and second, to achieve a method of parallel success.'[13].

It is difficult to apply Belshaw's 'universals' to the Xhosa case. Firstly there is no real proof that Xhosa envied the European way of living. While they might have attempted to find an explanation for the European's power, and striven to attain similar power, jealousy of the European's possessions did not provide them with 'an end of activity'. The 'cargo' Xhosa wanted, grain and cattle, was a reflection of their own culture, not of the European's. I am not suggesting that this invalidates Belshaw's theory with regard to Melanesia. It means that as a method of approaching millenarianism in its broader context, its uses are limited.

Belshaw has been criticised for his contention that cults have arisen among 'half-way' communities. Guiart has shown that cults have arisen both among people of a reasonable degree of sophistication and among very backward people.[14]. Inglis has criticised him for his choice

of the term 'half-way' since it suggests that there comes a point in the history of Melanesian and white contact at which cults arise. They do not occur before the point is reached, nor after it has passed. The difficulty is in defining the point. If this concept is to be applied to the Xhosa nation, it suggests that when the Cattle-killing occurred, a certain 'half-way' state of mind prevailed. Since the Cattle-killing was not an isolated movement, and since it formed part of a 'tradition' of such movements which I hope to ~~be~~ have been able to show occurred before European contact, this concept does not assist us.

Guiart has published three papers on cargo cults.[16] He deals with the general problem: Why does Melanesia have cargo cults? and attempts to isolate a single, common element in all cult outbreaks. He too considers that Melanesians covet the standard of living of the white man with whom they are in contact. In order to achieve the coveted end, they accept schooling and Christianity from the Europeans. But in accepting Christianity, they tend to attribute more importance to the religious ritual than to the actual doctrines. Gradually the old culture is blended with elements of Christianity. The Melanesians believe that possession of cargo will give them powers equal to those of Europeans. It is a measure of their retention of traditional beliefs that they believe this desirable state of affairs will be brought about by the ancestors, the spirits, or, on later occasions, the Americans.

With regard to the Southern African movements, I have already

discussed the question of 'cargo' as a predisposing cause, and shown it to be questionable, but it is Guiart's mention of traditional beliefs which introduces a new and interesting feature into the field, and which brings us to the most recent contributions to the problem.

The first of these is by Burridge.[17] Burridge has made two studies about one particular cult. He has dealt mainly with a single group, the Tangu, living inland from Bogia, but he also includes material from Manam island. He interprets cargo activity as being primarily directed against Europeans. He argues that Tangu see the relationship between black and white as a relationship 'lacking in moral context'. The reason for this is because Europeans have at their disposal techniques for making greater wealth, yet they share neither the techniques nor the wealth with Tangu. Since their social system is a co-operative one, Tangu see this witholding of 'secrets' as profoundly immoral. 'Intellectually bewildered, perplexed, their social system in which their beliefs are embedded partially disrupted by the impact of European culture, yet desirous of European wealth, Tangu attempts, within terms of their own knowledge and modes of thought, to grasp these techniques.' Burridge feels that the cargo myths are simply rationalizations of what Tangu do not understand.[18]

This interpretation is developed further in Burridge's book, Mambu. The Kanakas are in a situation where they need to explain Europeans. This explanation must be extended to include his wealth, his moral superiority, and their own inferiority. The moral disparity

between Kanakas and Europeans does not only consist of material differences. One of the Kanakas' most important categories - kinship, which implies moral obligation, is rendered almost useless.[19.] Kanakas' mythology is the sole repository of truth in matters of this kind, and explanations are therefore sought in terms of it.

Since this section deals with the problem of what conditions made the situation ripe for a cult, I wish to turn back briefly to Kaffraria. The Cattle-killing can be seen, in Burridge's terms, to be directed against Europeans. This was openly declared by the priest-diviner. Furthermore, the relationship between European and Xhosa could be seen to be profoundly immoral, though not so much through the 'witholding of secrets' as through general exploitation and misrule.

Burridge now puts forward a highly interesting hypothesis. He states that cargo cults are also the latest forms an old tradition of the society has taken. 'One should not be too hasty in assuming the Cargo cults are wholly derived from the colonial situation. They may be a cultural inheritance.'[20.] He argues that much of the Kanakas' 'knowledge' about their history and the world is embodied in their mythology and especially in the Primal Myth, a story of the origin of people which has mysterious and symbolic character. This myth is partly a pseudo-history and partly a moral dream. Burridge holds that Tangu interpret much of their experience in terms of this myth and that they use it to justify their moral values. The cargo myth had to be created within Tangu terms - within the myth-dream. 'They

try to understand their total experience, and can only do so in terms of their history - in terms of the categories they know. Mere observation is neither memorable nor intelligible unless immediately related to categories of understanding. Expectations - selection of particular categories play a major part. So Tangu make their observations, render them intelligible, and line them up with expectations. Quite a normal procedure. Only those whose categories and expectations are wider or different may perceive the end result in such a way as to call it mistaken.'[21]. Into this tradition of the Primal Myth has been fed the experience of the white man, especially in the form of missionaries and administrators and the dreams and expectations the white man has aroused. The development of the cargo myth has been a 'feeling of the way'.[22].

Burridge's thesis therefore is that this process performed a subtle transformation and that the myth of the cargo was the myth-dream made into a full explanation and a call to action.

With regard to Kaffraria, the first step that Burridge's thesis suggests is detailed research into Xhosa mythology. Unfortunately, very little work appears to have been done on this subject, and references do not reveal a wealth of material as great as that with which Burridge has substantiated his theory. In the absence of an opportunity to do fieldwork, it becomes accordingly difficult to apply this method to the Cattle-killing movement. The material which is available, however, does allow one or two striking comparisons to be

made. These have been of great value in my final analysis. The most interesting and certainly the most important of these concerns what I shall call the 'Golden-age' myth. There are numerous variations, but the central theme in all cases is essentially similar. It concerns life when the earth was believed to be governed by Umkulunkulu, the 'Great One' or Creator.

Man, it is said, was created by Umkulunkulu. He was raised up by Umkulunkulu out of a bed of reeds by the water-side. At this time, man lived in bliss in a golden age; there was no sickness, no death, and no hunger, there was no need to eat, neither was there a need to propagate the species (no child-birth). But one day to everyone's consternation, a baby appeared. The mother was ill and in pain, so the people gave her pumpkin to eat, thinking it would poison her. Yet the woman got fit and well on the pumpkins, and so all the people began to eat them. It was at this stage that Umkulunkulu introduced death into the world.[23,24].

During the Golden Age, Umkulunkulu wanted to send a messenger to his people on earth to tell them that they were to live for ever. Looking around for a messenger, he saw a chameleon, and promptly sent it off to earth with the message of life. As the chameleon is the sleepiest of animals, it dawdled on the way, and coming to a tree, climbed up it to bask in the sun. The lazy creature filled its belly with flies and then fell asleep, and so loitered on its journey. Umkulunkulu seemingly changed his mind, and wished to send a message

of death to the world. Looking round again, he saw a lizard. He told it to hurry off and tell the men that they were to die. It ran off instantly, and never stopped till it came to men, who believed its message. By and by the chameleon awoke, and came along to the top of a hill from which it could see the men; it then said that Umkulunkulu had sent it to say that men were to live and not die. But the lizard slapped it in the face and said, 'Get you gone, the message is that men are to die', so the people said that they would not believe it, for the lizard had long ago arrived with the message that men were to die. Consequently they began to beat the chameleon and threw stones at it, telling it not to tell lies. The chameleon is therefore hated by Xhosa to this day and they often kill it saying 'But for you we should never die.'[25,26].

