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STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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"Neo-Fichtean Nationalists" and/or Organic Intellectuals?

Revisiting the Ideological Entrepreneurs of Modern Afrikaner Nationalism

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The point of departure for this paper is a minor puzzle in the historiography of Afrikaner nationalism which I hope will provide an opportunity to raise some larger questions about the role of intellectuals in ethnic mobilisation, more particularly in the intellectual and historical context of a postcolonial society. If initially it may seem that I am pursuing some of the more esoteric byways in the literature this will nevertheless, I hope, prove to be relevant to those larger questions. No doubt the problem of the role of certain Afrikaner intellectuals as the ideological entrepreneurs par excellence of modern Afrikaner nationalism could also be addressed in other ways. Thus it could be most illuminating to take up the controversial and provocative challenge posed by the reductionist interpretation of O'Meara and to see to what extent the ideological projects of intellectuals such as Diedericha, Piet Meyer, Geoff Cronje etc. can be accounted for in terms of the class interests of the Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie (O'Meara, 1983?). That will not be the strategy of this paper. Our approach will rather be to raise the problem of the role of intellectuals in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism more nearly at their own level, that of intellectual history (which is not necessarily incompatible with a historical critique of ideologies).

The puzzle concerns the use of the term "neo-Fichtean nationalism". Somehow this term has become established as an accepted category in the literature on Afrikaner nationalism, especially with reference to the crucial period from the 1930s and the role of such intellectuals as Diedericha, Meyer, Cronjé,

Verwoerd etc. It is by no means a familiar or self-explanatory rubric. But in this literature it is utilised all too readily, usually with a minimum in the way of explication. A few recent examples should suffice. Thus in his most recent account of the history of Afrikaner nationalism Hermann Giliomee asserts that, rather than any neo-Calvinist ideas, the metaphysical beliefs about nationhood propounded by Afrikaner ideologues, such as Diederichs, Verwoerd, Meyer and Cronje, were "inspired by the thinking of Herder and Fichte" during their studies in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s (Giliomee and Sclemmer, 1989: 44). Again Dirk van Zyl Smit, in his pioneering account of the parts played by Cronje and Willemse in founding criminology as an academic discipline in South Africa in relation to Afrikaner nationalism, situates all this by citing Dunbar Moodie (of whom more anon) about "young Afrikaner intellectuals ... coming home from Europe inspired by the ideals of neo-Fichtean nationalism" (Van Zyl Smit, 1988: 8). And Gerrit Olivier, in his major new study of N.P.Van Wyk Louw, likewise invokes the influence of Fichte and the existence of "neo-Fichtean views" to characterise Diederich's seminal address on Nasionalisme as Lewensbeskouing (Olivier, 1988: 44 f). Further instances may readily be found. Evidently the category of "neo-Fichtean nationalism", as applied to Afrikaner nationalist intellectuals at this time, is held to be informative, reliably established and unproblematic.

But what precisely is the term meant to convey? It would seem to be at least something like the following: key intellectuals like Diederichs, Cronje and Meyer were active during the 1930s in providing a major intellectual thrust, expressed in terms of particular philosophical and metaphysical ideas, to the Afrikaner nationalist movement of the time; these ideas were derived from their graduate studies in Europe, and especially in Germany, during the 1920s and 1930s and were thus rooted in nationalist intellectual and political traditions then current on the Continent; the nationalist traditions concerned were revivals of,

or can trace their roots back to, the ideas of the philosopher J.G. Fichte at the beginning of the 19th century. In short, the term suggests a particular connection between Afrikaner nationalism and an extraneous source, that of German nationalism, and one mediated at the level of abstract ideas by particular Afrikaner intellectuals.

