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A FEELING OF PREJUDICE: ORPHEUS M. McADOO AND THE VIRGINIA JUBILEE SINGERS IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1890 - 1898

by Veit Erlmann

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A Feeling of Prejudice
Orpheus M.McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers in South Africa 1890-1898

1.

On the evening of March 29, 1898, Trooper L'Estrange of the Natal Police, "on the look out for any criminal wanted", made a routine tour of the Inchanga railway station near Durban. On the platform, near the bar, he encountered Richard H.Collins, a black man, whom he addressed in Zulu, asking what he wanted in the bar. Collins replied: "Who are you talking to? Talk English. I have as much right in the bar as you have." In the argument that followed, considerable confusion arose as to Collins' nationality. It appears that L'Estrange, having dealt on three previous occasions with "dressed natives exempt from native law" who had entered the bar, produced badges of exemption and asked for a drink, took Collins "for a native of this colony", whereas Collins, growing increasingly impatient, declared that he was an American citizen and " a professional singer in the McAdoo company". He did "not give a button" whether L'Estrange, dressed in plain clothes, was a policeman or not, and that he was entitled to get as much liquor as he liked. The trooper then proceeded to arrest Collins, and in the scuffle that ensued Collins inflicted a blow on L'Estrange's nose and caught him by the throat. Assisted by the station clerk, L'Estrange eventually managed to pull the vehemently protesting singer in the direction of the police station where he was held for several hours and later released on bail of £5. Court proceedings which were to take place the following morning were suspended following an intervention by the American consul in Durban.1

Thus came to an end an incident which the colonial press saw as a "blunder"2 in U.S. and colonial diplomatic relations, but which in retrospect and in a more fundamental way can be regarded as a significant moment in the emerging American-South African discourse about race relations and segregation. Between July 1890 and June 1898, Orpheus M.McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers spent almost five years in South Africa, becoming the first and most publicized Afro-American initiators of this discourse. McAdoo and other members of the company frequently corresponded about their experiences with friends in the U.S.A. and with the U.S. black press. Their letters were published in papers like

Southern Workman, Cleveland Gazette, New York Age, and The Freeman, and became the first black American eyewitness accounts of a country whose exacerbating race relations were increasingly to attract the attention of black Americans. In South Africa, concerts given by the Jubilee Singers aroused interest in Negro spirituals and Afro-American folk music, and for many black and white concert-goers McAdoo's speeches on black education in the U.S.A. and subsequent reports in the colonial press were their first encounter with Afro-American culture and history. Involved eventually in a widening network of transatlantic contacts, blacks and whites in both countries became convinced that "the two societies were traveling along the same road toward a much more competitive and troubled racial system."3

To be sure, what we are concerned with here, is the form that the contact between members of the two societies - the one a colonial frontier society, the other in part based on a plantation economy - assumed in their consciousness. In themselves the two systems, although they may well have contributed to the kind of segregation which the Jubilee Singers were experiencing in their own country and South Africa, were quite different. Thus, John Cell has argued that "the primary origins of segregation are not in slavery or on the frontier, but in the modern conditions of the 1890s and after."4 Segregation is "typical of modern, complex, industrialising and therefore increasingly urban societies."5

To McAdoo and his audience such distinctions were not only quite irrelevant, but often the conclusions drawn from a comparison between the two societies were the same in both countries. The songs, dances, and sketches that the Jubilee Singers carried into virtually every corner of South Africa, suggested powerful images of race relations in the American South. Similar to the response in the United States to the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the 1870s and 1880s, and varying with class position, these images provoked either paternalistic feelings or a more liberal reaction. Moreover, McAdoo's intensive contacts with members of the aspiring African petty bourgeoisie of Kimberley, in particular, initiated a specifically black dialogue which developed into "a force, from which the oppressed black peoples of diaspora and the fatherland alike could draw intellectual and psychological sustenance."6 For Kimberley's African middle-class as much as for emancipated slaves and the Fisk students who had formed the Fisk Jubilee Singers two or three decades earlier, the solution to racial oppression and segregation lay in increased social mobility through education.