This Primal Myth can be related directly to the Cattle-killing, since the return of the Golden Age to earth was one of the central themes of the movement. The idea of a life of peace and contentment was not foreign to Xhosa, neither was the concept of immortality.

Before proceeding any further, I should like to analyse as far as is possible, the structure of this Primal Myth. One can distinguish between two myths in it; the story of the Golden Age, and the story of how life and death came into the world. The importance of making such an analysis can be appreciated when one comes to consider the following questions with regard to myth:

(i) Is the manner in which myths are constructed and in which they

convey their messages similar in all cultural situations or is it not? (ii) Are there some mythical themes which are universal or nearly so and which can therefore be studied cross-culturally as well as in their particular cultural contexts?[27].

These questions necessarily entail cross-cultural inquiry, and in the case of the Xhosa Primal Myth, it would appear that we have a theme which can be studied both cross-culturally, and in a particular cultural context. I here depend almost entirely on Lévi-Strauss, who has pioneered the study of the structure of myths. Lévi-Strauss does not say that all myths belong to the category which can be termed universal, but that myths of this limited category are ones which are specially interesting from a cross-cultural point of view.[28]. The universal myth with which we are here dealing is the one relating to the nature of human beginning. I do not wish to be interpreted as saying that all myths are the same, but argue from Lévi-Strauss' point of view that, at a certain level of abstraction, the dialectical structure of all myths 'constitutes a set of variations on a common theme.'[29].

With regard to the Xhosa Primal Myth, one can trace the beginning of what Lévi-Strauss calles the 'strict logic' of mythic thought, by which he means a Hegelian logic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, moving in ever more complex cycles to comprehend all the oppositions and limitations inherent in thought. According to Lévi-Strauss, the structure of myth is a dialectical structure in which opposed logical

positions are stated, the oppositions mediated by a restatement, which again, when its internal structure becomes clear, gives rise to another kind of opposition, which in turn is mediated or resolved and so on.[30,31].

In the Xhosa Primal myth, the initial 'thesis' appears to be immortality - as it was in the beginning, the antithesis is illness, pain and childbirth, the precursors of mortality. The synthesis is in recovery from illness through the introduction of food. No sooner is this effected, than a new opposition arises, that of death, which is in turn to be resolved by a promise of immortality, but which, through no fault of man, is denied him.

Having thus assumed that it is the nature of myth to mediate contradictions, the method of analysis proceeds by distinguishing the oppositions and the mediating elements. It follows that the function of myth is to portray the contradictions in the basic premises of the culture. With regard to the situation at the time of the Cattle-killing, the broad thesis became the old way of life, which included all the old values. The arrival of Europeans introduced an opposition to this thesis. Further oppositions could be traced with regard to European administrative policy which was in itself contradictory, claiming to be for the good of Xhosa while at the same time depriving them. If it is accepted that it is the nature of myth to mediate contradictions, then it is not surprising to find the mediating element, the promise of a golden age without Europeans, being implied in the Cattle-killing myth.

By employing a methodology such as this which encourages cross-

cultural inquiry, we can go a long way towards complying with Pocock's demand to avoid the restrictiveness which a functionalist approach to a study of this type implies.[32.]

Jarvie sees in the structure of the cargo myth the motivation for the movement. He states his theory as follows: 'The structure of their doctrines indicates what is wanted, and they are attempts to provide an explanation of why they haven't got it, and a religious prescription for how they can get it.[33.] In the Melanesian case, what is wanted is cargo, which provides an escape from the 'endless material poverty' which the people feel when confronted by the affluence of European society. Jarvie goes on to say that 'Knowledge is power, so people flock to the man who says he knows how the whites get the cargo (i.e. what is wanted) and that he can lead them to it.' In other words, the motivation for the movement, the feelings of poverty and the desire for cargo, is provided in the structure of the doctrine as preached by the prophets. The 'means' to the cargo was through the prophet himself, who possessed the power of knowledge.

I shall attempt to apply this to the Xhosa material. What was wanted was a 'golden age', an escape from the seemingly endless persecution they suffered at the hands of Europeans. This 'want' would be indicated in the structure of the Cattle-killing doctrine, and in the messages given to the people by the prophet. This want then, as indicated by the nature of the doctrine, becomes the motivating force in the movement. The prophet, who has the power of knowledge to

show how this golden age can be brought about, becomes the 'means'.

At first reading this appears to provide a suitable interpretation to the Cattle-killing. I feel however, that such an interpretation is too superficial for the following reasons: The predisposing causes of the Cattle-killing can not be sought in the doctrine of the movement. The 'prophecy' of the Golden Age does not provide the motivation, neither does it provide the 'means', although it is the desired end. The motivation must be sought in the socio-political changes which preceded the actual movement or the prophecy. The term 'prophet' is from the start confusing. In Xhosa society there are only 'priest-diviners', as I have called them. These people divine the cause of trouble in a man or in his society, and prescribe the means to alleviate the trouble. The message related by Nongqause was, as we have seen, the myth-dream of Xhosa society. Mhlakaza, the priest-diviner, prescribed the means for bringing about this desired end. His doctrine was based on traditional belief. This belief provided the means, but not the motivation. There was no 'following' of people who were attracted to Mhlakaza's 'power of knowledge'. Priest-diviners did not bring about cures by practice. Rather there was a 'following' of people who believed in the efficacy of traditional belief and practice as means to an end as prescribed by a traditional figure, the priest-diviner. I shall consider this question at greater length in Chapter 6.

Worsley sees the cults in Melanesia as a possible reaction to

an unbearable situation of political, social and economic domination.[34] This conforms to the now generally accepted theory which suggests that Cargo cults are a response to situations in which there is acute 'deprivation'. But Worsley sees them as political outlets of despair; the religious content functions as sanction and point of reference, uniting disparate or sectional elements. The form of the movements is moulded by the materialism of Melanesian religion, and its response to missions. The movements provide a selection from among a number of possible goals and ideas, and a symbolism which looks forward to a new morality. He rejects theories based upon personality characteristics because he feels that this has been crudely exploited in terms of European prejudice. There have been sufficient examples of this exploitation in the Cattle-killing alone, to justify this rejection.

If the Cattle-killing is considered as an isolated movement, and if no account is taken of the nature of the prophetic message, then it can be said that the religious content did serve to unite sectional elements among Xhosa. In this sense, the movement was a form of nationalism, but the movement was not revolutionary, as the term 'nationalism' tends to imply. This is revealed by an investigation into the nature of the myth-dream associated with the movement which I shall consider at greater length in my final analysis.

Lawrence provides a stimulating approach to the whole question of motivation, means and effect.[35] He has concerned himself with a

specialized case-study dealing with cargo movements in one socio-cultural field, the Southern Madang District of New Guinea. He begins by setting out the three questions of motivation, means and effect which have been discussed above. These three questions, although inter-related are kept separate for analytical purposes.[36].

(i) Why did people regard European wealth as so important that they spent decades of patently fruitless effort to discover its source? Why did they set such a high social value on it?

(ii) Why did they believe that this wealth could be obtained almost entirely by ritual activity? Why did they tend to ignore purely secular activity?

(iii) What is the general importance of the Cargo Movement? What sort of situation has it contributed to or created?

If, in considering the Cattle-killing, we substitute the desire for cargo and a knowledge of its source in Melanesia, for the Golden Age and the means of bringing this about in Kaffraria, then we can allow the three questions to stand unaltered in any further respect.