Of course we should not make too much of what are, after all, fairly incidental usages of a not particularly important term in the literature. However, I would like to suggest that it is worth reflecting on the relative currency achieved by this term in the literature, and to insist on its provenance and implications, precisely because it is prima facie such an unlikely candidate. Fichte, after all, is one of the more abstruse of the German idealist philosophers, of interest to specialists primarily as a transitional figure on the way from Kant to Hegel, and hardly intelligible to anyone outside this special context. Though at one important moment, in 1807-8 during the War of Liberation, Fichte's Reden an die Deutsche Nation made a dramatic impact on German public opinion Fichte, like Herder, was not himself a German nationalist nor a major figure in the history of German nationalism. Typically Werner Conze's The Shaping of the German Nation barely mentions Fichte in passing among a host of other intellectuals with similar or greater influence in the making of German nationalism (Conze, 1979: 26). And though Louis Snyder indeed claims in his German Nationalism that "in the making of German nationalism no small part fell to the eloquent Fichte" (Snyder, 1952: 130) he significantly does not provide any extensive treatment of this contribution apart from repeated mentions of his name along with those of a variety of other philosophers and intellectuals. Leonard Krieger provides a more incisive and substantial account of Fichte's volatile and sometimes quite esoteric political theories (Krieger, 1957: 178-192) but this also amply demonstrates the difficulties that would be involved in accommodating Fichte to the mainstream of emergent German

nationalism. In short, Fichte's philosophy had a tangential and transient impact on early German nationalism at the beginning of the 19th century. "Fichtean nationalism" is not a familiar category in the historiography of German nationalism (with one important exception, that of Kedourie, to which I will return). The social bases and political agents crucial for the making of modern German nationalism in the post-Bismarckian period are found in a very different range of late 19th century pressure groups and ideological concerns (Berdahl, 1972; Eley 1980, 1981). The idea of such a Fichtean core doctrine in German nationalism would amount to one more instance of the anachronistic projection of later conceptions of German national identity onto earlier periods when they could not yet have made historical sense (Sheehan, 1981). Nor is (neo-)Fichtean nationalism a familiar term in the wider comparative literature on nationalism: it does not occur, for example, among the many varieties and sub-varieties of nationalist movements distinguished by John Breuilly (Breuilly, 1982) nor among the elaborate typologies developed by Anthony Smith in his Theories of Nationalism (Smith, 1971; cf. also Smith, 1979). More generally, even if we do not want to insist on the (neo-)Fichtean component, the notion of a special linkage between German and Afrikaner nationalism, whether during the 1920s and 1930s or at any other time, would appear highly tenuous at best. Unless, that is, the "neo-Fichtean" terminology is to be taken as a euphemism for the reception of national-socialist ideas in Afrikaner politics. That would indeed be a quite specific if also complex and controversial charge, and one which has been argued often enough without any need to bring Fichte or his latterday revivals, if any, into the picture at all. Indeed -- and this is the point of our detour --there is reason to wonder why such an obscure and unwarranted term as "neo-Fichtean nationalism" has become accepted in the literature on Afrikaner nationalism, and what its function in this context actually is.

This point is underscored if we take a fresh look at some of the key texts by Afrikaner intellectuals from the 1930s supposedly exemplifying this "neo-Fichtean nationalism". There can be no doubt that in Afrikaner politics the 1930s was a time of great ideological ferment, and that the prevalence of "alien" (vreemde) ideologies was a marked feature of contemporary Afrikaner political discourse. How to characterise and interpret this ideological activity, what its contribution to the mainstream of modern Afrikaner nationalism actually amounted to, indeed, what the role of the intellectuals involved in the reception and articulation of these ideological notions were in the broader context of ethnic mobilisation and the economic, cultural and political projects of Afrikaner nationalism at the time -- these are precisely some of the larger questions to be raised. The immediate puzzle is whether there is even a prima facie case for introducing the category of "neo-Fichtean nationalism" into this discussion. Consider the text usually treated as the pièce de resistance of Afrikaner neo-Fichtean nationalism in this context, Dr.N.J.Diederichs' Nasionalisme as Lewensbeskouing (1935). Strictly speaking it is significant more for its selfconscious concern with articulating nationalism as a specific ideology or world view rather than for any particular doctrinal innovation. The actual content of Diederichs' nationalism is fairly unremarkable; what is relatively new but would become characteristic of the 1930s is his attempt at a systematic ideological statement. Substantively the most notable feature of Diederichs' address is the great stress laid on nationalism as exemplifying man's "spiritual" (geestelike) nature and striving, in contrast to the "materialism" of internationalism and other ideologies. In the ideological context of the time this "idealist" emphasis is indeed of some significance: at the very least it implies a deliberate distancing from ideologies stressing the central importance of common biological descent and a common territorial origin (Blut und Boden) as in National-Socialism. Of course there is also a large measure of similarity in the common