McAdoo's reaction to South Africa, for a number of reasons that will be discussed at the end of this paper, was far more ambiguous. This is not only due to the fact that he, unlike most of his admirers in South Africa, had first-hand knowledge of both countries, but also because he and the Jubilee Singers had per-

sonal vested interests in South Africa. How these interests developed is the extraordinary story of a group of black students from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and of a remarkable young man born in Greensboro, North Carolina.7

Orpheus Myron McAdoo was born in 1858, the oldest child of slave parents in Greensboro. Besides Orpheus, the family included ssie Eunice, born in 1873. Around 1872 McAdoo first attended Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia, founded in 1868 as one of several institutions of higher education for emancipated slaves. In 1876 he graduated from Hampton and for the next three years taught in Pulaski and Accomac Counties in Virginia. In 1879 he took charge of the Butler training school at Hampton Institute, at the same time devoting his energies to extensive tours with the Hampton Male Quartette, one of the best known quartets of Afro-American music at the time. In 1885 the young teacher realized that music was his true vocation8 and decided to join Frederick Loudin's revived Fisk Jubilee Singers.9

The Fisk Jubilee Singers were named after Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, which was founded in 1866 as one of seven "chartered institutions" by the American Missionary Association of New York in an effort to provide higher education for the liberated slaves. By the late 1860s the school was already in financial difficulties and in 1871 George L.White, treasurer and music instructor of the insolvent university, was given permission to take a group of students on a fund-raising concert tour. Although initially reluctant to perform the "sorrow songs", bitter memories of the days of servitude, the Fisk Jubilee Singers introduced American and European audiences to Negro spirituals, the heart piece of genuine Afro-American culture. When the troupe returned to Nashville in 1878, it had not only raised $150,000 for the University, but the situation for blacks in the United States had also deteriorated to such an extent that Frederick Loudin, a member of the group and by then already a prominent spokesman for the campaign for the Civil Rights Act of 1875, saw the "wheels rolling backwards."10

In 1879 White reorganized the Jubilee Singers, independent of Fisk support, and entrusted the leadership to Frederick Loudin. During the first concert in Fredonia, New York, Loudin reminded the audience that the Jubilee Singers, after having "tasted the extremes of honor and indignity", "could not forget that in some portions of the country their people were still oppressed almost as cruelly as in the days of slavery."11 Loudin's speech set the tone for rest of the tour, and for the

next few months the Jubilee Singers generated widespread sympathy and support for the black civil rights campaign. However, it was not until 1881, that an incident focussed national attention on the Jubilee Singers and their cause. In a small Midwestern town hotels had as usual refused to accommodate the group, and the owner of at least one establishment bluntly declared that he could not "afford to scare away my guests by bringing in a pack of niggers."12 Poignantly, the town was Springfield, Illinois, Abraham's Lincoln's childhood town. This and the fact, that the incident caused "much indignation among the better classes of people of this city...which now dishonors his name and memory,"13 did little to prevent the Supreme Court from declaring the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional in 1883.

With the flood gates opened to a spate of "Jim Crow" laws, and expecting little sympathy in the United States, Loudin shifted his activities to foreign shores. In April 1884, the new company sailed for England, and only returned to the United States in April 1890, after a six years tour of Australia, India, and the Far East. Somewhere along the way, a rift occurred between Loudin and a number of singers, apparently led by Orpheus McAdoo.14 Upon the return to the United States McAdoo formed his own company, and on May 29, 1890, the Virginia Jubilee Singers, or Virginia Concert Company as the troupe was alternatively called, left New York, bound for England. None of the members had been part of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, but soprano Belle F.Gibbons had been part of Loudin's second group. The other members, some of them Hampton graduates like McAdoo himself and his younger brother Eugene, had all been recruited prior to the departure to England. They were the sopranos J.Stewart Ball and Josie M.Jackson, the contralto Mamie L.Harris, the baritone Moses H.Hodges, and the tenor Richard H.Collins who became involved in the fight with the Natal trooper eight years later. Lucy J.Moten acted as accompanying pianist. In England, the troupe was completed by McAdoo's future wife, the "lady tenor" Mattie E.Allan.15 After two months the tour ran into unexpected difficulties which McAdoo described in a letter to General Armstrong, the Head of Hampton Institute:

> Upon my arrival in Glasgow I found that a company of dissipated people calling themselves "The Jubilee Singers" and in some instances "The Virginia Jubilee Singers" have...disgusted the better class of people and that it was almost impossible to get a hearing...I shall, I hope, leave here soon for South Africa and Australia. I am quite sure of success and I am not at all discouraged.16

Although McAdoo's business success in South Africa - as he later told the Cleveland Gazette - proved to be beyond his "wildest dreams and anticipations,"17 the country was to surprise him in another regard when the Jubilee Singers eventually landed in Cape Town in mid-June 1890. For although the group had not always met with friendly treatment in Australia, the kind of racial bias that awaited them in South Africa, was well beyond their expectations. In one of the first letters McAdoo sent back to his

home country from South Africa, he wrote to General Armstrong:

> "Everyone seemed captivated with the singing; never heard such singing in all their lives, and they said, 'and just to think that black people should do it.' The latter remark will give you some idea of a feeling of prejudice; well, so it is. There is no country in the world where prejudice is so strong as here in Africa. The native to-day is treated as badly as ever the slave was treated in Georgia. Here in Africa the native laws are most unjust; such as any Christian people would be ashamed of. Do you credit a law in a civilized community compelling every man of dark skin, even though he is a citizen of another country, to be in his house by 9 o'clock at night, or he is arrested...These laws exist in the Transvaal and Orange Free States, which are governed by the Dutch, who place every living creature before the native."18

3.