These questions of motivation, means and effects, can be answered by considering the Cargo Movement or the Cattle-killing from three different angles. Motivation can be understood by examining the nature of European contact, the people's reaction to it, and the attitudes and values these reactions expressed. Means can be understood by analysing the processes by which the people believed all human destiny was governed, and their attempts to harness them. Effects are

shown to be the changes for which the Cargo Movements (or Cattle-killing) were directly responsible, and those which they envisaged, in the traditional socio-political system in the past. It includes the influence they will have on the adjustment of the people to increasing Western encroachment in the future.[37.]

As Lawrence points out, these answers cannot be provided simply by describing the millenarian movement on its own. They necessitate careful analysis of the total setting in which the movement grew up - the interaction between the people's traditional socio-cultural background and the situation created by European occupation. Such an account cannot be restricted to a single plane of time but must be presented chronologically. It is for this reason that I have included a chapter which gives a comprehensive summary of the historical events leading up to the year in which the Cattle-killing took place. Another chapter considers further developments in the sphere of millenarian movements since the actual Cattle-killing.

With regard to the initial point made by Lawrence - the frequent neglect of the 'epistemological' aspect in trying to interpret millenarian movements - I shall attempt in Chapter 6 to undertake as fully as possible a consideration of Xhosa epistemological beliefs,* but in the

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* The Oxford English Dictionary defines epistemology as 'the theory or science of the method or grounds of knowledge'. Lawrence, in his book Road Belong Cargo uses the term to cover the general questions: 'From what sources do the people of the Southern Madang District believe knowledge to be derived? And what kinds of knowledge do they hold to be available to themselves? I apply Lawrence's use of the term to the Southern African material.

absence of field-work, my findings in this regard are subject to limitations. Despite this, however, a study of what is known about the traditional value and epistemological systems of the Xhosa has been highly rewarding.

Lawrence draws our attention to an important point with regard to this aspect of study. He agrees that if the Cargo Movement is examined on its own as a phenomenon sui generis, it may be regarded as a rudimentary form of revolutionary 'nationalism' - the people's first experiment in completely renewing the world order and achieving independence from European rule.[38] But in the Madang District, the people, even in regions where contact was greatest, were never faced with anything like total social or cultural disintegration. Lawrence shows that while there were great changes in their way of life, these did no more than give a 'new cast' to its outward forms. The changes were superficial. Although the people may have thought that they were creating a new way of life, it was old attitudes and concepts that primarily directed their actions. From this point of view, therefore, the movement was conservative rather than revolutionary.[39] In my final interpretation of the Cattle-killing, I shall attempt to demonstrate the truth of this assertion from the Xhosa viewpoint.

CHAPTER 6

An Analytical Approach to the Cattle-killing Movement.

The Cattle-killing can be understood more clearly if we set about answering three questions based on Lawrence's investigations into motivation, means and effect: Why did Xhosa want to bring about a new age on earth? Why did they believe that they could do this largely by killing cattle in a sacrifical way? What were the consequences, largely unintended, and largely political, of their attempts to do so?

The first of these questions can be answered in part by considering the nature and extent of socio-cultural change in British Kaffraria between the years 1702 - 1856; representing the period between the first known meeting of European colonists and Xhosa, and the start of the Cattle-killing. Although it was not until 1778 that the first recorded clash between Xhosa and European took place, the early years were important, for they gave rise to what I have termed the 'frontier mentality'. This was reflected in the policies of European administrators in Kaffraria who later sought to provide answers in military terms to what were essentially social problems.

There were two dominant themes running through the whole story of contact between Europeans and Xhosa; they were of land and cattle. Both opposing factions were pastoralists, both sought the same possessions. Europeans, by virtue of their superior weapons, were

usually more successful in obtaining what they desired. There seemed to be no hope of a peaceful settlement or of co-existence. In the beginning treaties had been made by Europeans, by which they had obtained private ownership of land. But this land, according to Xhosa belief, could not be owned privately. They did not understand property rights in land since they knew only usufructory rights. According to Xhosa belief, the land belonged to their ancestors, and had been left them in trust only. It was theirs neither to give away nor to sell. Not recognizing the validity of property rights, Xhosa retaliated to what they considered illegal holding of land on the part of the Europeans, by driving off their cattle. More land would in turn be taken by Europeans as punishment, and the vicious circle was completed. The position of the Europeans was therefore an ambiguous one. On the one hand he brought insecurity to Xhosa life by claiming land and backing this claim by force, on the other hand he also claimed to be administering Xhosa 'for their own advancement'. But for the most part, administrative policies were uninformed, based upon an insufficient knowledge and understanding of Xhosa social structure, beliefs, laws and customs, and did much to change the way of life in Kaffraria. These changes appeared always to have been to European advantage and to Xhosa loss. In the beginning Xhosa were subjected to a policy which sought '-not to destroy them, but to break them up as tribes-'[1]. But by 1850 this policy had changed to one which was calling upon the colonists to rise up to the assistance of British troops in order to

'-destroy and exterminate these most barbarous and treacherous savages.'[2]. Clearly Xhosa would have felt themselves better off without such 'advancement'. A land without Europeans would, at that time, have appeared as a land without war, jealousy, hunger and death. In addition, their ancestors would be appeased if the land were cleared of Europeans, and these ancestors would then once again visit them with benevolence. Crops would grow, their cattle would stop dying, grow fat and increase. It would be an age not unfamiliar to them; the Golden Age which lived on in their myths. More cattle would mean greater wealth, many wives and increased prestige. It would mean that more sacrifices could be made to the ancestors, who would then visit them with yet greater munificence. The vicious circle which was depriving them of land, cattle and manhood would be stopped, even reversed, and wealth and security could grow unhindered.

I now turn to a consideration of what Lawrence has termed 'precipitating' and 'enabling' conditions. One being represented by the history of contact, and the other by Xhosa culture itself. 'It is by analysing the interaction between the two that we get a true insight into the problems of motivation and means'.[3]. Motivation, or the Xhosa reasons for wanting the Golden Age to come about, can be seen as their reaction to the main events of contact in terms of their traditional social values. These reasons centred around the privation, injustice and indignity, real and imagined, which Xhosa were suffering. Means, or the Xhosa conviction that the Golden Age could be brought

about by the ritual propitiation of their ancestors can be seen as their attempt 'to control the new situation by the same sorts of techniques as they had always had good reason to assume were effective in the old, very largely because they could not conceive any alternative'.[4] As with the leaders of the cargo movements, these two themes are reflected also in the conduct of the priest-diviners.

Means: Xhosa Belief and the Cattle-killing.

Xhosa believed that the Golden Age could be brought about by ritual sacrifice because their belief in ancestor worship and the efficacy of propitiation had not been changed. Governor Grey had, theoretically at least, outlawed 'witchcraft', in which category he included all Xhosa belief, but it would have taken more than a statement by the Governor to put an end to a belief so firmly held by the people as was ancestor worship. There are several important points regarding the nature of ancestor worship among Xhosa which should be mentioned at this stage.

Ancestor worship is based upon the belief that man, or rather part of him, survives after death. This conviction is held by all Bantu-speaking Africans, who firmly believe that already during his lifetime, a person consists of two separable entities, his mortal body and his immortal soul. At death, the soul becomes separated from the body, and becomes a spirit. In general, it is believed that this spirit eventually finds its way into a spirit-world, situated somewhere

underground, where it leads a life similar to that on earth. This spirit in its new home is aware of all that its descendants who remain 'outside on earth' do, say, or suffer. Spirits are as interested as ever in their descendants, and are able to influence for good or evil the destinies of these descendants. Members of other communities are usually regarded with indifference, unless the spirits owe them some grudge, or have to hinder them from hurting their protégés.[5.]