voluntarist stress on the constitutive significance of human and social life as essentially "a process, a becoming, a deed" so that the fully spiritual man is held to be "what he has become in and through himself" and human nature "is not a mere fact but a task, a calling, an idea" (Diederichs, 1935: 18-19, as translated by Moodie, 1975: 157). But then this voluntarist discourse, whether in more idealist or more irrationalist versions, were common coin among a variety of Continental thinkers from Spengler to Berdyaev, and may even be found in such an influential cultural figure of the 19th century as Carlyle (a significant influence on van Wyk Louw). Diederichs specifically applies this vision of becoming through "continual struggle" to the nation as a spiritual being, and makes the strong claim that individuals have existence only in so far as they are taken up into the national whole (Diederichs, 1935: 24). In contrast to the individualist assumptions of a liberal tradition, this posits the priority of the nation as a social and political category: "The nation contains the essence of being human. It is the form of the individual's spiritual realization and perfection" (Diederichs, 1935: 52-53, as translated by de Klerk, 1976: 206). Undoubtedly this implies a different social metaphysics, to use Dunbar Moodie's term in this context, than that involved in liberalism or socialism. But then this is the social metaphysics implied by any standard nationalist discourse (except perhaps for some "liberal nationalist" variants), and there seems to be no particular need to invoke the name of Fichte to account for this. If Diederichs' nationalist discourse was characterised by a notable idealist slant, so was such seminal local articulations of Afrikaner nationalism as Die Geloofsbelydenis van 'n Nasionalis (1913) by Tobie Muller. And Muller was philosophically rooted in pragmatism rather than in any Continental traditions, while also espousing a more moderate form of the nationalist ideal. On the face of it the intellectual continuities are such that there seems to be little reason to interpose a (neo-)Fichtean source to account for the articulation of the core

notions, as distinct from the more rhetorical flourishes, of mainstream Afrikaner nationalism from Muller to Diederichs. By the time we get to P.J. Meyer's tracts Die Afrikaner and Demokrasie of Volkstaat of the early 1940s (Meyer, 1941; 1942) it is a different story: this is a highly charged discourse whose ideological interventions are evidently derived from outside the local political context -- though the probable sources and influences are readily to be found among contemporary German ideologues without having to bring Fichte into the picture at all. There is indeed a genuine problem here: how do the projects of such Afrikaner ideologues as Meyer and Cronjé fit into the articulation of Afrikaner nationalism from Tobie Muller to Diederichs and beyond? The puzzle from which we start is why such an unlikely notion as "neo-Fichtean nationalism" could have become accepted as providing even part of the answer to this problem.

Let us take a closer look, then, at the uses and provenance of this idiosyncratic term in the literature on Afrikaner nationalism. It figures repeatedly in the writings of the philosopher Johan Degenaar, perhaps understandably since he is avowedly more interested in constructing an ideal-typical model of "volksnasionalisme" bringing out its philosophical assumptions than in a more strictly historical account of the roles of intellectuals in the ideological construction of a nationalist movement (Degenaar, 1976: 44f; 1982: 17f etc). Characteristically he stresses the Kantian concept of self-determination, applied to a people rather than the individual, as the basic philosophical assumption of nationalism -- though no one would presumably want to impute any particular historical connection between Kant and Diederichs or Piet Meyer. The major source for this usage of "neo-Fichtean nationalism" is, however, undoubtedly to be found in the work of Dunbar Moodie. In Chapter 8 of The Rise of Afrikanerdom, entitled "Organization and Ideology: Developments on the Cultural Front, 1930-1938" Moodie provides a detailed and extended account of "neo-Fichtean nationalism" with special reference to the

writings of Diedericha and Meyer (Moodie, 1975: 153-165). Moodie here claims that "the major thrust toward defining Afrikanerdom as the only truly South African 'nation' came from ... young Afrikaner intellectuals ... coming home after doctoral study in Europe inspired with the ideals of neo-Fichtean nationalism" (Moodie, 1975: 153-154). It could easily be shown that this is the direct *source and inspiration of the established usage of the term in this literature.*