The characters of men are not changed by death; they are as prone to jealousy as they ever were, and as antagonistic towards descendants who wound their vanity, flaunt their wishes, abuse their inheritance, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of the land, but they are just as willing to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance, but without their help and guidance, their descendants cannot hope to flourish, for if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, disaster, sickness and death.

During the years immediately before the Cattle-killing, Xhosa experienced what to them must have seemed every possible manifestation of the displeasure of the ancestor spirits. The almost constant harrying of the people by the European commandos had led to much loss of life and property. This was coupled to the effects of eight successive defeats in wars against Europeans during the past sixty years. During this time they had been dispossessed of their traditional homes,

and forced to seek refuge among hostile neighbours. Foreign clusters such as the Fingo, fleeing from disturbances in Zululand, had been given grants of land by the administration in their already overcrowded 'reserves', and enjoyed the protection of the administration. Europeans had been settled in the homelands Xhosa had been forced to leave, and in some instances, Hottentots, whom Xhosa despised, had also been settled in their old homes. In the latest move, they had been transplanted en masse to new and uncongenial surroundings by the unsympathetic administration. Their cattle had been raided under the 'spoor-law' system by European commandos, and many of their homes together with their crops destroyed by systematic 'scourging'. Hintsa, paramount chief and 'father of the nation', had been murdered by European troops, and his body mutilated. Sandile, chief of the Gcaleka, had been summarily deposed and a European appointed in his place. All chiefs, under threat of great violence, had been forced to foreswear allegiance to all authority but that emanating from the Queen of England. They were deprived of the powers upon which their prestige and status depended. The people were ordered to foresake their traditional religion and to embrace a foreign creed. Priest-diviners, as the 'instruments of darkness' were outlawed. Customs such as the marriage payment and polygyny which were so important to their society, were forbidden. To make matters even worse, the ten years before the Cattle-killing were remarkable for a number of natural disasters; severe droughts and heat in summer and bitter cold in winter resulted in the

failure of crops, scarcity of grazing, and consequent poverty among the people. In 1854, a cattle disease, lung-sickness, (introduced by Europeans) killed some 100,000 Xhosa cattle.

In accordance with their beliefs, it could not have been difficult for Xhosa to account for these happenings. They had alienated themselves from the benevolence of their ancestors, who were now visiting these Job-like trials upon them as retribution. The most obvious cases of alienation must have been the presence of Europeans and Hottentots in the Xhosa homelands, to the exclusion of Xhosa. After Xhosa had been forcibly removed from this land and settled elsewhere, we are told that 'their minds were in a perfect fever over the land question', and that 'their cattle were lowing for the sweet pastures of the Amatole valleys'.*

Less obvious than the land problem, but nonetheless as important in this regard, was the neglect of ritual and propitiation. The biggest factor militating against ritual observance, besides the fact that much of it was outlawed, was the lack of security on the frontier. Land, seeds, and the ripening crops should all have become the object of ritual during their season. Without this ritual and propitiation, the ancestors, feeling themselves neglected, could withold fertility and rain, thus bringing bad seasons, famine and disease.

In the normal course of events, it was to the priest-diviner of the chiefdom that the people turned when faced with misfortune. Mhlakaza was priest-diviner of the senior Xhosa chiefdom, the Gcaleka,

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* Amatole - lit. 'of the calves'.

and therefore senior priest-diviner of the entire Xhosa nation. He could not have been unaware of the responsibility which rested upon his shoulders at this time. Mhlakaza could not himself sacrifice on behalf of the Xhosa nation. When a calamity overtakes a Xhosa, he must make atonement to the offended ancestors who have brought about the misfortune, and here the priest-diviner acts as guide and adviser. He does not act as the propitiatory medium between the supplicant and the spirits. This is the function of the head of the family, who in all cases takes on this role. If Mhlakaza had been prescribing a cure for a single family in need, or even for his own chiefdom, then either the head of the family or the head of the chiefdom, the chief himself, would have had to sacrifice. But this time it was different, the entire nation was in distress. Normally, conditions were such that it was seldom the entire nation was threatened with a national calamity. Since the nation was being made to suffer, it was clear that the national ancestors had been offended, and a course of action was needed which would win back their favour, and thereby alleviate the distress of their descendants. As national priest-diviner, it was Mhlakaza's responsibility to advise what action was to be taken. No departure from traditional practice was needed, a national sacrifice would restore the favour of the national ancestors. The only variable factor was the magnitude of the sacrifice, which had increased in relation to the need. What was unique was not the killing of cattle, but the scale upon which the killing was to proceed.

The belief in the efficacy of sacrifice as a propitiatory medium has survived among Xhosa to a large extent up to the present time. In rural areas, the usual sacrifice prescribed by the priest-diviner is still an ox which is killed in a strictly prescribed manner.* It is desirable that the ox should bellow loudly during the killing, for this 'summonses the ancestors to the feast'.** While the ox is bellowing, the priest will call out the following invocation:

> 'Cry out, ox of So-and-So; listen to us, So-and-So; this is your ox, we praise you by all your laud-giving names, and tell of all your deeds; do not be angry with us any more; do you not see that this is your ox? Do not accuse us of neglecting you, when, forsooth, have we ceased to praise you and offer you meat and beer? Take note then, that here is another ox we are offering to you.' 7.

A special piece of meat, the intsonyama is set aside for the ancestors, while the rest is eaten. There is little noise made, all observe the utmost decorum, as they are in the presence of the ancestors and must show honour and deference to them.

If the trouble is alleviated, then a beer-drink is arranged. This is in the nature of a thank-offering to the ancestral spirits who have graciously heard the prayers and accepted the sacrifice. If

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* As has been found elsewhere in Africa. According to Evans-Pritchard nowhere in Nuerland are cattle ordinarily slaughtered for food, but oxen are frequently sacrificed at ceremonies.[6.]

** Sheep die quietly, and this is one of the reasons why they are not popular as sacrifices.

the trouble continues, the people have little hesitation in saying iggira lixokile - the priest has lied.* If a person has died, a day of mourning is observed and another ox is slaughtered. On this occasion no ceremonies are observed, for it is not a ceremonial observance in presence of the ancestral spirits, but simply a social mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The particular animal to be slaughtered is usually indicated by the priest-diviner (the 'fattest' or the 'best'). In the event of some other animal than that indicated being sacrificed, and the person continuing to be ill, it will be intimated that a sin has been committed, and that the spirits will not be satisfied until the correct sacrifice has been made. There is no alternative but to obey, lest a worse calamity befall the family. It is useless to try and circumvent the priest-diviner, for as soon as anything else goes wrong, he must be consulted again, and the neglect of his instructions will be sure to be revealed. It is seldom therefore that liberties are taken with a priest-diviner's ruling, for in the end he will have to be obeyed.

Cattle, playing a most important role in Xhosa society, were the only acceptable sacrifice that could be made. Furthermore, it was

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* In this respect, it is easier to understand the scorn with which Nongqause was later to be held. This reflected in the songs about her which still survive, and in the neglect of her grave. Cf. Appendix H. and page 4.

believed that all cattle belonged to the ancestors; they had simply been left in trust to their descendants. Ancestors were known to 'get hungry', and if they consequently called for a sacrifice of their own cattle, it was not for the custodians of those cattle to deny it them.

In the light of all this information, it seems now clear why ritual sacrifice was demanded by Mhlakaza and Nongqause, and why this ritual sacrifice entailed the killing of cattle. We can understand too the coercive aspect of the Cattle-killing. Those who refrained from carrying out the instructions of the priest-diviner knew that they were impeding the fulfilment of his prophecy. It is for this reason that the 'unbelievers' were later blamed by Mhlakaza for the failure of Nongqause's prophesies.

In considering ancestor worship, one can draw an interesting parallel between Xhosa and Melanesian beliefs. Lawrence, in considering the epistemological system of the Melanesians, states that although their geographical environment was expanding, their assumptions about the nature and dynamics of the cosmic order were virtually unchanged. ' - the total cosmic order was still regarded as finite and anthropocentric - with few if any supernatural attributes - and the relationships between its human and superhuman personnel as specified and predictable. It existed solely for the benefit of man.'[8]. This definition could be applied almost without change to the Xhosa situation if it is remembered that ancestor spirits, although 'supernatural' in

a sense, were considered to be part of the living community. The relationship between Xhosa and their 'superhuman personnel' were indeed specified and predictable. Ancestor spirits were fundamentally interested in the well-being of their descendants on earth, and as we have seen they would regulate their benevolence according to the attitude of these descendants towards them. Proper veneration would bring bounty, whereas to neglect the ancestors would be to court disaster. This belief had not changed. What had changed was the way of life. Xhosa felt that under the new government, they had been alienated from the benevolent care of their ancestors. In a sense, they themselves were to blame, for they had allowed Europeans to abuse the material possessions which their ancestors had left in trust for them. A means had to be found in order to win back their favour of the ancestors. What Mhlakaza and Nongqause in fact told the people in their 'messages' was that it was not necessary to search for this means, since it was already known to them. They were to sacrifice their cattle. The form that the movement was to take was thus implied in the logic of the traditional belief and ritual practices of the people.

I have also to consider the influence of Christianity on the Xhosa intellectual system. The most obvious example of the adoption of Christian concepts into Xhosa belief would appear to be the doctrine of resurrection. According to traditional belief, the dead, although dwelling in a world of their own, were in fact 'living'. They remained an integral part of the living community. There was no need for them

to appear in the flesh, except sometimes when they delivered a message, and then it was in a dream or vision, and sometimes even as a small animal. These were always fleeting glimpses, and the ancestors never sought to rejoin their descendants in the 'outside' world. Mutwa states that it was the part of Nongqause's message regarding the old chiefs who were to rise up together with their warriors to take command of the people that most fired their minds. Here is an enigma. If the whirlwind was going to sweep all white men and unbelievers into the sea, as everyone believed, and if the blood-red sun were at the same time to usher in the dawn of a new era, a golden age in which men were to live in peace and fight and kill no more, then why was there a need for the old leaders, the old warriors? Nongqause's messages were highly symbolic. Social anthropologists have shown the usefulness of an analysis of symbolism in exposing the 'deeper layers' of a society's system of values.[9].

Symbolism and the Cattle-killing.

Many of the millenarian movements described in Chapter 4 demonstrate that symbolism is quite often a feature of such movements in Southern Africa. It is especially prominent in the Cattle-killing movement.

In his investigation into social conflict and its resolution in Ndembu society, Turner is able to show that every form of opposition or dualism in their society was contained in a wider tripartite mode

of classification. This classification related to the colours white, red and black.[10.] In an earlier study, Turner has shown that many ritual symbols are 'multivocal' or 'polysemous', each polysemous symbol having a spectrum of referents tending to be linked by a simple mode of associations.

An interesting question arises - can anything of the conflicts in Xhosa society prior to the Cattle-killing be revealed by a study of the Cattle-killing symbolism?

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible to apply Turner's methods of analysis to the Cattle-killing movement. Ironically, although the Cattle-killing occurred over a hundred years ago, it is not so much a lack in this regard as in the present day lack of information on Xhosa symbolism that militates against such an analysis. Turner's success is the result of exhaustive fieldwork. In his study of rituals, he was able to observe the ceremonies at first hand, besides having at his disposal 'many vernacular texts on different aspects of the rites and their symbolism'.[11.] Until a first-hand study of symbolism can be conducted among Xhosa, any attempt at applying Turner's methods must be based on conjecture. The analysis I attempt is dependent to a large extent upon my own knowledge of the Xhosa language, and on what can be gleaned from other sources. My findings are consequently subject to many limitations.

The 'blood-red sun' is perhaps the most striking of the Cattle-killing symbols. It was to be the first physical manifestation of the

rebirth of the old order. There are two important aspects about this particular piece of symbolism; the unnaturalness of the colour of the sun itself, and the unnaturalness of its behaviour. Turner considers red to be a polysemous symbol in all societies, and possessing a wide fan of connotations. It is one of the three basic colours of his universal 'triad', the other two being black and white. Turner claims that each of these colours has associations with experiences of social relationships. Thus red = maternal blood is linked to the mother child tie and also the processes of group recruitment and social placement, red = bloodshed is connected with war, feud, conflict, social discontinuities, red = obtaining and preparation of animal food = status of hunter or herder, male productive role in the sexual division of labour, etc., red = transmission of blood from generation to generation = an index of membership in a corporate group.[12.]

If we accept these associations and refer them to the Xhosa situation in the context of their conflict with Europeans, we can begin to understand that the redness of the sun was not fortuitous. The most obvious association is possibly that pertaining to bloodshed and social discontinuities, and in this regard it should not be forgotten that in a number of instances, conflict was not restricted to black versus white only, but to black versus black as well.

I wish to draw attention to two further possible associations with the colour red, this time with specific reference to the Xhosa. The first of these is with Europeans. Among Xhosa, Europeans appear

to be associated with 'redness' rather than with 'whiteness'.* I have found that in their 'cryptic' speech, employed to render their conversation unintelligible to Xhosa-speaking Europeans, Xhosa refer to Europeans as 'red'. A European man becomes a 'red bull', a woman a 'red heifer' or 'red cow'. If we accept this association, and link it to the associations which appear to have developed between Europeans, the sea, and the 'east', then the red sun rising in the east might well have symbolized the arrival and rise to power of Europeans.** The 'defeat' of the sun at its zenith could be interpreted as the defeat of the European, and his retreat back to the sea and the east from where he had come. The fact that the whirlwind was going to spring up at the same time as the sun turned about in the heavens, and was to blow Europeans into the sea while the sun itself was setting in that direction, strengthens the effectiveness of this association.

There is ANOTHER possible association, and that is that redness was associated with Xhosa themselves. In a general sense, this could be related in Turner's terms to the transmission of blood from generation

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* Although white fowls were killed in Pondoland in 1921, and in Zululand in 1909.

** The east was the direction from which ships on the eastern coast of the Cape province appeared to arrive with their cargo of immigrant Europeans. 4,000 British settlers arrived by sea in Algoa Bay in 1820. 1,000 German settlers landed at the mouth of the Buffalo River in 1854.

to generation and to an index of membership in a corporate Xhosa group. More specifically it could be associated with Xhosa conservatism. Among Europeans, the conservative or 'tribal' Xhosa have become known as 'red-blanket' or 'red' people, after the colour of their ochre-stained apparel. These are opposed to town or 'school' Xhosa.[13] Reds are associated with everything that is conservative and traditional in Xhosa society, and these conservatives in modern times are sometimes scorned by their 'school' counterparts. It can be argued that the 'red/school' dichotomy is a product of modern times, and that until industrialization increased urban immigration, this dichotomy did not exist. Furthermore, 'reds' are not called bomvu, or 'red', by Xhosa, but qwaba, a term which does not signify a colour. This argument does not, however, eliminate the fact that the ochre-stained blanket has always been associated with 'tribalism' and need not have become part of the terminology. If this association is valid, then the returning sun could have symbolized a return to the old values and customs of the people, a rejection of the new life and a return to the old.