Two aspects of Moodie's own usage should be noted with some care. First, Moodie introduced the notion of "neo-Fichtean nationalism" not as a general characterisation of Afrikaner nationalism then or since, but rather to designate a particular tendency next to others. He lists a particular grouping of intellectuals, active within the A.N.S. (Afrikaner Nasionale Studentebond), who are differentiated both from the more liberal nationalist tendency aseociated with the Malanite Nasionale Pers in the Cape as well as from the Kuyperian Calvinists based on Potchefstroom and influential in the Broederbond. He takes care to distinguish these from the contemporaneous expressions of grassroots anti-semitism and the exponents of national-socialism to be found in the Ossewa Brandwag and Pirow's Nuwe Orde. (Elsewhere he deals with such other distinctive traditions and tendencies in Afrikaner politics as the Murrayite tradition in the Dutch Reformed Church, the distinctive approach and following of Genl. Hertzog, etc). Moodie's terminology is thus evidently meant to be historically specific. However, it is not so much his careful designations or his fourfold differentiation of distinctive tendencies within Afrikaner nationalist politics which have gained general currency in the literature. Rather, it has been the peculiar term "neo-Fichtean nationalism" that has been taken up on various sides -- on occasion even to be applied as a generic characterisation of Afrikaner nationalism in general.

Secondly, Moodie also took care to indicate that he himself derived the term from Elie Kedourie's Nationalism (Kedourie, 1961),

but that he used it in a significantly different way (Moodie, 1975: 154 n.9). Whereas Kedourie focussed on Fichte in order to provide an interpretation of nationalism in general, Moodie was concerned with developing an analytical category for a specific historical application in a particular context. Once again the literature has tended to disregard Moodie's qualifications and reservations and to appropriate the core idea for more generalised usage regarding the intellectual thrust of Afrikaner nationalism. Indeed, we may begin to suspect that what has happened was less an appropriation of Moodie's historically specific account than, via the intermediary provided by his text, of Kedourie's general interpretation of nationalism applied to this formative moment of modern Afrikaner nationalism. To substantiate this, and to bring out its relevance to our larger problem, we need to look somewhat more closely at Kedourie's own work.

Kedourie's Nationalism (1961) is an unusual work. It shares a focus on the importance of the German idealist tradition of Kant and Fichte (though surprisingly little mention is made of Hegel) with the older history of ideas approach to nationalism; but it also shares key insights of the newer sociological literature in stressing the linkages between nationalism and modernisation or the key roles of ambitious intellectuals with blocked careers. (We will return to the question how these two perspectives go together). The unusual and surprising thing about Kedourie's Nationalism is that it is actually a passionately anti-nationalist tract. This is no mere critique of nationalism from a liberal or Marxist perspective, which would still be based on a shared commitment to the secular values of progress and modernity. Kedourie depicts nationalism as a (indeed as the) radically subversive movement and revolutionary doctrine of the modern era, and he does so from an essentially conservative perspective that seems to be rooted somewhere before the Revolution (whether of 1789 or its later equivalents elsewhere). The philosophical claim to autonomous self-determination, extended to nations as "natural" linguistic and

territorial units, was both made possible by the rapid social changes of modernising societies in Europe from the end of the 18th century and acted as the solvent for destabilising ancient empires and upsetting the intricate order among the European powers. It is characteristic of the revolutionary doctrine of self-determination underlying nationalism, writes Kedourie, "to disregard the limits imposed by nature and history, and to believe that a good will alone can accomplish miracles" (Kedourie, 1961: 109; cf.13-19, 74, 92-98. Cf. the summary in Smith, 1972: 9-12).

In the present context it will not be possible to follow the nuances and details of Kedourie's argument, which provides much of its force, but we must note a certain general paradox in his approach which is highly relevant to our problem of the role of intellectuals in the cultural politics of nationalism. On the one hand Kedourie insists on the priority of ideas in the history of nationalism, so that philosophers like Kant and Fichte appear as prime movers of world political change. (This has provoked Gellner to protest, even apart from disagreeing in general that the doctrinal or ideological history of nationalism is of much relevance to the understanding of it, that the Kantian notion of self-determination in particular is grossly miscast for this historical role -- Gellner, 1983: 130-134). On the other hand, Kedourie provides a decidedly relativising and determinist, not to say jaundiced, social explanation for the ideological projects of these same intellectuals. Thus in a passage deserving to be quoted at some length, he writes: "The writers who invented and elaborated the post-Kantian theory of the state belonged to a caste which was relatively low on the social scale (in a society which was rigidly stratified into hidebound castes). They were, most of them, the sons of pastors, artisans, or small farmers. They somehow managed to become university students, most often in the faculty of theology, and last out the duration of their course on minute grants, private lessons, and similar makeshifts. When they graduated they found that their knowledge opened no doors, that

they were still in the same social class, looked down upon by a nobility which was stupid, unlettered, and which engrossed the public employments they felt themselves so capable of filling. These students and ex-students felt in them the power to do great things, they had culture, knowledge, ability, they yearned for the life of action, its excitements and rewards, and yet there they were, doomed to spend heartbreaking years as indigent curates waiting to be appointed pastors, or as tutors in some noble household, where they were little better than superior domestics, or as famished writers dependent on the goodwill of an editor or a publisher....This created a remarkable gulf between political speculation and political practice which was no doubt also responsible for the extravagant hopes of spiritual fulfilment which they set on the state" (Kedourie, 1961: 43-44, 46). To the extent that this account succeeds in providing a sociological explanation, it becomes more difficult to recognise in these intellectuals the agents of that revolutionary doctrine that was changing the very assumptions of political life.

The paradox reappears in a somewhat different form in Kedourie's account of the later spread of nationalist movements in Europe and beyond. On the one hand he relates the revolutionary appeal of nationalism to the powerful social strains of societies in transition, and in particular to the special needs and aspirations in such times of the young: "Nationalist movements are children's crusades: their very names are manifestoes against old age: Young Italy, Young Egypt, The Young Turks, the Young Arab Party. When they are stripped of their metaphysics and their slogans.... such movements are seen to to satisfy a need ... to belong together in a coherent and stable community. Such a need is normally satisfied by the family, the neighbourhood, the religious community. ... It is no accident that nationalism was at its most intense where and when such institutions all over the world had little resilience (in the face of violent social and intellectual change)" (Kedourie, 1961: 101). In the same context, however, he

also comments that the rousing and heady doctrine of nationalism, which so appealed to young intellectuals (with Mazzini as the exemplary figure) did not have much actual success: "Conspiracies and agitations by students and ex-students led to nothing much", and nationalist objectives were actually achieved by, or in alliance with, real-politicians like Bismarck (Kedourie, 1961: 99). Again, if this explanation and assessment effectively cuts nationalist intellectuals and rhetoric down to size, it also leaves us without the agents of nationalism as an essentially revolutionary doctrine.

At this stage it may be possible to state both the relevance and the problematic of the Kedourian model of "neo-Fichtean nationalism" as applied to Afrikaner nationalism. What the Kedourian model proposes is a double thesis regarding the priority of ideas and the role of intellectuals in the articulation and propagation of nationalism. In the first instance nationalism has to be understood in terms of a particular idea, indeed a revolutionary doctrine, that of self-determination as applied to nations as "natural" linguistic and territorial units, and articulated by intellectuals like Kant and Fichte. In the second instance this core idea, paradigmatically articulated in the context of 19th century German and European nationalism, was then appropriated by other intellectuals, like Diederichs and Meyer, as a centrepiece of Afrikaner nationalism in the very different context of South Africa in the 1930s. Presumably much the same kind of sociological explanation regarding the unrealistic aspirations and blocked careers of able young intellectuals in the early 19th century German context would apply to these Afrikaner intellectuals as well. But if this explanation is self-defeating and paradoxical in the primary instance of "Fichtean nationalism" it must be doubly problematic in the secondary case of "neo-Fichtean nationalism".