According to Mutwa, the part of the message delivered by Nongqause that the dead chiefs were going to rise up from the dead, was what caused the most excitement among the people.[14] Although this part of the message can be related to the Christian doctrine of resurrection, I consider two other aspects which involve Xhosa belief to be far more important than the Christian belief in this regard. The first of these is the Xhosa idea that man originated from a bed of reeds. In

similar fashion, the men who came to deliver the message to Nongqause rose up among the reeds at the pool. Here we have as it were a second coming; new men arriving out of a bed of reeds in order to announce the millennium. It is, as it were, the story of the creation being re-enacted. The second aspect involves the belief that the chiefs were 'the fathers of the people'. It was surely not difficult for Xhosa to associate the part of the message which foretold the resurrection of the chief with the rebirth of the Xhosa nation.

There was nothing to make Xhosa suspect that Nongqause had not held communion with the ancestors as they stood among the reeds, and neither can it be said that Nongqause herself did not believe it. Among Xhosa, there is one region in which direct communication between the living and the ancestral spirits takes place, and where reference to the priest-diviners is often dispensed with, that is in the world of dreams. The line of demarcation between dreams and visions seems so thin that it is scarcely worth considering them as differing materially.[15.] According to Soga, dreams exert a 'fascinating influence' over Xhosa. A Xhosa firmly believes that when he is asleep, visions, <u>particularly from the spirit world</u>, must be accepted as real manifestations. 'Argument will not convince him to the contrary.'[16.] If in the course of his sleep, a father or mother, long dead, should appear to the sleeper, talk with him, give warning of some impending trouble or disaster, and advise a sacrifice to be made so as to avert it, the sacrifice will invariably be made.

According to one source, Nongqause often visited the pool by the river, and was fond of sitting among the reeds there.[17] It is possible of course that during one of these visits, she fell asleep, and dreamed of the 'strange men' with their message, but a more likely answer is that Nongqause was a novitiate priest-diviner under the tutelage of her father. During the initial stage of entrance into the position of gqira, the novitiate is reported to be 'ill'. He or she sees visions of a peculiar nature. As was shown in Chapter 4, this is common among many people of the area. These novitiates are usually of a 'highly neurotic temperament', who during the course of their 'illness' are usually for long periods in a state of trance, and often hear voices while in this state. If Nongqause was not in a state of trance when she first 'saw the ancestors' there is every reason to believe that this was the case when she later stood in the river 'hearing the voices of the spirits'.

There is one aspect of the message which has not yet been explained, and that is the reference to Europeans being turned into 'frogs, mice and insects'. There is unfortunately no reference material on the symbolic associations of animals in Xhosa culture. It was possible for ancestors to appear sometimes in the form of small animals, but the idea of men being turned into animals does not appear to have been a widespread one. An investigation into Xhosa animal categories along the lines suggested by Leach in his paper concerning animal categories and verbal abuse might well be rewarding.[18] Leach suggests

that verbal abuse is in some way linked with what Radcliffe-Brown called the ritual value of the animal category concerned, and that this ritual value is linked in some as yet undetermined way with rules and taboos concerning the killing and eating of these and other animals. In this way edible substances that by culture and language are not recognized as food at all are unconsciously tabooed. Among Xhosa, I have found that frogs are viewed with the greatest revulsion, even the touching of a frog is believed sufficient to induce warts. Although I have no knowledge of any taboo associated with mice, contact with certain insects such as the 'praying mantis' or Hottentot's God is usually avoided. But again, a lack of reference material on this subject is a limiting factor in such an investigation.

I now come to consider the effects of the Cattle-killing. My task is considerably easier than that of social anthropologists who attempt to appreciate the effects of cargo movements. The passage of a hundred years in time allows the picture to be seen in broader perspective.

Effects: The Political Significance of the Cattle-killing.

An important factor which must not be overlooked in an assessment of the effects of the Cattle-killing, concerns the morale and strength of European settlers at the frontier before and after the actual movement. While much attention has of necessity been focused on the position of the Xhosa at this time, it must be remembered that

the European community too, was in a state of turmoil. Eight wars had been fought against Xhosa, and in most of these, the outlying European farms had suffered much damage. It was only with the assistance of British garrisons, scattered throughout the frontier districts, that the wars had eventually been won, and 'order' restored. Whilst the farmers were able to form up into commandos which were effective for guerilla-type raids, these commandos could not match a full Xhosa army. In turn, Xhosa warriors had themselves conducted a successful type of guerilla warfare upon isolated farms. These sporadic and unexpected attacks appear to have had a most demoralizing effect on European settlers. Insecurity was not conducive to economic growth in the area. Settlers were impatient with what they regarded as ineffective steps taken on the part of the administration to ensure their safety. Trouble in this regard had been brewing since the first Xhosa war of 1778. This was one of the main factors which led to the abandonment of the Cape Colony by many thousands of European burghers who trekked north to make a new life for themselves. In the districts of Beaufort, Graaff-Reinet, Somerset, Albany and Uitenhague, the part of the frontier which had suffered most attacks, the exodus began in earnest in 1833.* Those who remained behind, mainly British settlers, unsuccessfully entreated the Burgher leaders not to embark on the trek. What the eventual outcome would have been if the trek north had been

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* Cf. Appendix I for reasons of trek.

maintained over a longer period of time, and if Xhosa attacks on those remaining behind had continued, is open to conjecture.

The climactic Cattle-killing created a social explosion which reverberated throughout the entire country. Its effects, although disguised, and spread in new directions, can still be detected today. After the failure of the movement, a period of enforced peace ensued. During this time, missionaries and administrators enjoyed an era of unprecedented development and expansion in their respective fields. The acceptance of the teachings of both missionaries and educationalists by large numbers of Africans, coupled with immigration into the cities and minefields in search of work, led to the gradual emergence of a new class of intellectual and social élite, the 'school' people. These new movements were not conservative and 'backward-looking' as the Cattle-killing had been. The number of separatist churches which were established by these people continues to grow at a phenomenal rate. In 1913 there were thirty, but by 1948 the figure had risen to eight hundred. In 1960 there were two thousand two hundred.[19].

In the political field itself, the power of the nation was effectively and finally broken. Very little short of a serious genocide policy on the part of the Administration could have achieved the same results as quickly. The way was opened for the eventual annexation of the whole territory to the British Crown in 1865, and it has remained under European control ever since.

Final Remarks.

My first aim in writing this thesis was to undertake a thorough investigation of the millenarian movements in South Africa, and by analysing the movement which was by far the most important of these, the Cattle-killing of the Xhosa, I have sought to bring about a better understanding of their nature. I have concentrated especially on the three questions of motivation, means and effects, and have attempted to show that while the predisposing causes are to be sought in the field of contact between white and black people, the 'enabling conditions' or the means of bringing about the desired end such as the Xhosa Golden Age, are to be sought in the intellectual field of the people. In this regard I have sought to illustrate the essential conservatism of South African millenarian movements. To see them in the light of purely 'nationalistic' or 'revolutionary' movements, is to gain a false impression of them.

Secondly, I have considered the Cattle-killing movement with regard to the theoretical contributions of social anthropologists on millenarian movements in other parts of the world. This has been of great assistance to me in my attempt to achieve the third aim of this thesis, that is, to replace the theories of historians and others with regard to the Cattle-killing, with a social anthropological interpretation more valid than those it seeks to refute.