This is no accidental abberation but goes to the heart of the Kedourian model as an idealist account of the origins and spread of nationalism. As a historical theory it is, as Anthony Smith

argues, an instance of the diffusionist explanation which accounts for the outward movement of the core doctrine of nationalism from the European heartlands through a process of imitation and importation involving the agency of the tiny educated elites of more backward societies (Smith, 1972: 27-29). Smith's trenchant summary of the assumptions and implications of this general approach is highly relevant to our purposes, and may be quoted at some length: "This classic picture of the spread of nationalism emphasises its Western origins and the 'alienity' of its content from the thoughts and sentiments of the populations and lands to which it was carried. The ideology is a quite new-fangled notion -- half-understood, misapplied, distorted. The political thinking of the indigenous intelligentsia is purely derivative, and on the whole out of place in the local setting. ... this stereotype of foreign students imbibing Rousseau, Marx and Mill at the Sorbonne or London School of Economics, only to miss the subtleties and nuances of their thought. Theories are mistaken for political slogans, and hypotheses are treated as straightjacketing doctrines, when the student returns to his traditional setting" (Smith, 1972: 29). The Kedourian model of the spread of nationalism provides a paradigm case of this process at work: "Not only does Kedourie treat the evolution of German thought .... as the main cause of German nationalism, bringing in other factors in a purely secondary role; he assumes the wholesale adoption of the results of this specifically German philosophical development by the intellectuals of other, often remote, areas, to account for the rise of nationalism elsewhere. The Kantian revolution is enacted everywhere" (Smith, 1972: 38). But, as Smith also points out, to the extent that this account avoids a sociological determinism of the intelligentsia's needs, it amounts to a historical determinism of <u>ideas</u>, resulting either in a circular argument or an illuminating empirical tautology. At best, Smith concludes, Kedourie's critique of nationalism "raises, though it disqualifies itself from answering, the difficult question of the precise

mechanisms whereby ideas help to undermine existing structures" (Smith, 1971: 39; cf.35). Moreover, we may add, this problem is raised not only concerning the primary cases of nationalist movements in Europe, but even more so regarding the transmission and reception of nationalist ideas in colonial or post-colonial societies. And so we are back to our main problem, the role of the ideological projects of, in our case, Afrikaans intellectuals such as Diederichs, Cronjé and Meyer in the nationalist movement of the 1930s.

A major reason for using the somewhat circuitous route of unpacking the assumptions and implications of a term such as "neo-Fichtean nationalism" in the literature on Afrikaner nationalism in order to address the role of these intellectuals in the Afrikaner nationalist movement is that it brings out quite sharply the underlying problems inherent to the intellectual and political history of (post-)colonial societies, especially in the crucial transitional phase of early industrialisation and modernisation. It follows from the very nature of the colonial context that the social and intellectual history of colonial discourses can not be studied in their own terms only. Not only did colonial settlements transplant fragments of cultures and traditions rooted in the parent societies (Hartz, 1964), but colonial traditions too did not then develop autonomously in some relatively self-contained social and political universe. The imperial power and metropolitan centre continued to be of primary significance to colonial developments and to provide much of the intellectual context for emergent colonial thinking as well. Accordingly, colonial intellectual history is characterised by a particular kind of combined and uneven development which is of critical importance to the historical understanding of colonial and post-colonial discourses (Rodney, 1974). Local traditions, including the emergent Afrikaner nationalist movement, had to define their own ideas, values and aims very much within the ambit of hegemonious imperialist and other "foreign" discourses even (and perhaps especially) where they

deliberately set themselves off against these.

Typically colonial and postcolonial intellectuals found themselves cast as ambiguous intermediaries in these complex exchanges. Effectively they had to function both as the missionary agents of civilised values and imperial discourses and as the spokesmen for local interests and communities. This is why the roles of intellectuals in emergent local traditions and movements characteristically did not fit either of the Gramscian categories of traditional or organic intellectuals (taking these terms in a somewhat more general sense than those specified by Gramsci himself -- Gramsci,). No doubt there are those cultural figures who may be regarded as the "organic intellectuals" of Afrikaner nationalism such as Totius, Gustav Preller or Langenhoven. While having an important part in the tasks of "inventing" nationalist traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) and of "building a nation from words" (Hofmeyr 1987) they drew largely on locally available resources of history and culture. But typically they belonged to an earlier generation and were primarily active in the Afrikaans language movement which preceded the more militant nationalist politics and heightened ideological ferment from the 1930s on. The key Afrikaans intellectuals of the next generation differed in a number of significant respects from these more organic predecessors.