Perhaps the most striking impression which a study of the Cattle-killing movement makes upon one, is that of its apparent tragic

inevitability. It could be said that it would have appeared as strange had the movement not occurred under the given circumstances. We can now see in the early movements as conducted by Umlangeni and Makana, gropings towards the 'truth' which was finally provided by Nongqause and Mhlakaza. None of the portents could be appreciated by the Governors who sought to give an answer in military terms to what was essentially a social problem. The cure served only to aggravate the condition.

Since 1857, as we have seen in Chapter 4, at least two other active millenarian movements have manifested themselves. On both occasions these were supported in the main by rural people. The Wellingtonites and the Bullhoek Israelites both found their most ardent adherents among the 'red-blanket' people, whose beliefs and way of life have not changed to the same extent as those of urban Xhosa. It is significant that both these movements called for a return to 'the old ways'. No evidence of a truly active millenarian movement can be found in modern times among educated or 'detribalized' school people. There has instead been a phenomenal increase in 'forward-looking' separatist churches, which can truly be described as the forerunners of true nationalism among Xhosa. This would seem to lend support to my contention that millenarianism among Africans, at least in its active form, while usually being induced by conditions of strain in the society, is implied essentially in the logic of traditional religious practice and belief.

Appendix A

Extract of letter from the Rev. Theophilus Jousse to the High Commissioner.

Thaba Bosigo, 4th June, 1856.

---I am also charged with the translation for you of his speech, which he made me yesterday in the presence of several of his councillors:-

"Sir, I have just learnt what has much afflicted me. I am accused of having made an alliance with all the Blacks who are situated on the Borders of the Free State and the Colony, in order that we may mutually assist each other in a war which I Moshesh intend to foment against the whites who inhabit the country above mentioned. I am said even to have already sent messengers to different parts of South Africa for this purpose. Sir, I am happy in being able to declare that all this is untrue, and that those who have so spoken of me have but one aim,- that of bringing my name into disfavour, and exciting the whites against me. I am not fond of war. I have proved this often; and if unhappily it should break out, I shall have been dragged into it by men who desire to rob me of a country which several treaties with the English Government bear testimony to being mine. At this very moment these same persons seek a pretext for beginning a war, which I am striving to avoid. I consider however that I have given sufficient proofs of my fidelity to the Government of the Queen for her subjects

to be without any apprehension as regards me.

Although I am a man without much experience in the wisdom of the whites, I assert that Peace is the mother of the greater portion of the blessings which are enjoyed upon earth, whilst war brings in its train great misery and deprives us of our children. I have lived long enough to appreciate the blessings of Peace. Since the reports I have just alluded to have had the effect of giving birth to apprehension in the Colony, I beg His Excellency to inform his children that Moshesh only desires their good, and that were it in his power to harm them he would not.'

I unite with Moshesh, My Lord, in wishing you peace and prosperity, and in offering you the assurance of my devotion.

(Signed) Theop. Jousse.

B.R., pp. 195-196.

Appendix B

Extract from a Report of the Gaika Commissioner to Governor Sir George Grey.

Dohne, 3rd May, 1856.

(Acknowledges receipt of a letter from the Governor, with enclosures, calling upon him to ascertain if there was any truth in the rumours of a combination among the Native Tribes.)

Since the close of the late war, matters have been somewhat as described in the reports, that is, messages have passed between Kreli and Moshesh to the intent of establishing friendly relations and for the formation of a combination for mutual assistance in case of need, but that anything further has been done, or that an aggressive movement is in contemplation, I have not yet been able to learn.

(Signed) Chas. Brownlee, Gaika Commissioner.

B.R. p. 187.

Appendix C

Letter from the Chief Moshesh to the High Commissioner.

Thaba Bosigo, 6th October, 1856.

Governor, - Your letter of the 27th September was delivered to me yesterday, Sunday, as we were going to prayers, and I only read it after afternoon service.

The contents of it gratified me, inasmuch as it proves that I am in debt to you, and that you desire my welfare; for though I am but a sinner you are desirous of conferring on my country a school of Industry. I am gratified by this: nevertheless the idea that Your Excellency believes that I harbour in my heart thoughts hostile to your Government, and that I speak in one way and act in another, is very painful to me.

I beseech Your Excellency not to credit the reports of men who take advantage of my name to spread such false words. My conduct towards the English Government has ever been the same; I owe being what I am to the Gospel and the Government of the Queen, and should you cease to trust me and throw me off, it would not alter my feelings towards you.

I beseech Your Excellency not to render my position as a chief still more complicated by mixing me up in a business that does not

concern me. I already find myself sufficiently embarrassed, occupied as I am in endeavouring to settle satisfactorily the question now pending between me and the Free State.

Kreli is equally a Black as myself, but he is my enemy. He killed one of my brothers in war, and I have had no sort of intercourse with him for more than three years. I am therefore quite in the dark as to what is passing in his country, and it is from my missionary (who had his information from a Cape newspaper) that I learnt a false prophet had given a general order for cattle to be killed, and had said it would come to life again.

I beseech Your Excellency to believe in the sincerity of my affection and fidelity, and you have my authority for denying in my name any sort of report which aims at making me out the instigator of the troubles which agitate Kaffraria.

I, Moshesh, send you my most cordial salutation.

(Letter continued by the Rev. Mr. Jousse)

Such, Governor, are the words which I took down from Moshesh's own mouth, and which he gave me, in writing, and which I have only translated.

I have no private interest in occuping myself in matters which are not within the province of my ministry; but if testimony on my part could be of any utility, I would not hesitate to say that Moshesh appeared to be perfectly sincere in what he has just answered to Your Excellency. Believe, Governor, in the attachment of your humble servant,

(Signed) T.Jousse, V.D.M.

Basutoland Records, Vol. II. pp. 244-5.

Appendix D

Extract from Letter from the Chief Moshesh to the President of the Orange Free State.

Thaba Nchu, 17th October, 1856.

My Friend, - A letter has just reached me written by the Governor, the contents of which have made me feel great sorrow. It is said therein that if I have asked for time it was only to call my people together. This, however, is not so. Again it is said by the Governor that it was I who caused the late disturbances among the Amaxosa Kaffirs. These news I know not who has told them, for they are not news of truth. And I beseech you, saying, can you deny this for me by the Governor? For this news has caused me much to doubt, and I said, wherefore am I still seeking cattle when people say I am calling my people together--?

Basutoland Records Vol. II. p. 245.

Appendix E

Letter from the Gaika Commissioner to the Chief Commissioner of Kaffraria.

Dohne, 5th Nov., 1856.

Sir, - With reference to the statement of the Chief Moshesh to His Excellency the Governor, to the effect that he had no intercourse with Kreli for the last three years, in consequence of enmity between the chiefs caused by Kreli's having in war put to death a near relative of Moshesh, I beg to state that the reason assigned by Moshesh had no foundation in fact, there having been no collision between Moshesh and the Kaffirs for at least sixteen years.

So far as I am acquainted with the intercourse of Moshesh with the Kaffirs, it is as follows:-

About 1838 Gasela made two forays against Moshesh, in which he captured many cattle and sheep and killed some of Moshesh's people.

Shortly after this, Umyalusa the son of Kahabe, and Qamba the son of Hlambe, went with a number of their people and settled in Moshesh's country. They were kindly received and well treated, but after a time, the Basutos fell upon them by night, murdering almost the whole of them, and taking all their cattle, Qamba and Umyalusa were among those killed.