It is a notable feature of Afrikaner nationalism from the 1930s on that the increase in political militancy is matched by the emergence of a variety of pronounced ideological projects, often of decidedly "foreign" provenance by what we may best term the Afrikaner ideologues of that period (Van Heerden, 1977). There is something paradoxical to the way in which the articulation of the undoubted "inward turn" involved in a more exclusivist mobilisation of Afrikaners in terms of their ethnic identity so explicitly drew on intellectual resources well outside local political and cultural traditions. This is the actual phenomenon which the rubric of "neo-Fichtean nationalism" so misleadingly and

inadequately depicts: young Afrikaner intellectuals, returning from graduate studies in Europe, and employing a new kind of political discourse, certainly one that was unfamiliar in local contexts and traditions, in launching ideological projects of considerable significance to the construction of modern Afrikaner nationalism at the time. If neither the literal content of this term nor the underlying Kedourian model of the nature of nationalism and the role of intellectuals in the spread of such movements will withstand much critical scrutiny, then this does not do away with the historical phenomenon of the Afrikaner ideologues to which it refers. In addressing this problem in more appropriate terms it may be relevant to keep the postcolonial context of this episode in our intellectual and political history in mind: Would it be helpful to analyse this as a further instance of the combined and uneven development characteristic of (post)colonial intellectual history? More concretely, how do the young Afrikaner intellectuals returning from graduate studies in Europe in the 1930s to intervene with pronounced ideological projects in local political movements compare to, say, young Afrikaner intellectuals returning from graduate studies in Europe in the 1850s to become embroiled in the "Liberaliemestryd" so crucial to intellectual and political developments in the Cape Colony (cf. du Toit, 1987; also du Plessis, 1988)? What are the structural similarities and dissimilarities in the reception of "imported" intellectual and ideological discourses in relation to local traditions and political movements in both cases? If the earlier episode clearly belongs to colonial intellectual and political history, what if any are the relevant differences with the latter case in the context of modern South Africa? Is it helpful to conceptualise and situate the actual phenomenon involved in the emergence of these Afrikaner ideologues more specifically in a postcolonial setting, and just what would that mean?

One of the relevant differences between the 1860s and the 1930s evidently is that local Afrikaner intellectual and political

traditions had become much better established and articulated, in part through successive generations of marginal colonial intellectuals mediating metropolitan and imperial discourses even while speaking up for the interests and values of local communities, but also due to the contribution of more "organic" intellectuals, the Prellers, Langenhovens and Totius, who deliberately set about constructing a nationalist tradition drawing on the resources available in local Afrikaner culture and history. (No doubt this contrast is overdrawn and will need to be qualified in important respects; still it can serve our present purposes of identifying the range and nature of the problems to be addressed). The interesting question suggested by this is that of the relation and interactions between the cultural and political projects of these organic Afrikaner intellectuals, which culminated during the 1930s in such effective popular mobilisations as the centennial celebrations of the Great Trek, and the more ideological projects, drawing on "foreign" discourses and intellectual resources, of the Afrikaner ideologues. To what extent were these different kinds of projects serving mutually complementary functions or in underlying conflict with each other; did they address distinct audiences and ranges of concern; which of these projects served more to define the main intellectual thrust of the Afrikaner nationalist movement and which were of marginal and secondary significance only? I do not think that we are at all in a position to answer questions like these without an intensive and critical re-examination of the available record, as well as substantial new research. What is needed, in effect, is something like the careful charting by Moodie of the various groupings and tendencies at work within the compass of the Afrikaner nationalist movement during the 1930s, but now informed by some of the larger historical and more theoretical questions suggested above.