About 1841 or 1842, Kama left the Gunukwebi Tribe, and obtained permission from Moshesh to settle on the Tyumbu or Kraai River. Mani, I think, settled there, but I do not believe that Kama personally occupied

the country given to him by Moshesh.

From the time that Kama began his intercourse with Moshesh, friendly communications were established between the Kaffirs and Moshesh, and have uninterruptedly existed to the present time, without the least collision or ill-feeling on either side.

During the war of 1850, Moshesh sent an embassy to Sandile, and while with Sandile in the Amatole, Matana, Sandile's brother, and Seti, the son of the chief counsellor, stole five of the horses of Moshesh's messengers, and Qotshi, the son of Siku, was employed to search for these horses and recover them for the owners.

Immediately after the engagement at Berea, Moshesh sent a deputation to Kreli to inform him that he had conquered the English, and the war with the Kaffirs not then having been brought to a close the Kaffirs fully expected succour from Moshesh.

After the conclusion of the war, Kreli twice sent messengers to Moshesh, on one occasion the sons of Gocini were sent, and on another Cata, the son of Vasi, was Kreli's messenger.

I believe that after this messengers have been down from Moshesh, but of this I cannot speak with any certainty.

As reported to you in my letter of 24th September, Kreli sent messengers to the Chiefs west of the Kei, to inform them that he had received orders to inform all the Chiefs, Moshesh included, of the orders he had received at Umhlakaza's.

I believe that Kreli did send messengers to Moshesh, but on this

point I have not been able to receive definite information. About a month after, however, messengers from Moshesh should have returned, I received information that Napakade, the supreme ruler, living far off in the north, had sent orders to his subordinates Uhlanga and Sifubasibangi to make an open manifestation to the Kaffirs of the truth of what had been asserted by Umhlakaza; this Napakade was supposed to be Moshesh, and this is also my opinion.

(Signed) Charles Brownlee, Gaika Commissioner.

Basuto Records, pp. 251-252.

Appendix F

Extract from a Report of the Superintendent of the Wittenbergen Native Reserve.

Wittenbergen, 28th Oct., 1856.

I believe that the departure of Moshesh's messengers was not generally known by the natives up here, and that it has been kept a great secret. I am now fully satisfied that a constant communication is kept up between Moshesh and the lower Kaffir Chiefs. I am also of the opinion that nothing of any importance would be done, either by Moshesh or the lower Chiefs, without such an intention having been first communicated to each other.

(Signed) Jno. Austen.

Appendix G

Extract of letter from Phillips to Buxton.

1st September, 1833.

I see by the papers today that our new Governor has left Demarara amidst the regrets of the colonists, I am almost in despair at the circumstances. Had they had public rejoicings on the occasion, I should have had more hope of him. "Oh Lord! how long" are we to have such men sent to us as governors?"

Appendix H

PONDO SONGS Translated by Mutwa, 1966.

1) You will not tell me Nongqause,
That I must kill my kine.
You will not tell me Nongqause,
That I must burn my grain.
The Xhosa died because of your word;
They died and are no more,
So I shall tell you Nongqause,
Take the long, long way,
And preach and prophesy, Nongqause,
To the monkeys and baboons, Nongqause,
To the monkeys and baboons.

2) She was a seer so she said, so she said, so she said;
She was a Wise One, so she said, so she said, so she said.
She saw the Tall Men of the forest and she took their words for truth.
The wretched Xhosa dared believe her, they took her words for sooth,
They died of hunger, ate each other - they drenched the land with blood.
The elders waited by the gravesides, but no heroes came to life!
The herdboys waited by the lone trees, yet the earth produced no cows!
And those that waited by the fields, they saw no corn appear.
And they died while feasting 'pon each other like wild beasts.
Oh Pondo in these pleasant valleys, shun that woman there -
Spit upon her passing footsteps; turn your heads away -
The many ghosts of murdered Xhosa haunt her till she dies.
Oh shun that woman there. Oh shun that woman there.

Appendix I

Causes of the Great Trek.

P.Retief's declaration, dated 22nd January, 1837.

(1) We despair of saving the Colony from those evils which threaten it by the turbulent and dishonest conduct of vagrants, who are allowed to infest the country in every part: nor do we see any prospect of peace or happiness for our children in a country thus distracted by internal commotions.

(2) We complain of the severe losses which we have been forced to sustain by the emancipation of our slaves, and the vexatious laws which have been enacted respecting them.

(3) We complain of the continual system of plunder which we have for years endured from the Kaffirs and other coloured classes, and particularly by the last invasion of the Colony, which has desolated the frontier districts and ruined most of the inhabitants.

(4) We complain of the unjustifiable odium which has been cast upon us by interested and dishonest persons, under the name of Religion, whose testimony is believed in England to the exclusion of all evidence in our favour: and we can foresee, as the result of this prejudice, nothing but the total ruin of the countries.

Cf. Theal, 1887, History of the Boers in South Africa, p. 61, for the remaining six causes not directly related to this thesis.

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53. Godlonton, (1852), p. 130.
54. MacMillan, (1927), p. 265.
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56. Ibid.
57. Ibid, p. 290.
58. Theal, (1908), Vol. 111, p. 99.
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60. Theal, (1908), Vol. 111, p. 100.
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62. Ibid, p. 107.
63. Ibid, p. 181.
64. Warner, (1858)..
65. Ibid, p. 6.
66. Ibid.
67. Theal, (1908), Vol. 111, p. 57.
68. Ibid, p. 182.
69. Ibid, p. 49.
70. Basutoland Records, Vol. 11, p. 229.

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2. Ibid, p. 11.
3. Cf. Jarvie, (1964), p. 83.
4. Theal, (1908), Vol. 111, p. 191.
5. Kidd, (1904), p. 190.
6. Soga, (1930).
7. Ibid, p. 242.
8. Walker, (1956), p. 289.
9. Van der Merwe, (1936), p. 139.
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17. Brownlee, (1896), p. 153.
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24. Ibid, p. 231.
25. Mutwa, (1964) and (1966).
26. Ibid, (1966), p. 291.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, p.313.
29. Cf. Chapter IV.
30. Johns, (1965), p. 290.

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2. Smith and Dale, (1920), p. 140.
3. Ibid, p. 143.
4. Ibid, p. 145.
5. Quoted by Smith and Dale, op. cit. p. 146.
6. Smith and Dale, op. cit. pp. 148-149.
7. Ibid, p. 145.
8. Willoughby, (1928), pp. 123-126.
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13. Theal, (1876), p. 320.
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17. Willoughby, (1928), p. 122.
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26. Lewis, (1966).
27. Smith and Dale, (1920), Vol. II, pp. 345-346.
28. MacMillan, (1928), p. 291.
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3. Ibid, p. 113.
4. Ibid.
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6. Jarvie, (1963), p. 27.
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9. Stanner, (1953), p. 71.
10. Belshaw, (1950).
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13. Ibid, pp. 123-124.
14. Inglis, (1957).
15. Worsley, (1957), p. 225.
16. Guiart, (1951), (1952a), (1952b).
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24. Junod, (1938), p. 62.
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27. Leach, (1967).
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32. Pocock, (1961), p. 112.
33. Jarvie, (1964).
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2. Walker, (1957), p. 160.
3. Lawrence, (1965), p. 5.
4. Ibid, p. 223.
5. Eiselen, vide Schapera, (1934), p. 247.
6. Kidd, (1925), p. 89.
7. Soga, (1931), p. 261.
8. Lawrence, (1964), p. 235.
9. Turner, (1962), p.125.
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