In conclusion I would simply like to suggest some concrete topics for further research which would be relevant to a more appropriate perspective on the role of those Afrikaner

intellectuals so misleadingly designated as "neo-Fichtean Nationalists" in the literature. One approach would evidently be to inquire into the direct influences and actual sources of a Diederichs, Cronjé or Meyer. The results may sometimes be surprising. Thus Van Zyl Smit shows that the intellectual mentor of Cronjé was the Dutch criminologist Prof. W.A.Bonger, a "marxist" (Van Zyl Smit, 1989). The actual sources for Meyer's pronounced ideological discourse by the early 1940s may be even more telling. Another approach would be to ascertain the impact and reception of the more pronounced ideological discourses initiated by this group of intellectuals within the broader nationalist movement. On the one hand this may involve comparisons with the projects of the more "organic" Afrikaner nationalist intellectuals, as suggested above. On the other hand it would require a study of the organisational involvements and accomplishments of Diederichs, Cronjé, Meyer and other intellectuals first in the A.N.S. and later in the Broederbond and a range of cultural and political organisations and institutions. To what extent were their ideological projects an indispensable means for success in this organisational strategy, or a more incidental feature, perhaps even an encumbrance? In this respect it may be highly relevant to compare their ideological trajectories to that of the arch-typal Afrikaner intellectual of the 1930s, N.P.van Wyk Louw, who was equally immersed in the new ideological discourses emanating at the time from Europe, but explicitly and resolutely defined his cultural projects in opposition to the "organisation men" prominent in the political mobilisation of Afrikaner culture (Louw, 1938; cf. Olivier, 1988). Louw's work of this time would seem to offer a particularly fruitful field for investigation in that there are both continuities with and developments of the position of earlier Afrikaner intellectuals such as Tobie Muller, while he actually explicitly thematised the relation between a colonial and a national literature and culture. At another level Louw's intellectual and political development also provides evidence of

the complex interactions with the intellectual projects of Alfred Hoernlé (Giliomee, 1987; cf. du Toit, 1989), the major figure in the contemporary reconstruction of liberal discourse within the context of modern South Africa. Of course the intellectual qualities of Louw's work was of a different order to that of Afrikaner ideologues like Diederichs, Cronjé or Meyer and his impact on the nationalist movement was much more indirect and subtle (even while often providing more sensitive indications of the underlying problems and trends).

In short, it will only be through the accumulation of such concrete and detailed research into the projects of these Afrikaner ideologues of the 1930s, though also research informed by a wider range of historical, comparative and theoretical questions, that we may hope to gain a better and more appropriate understanding of the roles of such intellectuals in the construction of modern Afrikaner nationalism in the context of our post-colonial intellectual and political history. If their roles could neither have been those of "neo-Fichtean nationalists" on the Kedourian model, nor those of (Gramscian) "organic intellectuals", we may be in need of more adequate categories for these Afrikaner ideologues. That need is an indication of both the empirical and theoretical work that remains to be done.

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Abstract

'Neo-Fichtean Nationalists' and/or organic intellectuals? Revisiting the Ideological Entrepreneurs of Modern Afrikaner Nationalism

This paper uses a minor puzzle in the historiography of Afrikaner nationalism as a point of departure for raising some more general problems concerning the role of Afrikaner intellectuals in ethnic mobilisation from the 1930s. The puzzle concerns the apparent acceptance in the literature of the obscure category of 'neo-Fichtean nationalism' to characterise such key intellectuals as Diederichs, Cronjé and Meyer. It is argued that prima facie this term makes little sense and is unfamiliar in the literature on German nationalism and on nationalism more generally, thus raising questions about its functions in the literature on Afrikaner nationalism.

An investigation of the source and provenance of the term 'neo-Fichtean nationalism' shows that it can be traced to Moodie's Rise of Afrikanerdom but in fact involved an appropriation of key notions derived from Elie Kedourie's controversial Nationalism (1961). What Kedourie provides is a particular model of the role of intellectuals in the articulation of nationalism, a model which is problematic in a number of ways even in its primary application to the paradigm of German nationalism. It is argued that these problems are greatly increased in any secondary application to other nationalist movements, but that these problems also highlight some of the underlying issues of intellectual and political history in a post-colonial society like South Africa. Though the use of the Kedourian model of 'neo-Fichtean nationalists' for the ideological entrepreneurs of modern Afrikaner nationalism has to be rejected, it does point to genuine problems of conceptualisation which must still be faced more adequately. Some possible avenues for further research is suggested.