When the Virginia Jubilee Singers opened at the Vaudeville Theatre in Cape Town on the evening of June 30, 1890, another attraction competed for the favors of Cape Town audiences. Lambert D'Arcs Court Minstrels Troupe promised an evening of "Spectacular, Music, Drama, Dances, Comedies, Parodies, Reviews, Allegorical, Bombastical, and Comical Burlesques...and the Side splitting, and always Encored Sand and Plantation Dances."19 But despite the "counter attraction" McAdoo secured a full house. Apart from the jubilee hymns, the program included songs like "The Old Folks at Home" and "Old Black Joe" which were stylistically akin to the kind of "plantation dances" which D'Arc's Court Minstrels presented. In fact, these songs were not so much "attributes of the race", - as the Cape Argus claimed - but classics of the minstrel theatre, the most important form of popular entertainment in mid-19th century America, in which white performers with blackened faces mimicked and ridiculed blacks.

Stage impersonation of blacks by whites was common in the English theatre since at least the late 18th century. It was, however, not until the 1820s and 1830s that professional American entertainers like Thomas Rice, J.W.Sweeney and Bob Farrell began to incorporate an increasing number of songs, dances, and dialogues portraying blacks in their shows. Rice eventually composed "Jim Crow", a classic of American minstrelsy and "the first great international song hit of American popular music."20 In other songs even more popular, like "Zip Coon" and "Miss Lucy Long", white Northerners who rarely had any first-hand knowledge of Afro-American culture portrayed one of their favorite black steroetypes: the "Dandy Broadway Swell", the free Negro of the Northern cities, who struts around in flashy long tailed coats, white gloves, and skintight trousers, boasting of his success with women. Songs like "Jim Crow" and "Jim Along Josey" mimicked the ignorant "plantation darky", poorly clad in rags, with ludicrously exaggerated features, and speaking malaprop language.

Such stereotypes became a fixture of the minstrel stage, because they reinforced the most cherished beliefs white Northerners held about blacks. In the beginning, minstrel shows consisted of little more than unrelated songs, instrumental solos and dances, loosely tied together by jokes and dialogues. With the years, however, as minstrel companies grew larger and accumulated a larger song and dance repertoire, a standard format developed with a clear division of acts and specialty roles. A pioneer in forging the new minstrel format was Dan Emmett who presented the first full-scale blackface entertainment at the Bowery Amphitheatre in New York in 1843. In the decade following the appearance of Emmett's "Virginia Minstrels" the American stage witnessed an explosion of "Ethiopian" entertainments with hundreds of minstrel troupes touring every corner of the country and Europe.

Until the late 1860s, a spectator of a typical minstrel show would have seen the following scene on stage: Seated in a semicircle and performing grotesquely distorted gestures were as many as 20 minstrels, their faces blackened with burnt cork, who sang in unison accompanied by fiddles and banjos. On the ends of the semicircle sat the stars of the show: Brudder or Mr.Tambo, playing tambourine, and Brudder Bones, playing castanet-like bone clappers. The ludicrous antics and raucous humor of these "endmen" contrasted with the solemn and pompous behavior of the "Interlocutor", or Mr.Johnson, the onstage director who held the heavily improvised show together and established a link between the audience and what happened on stage.

A minstrel show typically consisted of three parts: the first part featured songs and dances and, above all, the riddles, puns and "one-liners" of the "endmen". The second part, the olio, offered anything from acrobatic acts, men playing combs, to the latest novelty. Its main feature, however, was the stump speech delivered by one of the "endmen" in malaprop "nigger dialect" on topics such as the "History of England". In the third part, the curtain rose on a one-act skit set on a Southern plantation where happy "darkies" danced "break downs", extolled the goodness of the "massa" and generally seemed to enjoy nothing so much than being slaves. The cast included roles such as Mr Hide'm, a protectionist, Mr Flog'em, the slave driver, and the inevitable Sambo, a runaway slave. Until the end of the Civil War this format remained relatively unchanged, but from the 1870s, minstrels introduced more and more variety elements, discarding the old plantation material.

The most profound changes in American minstrel theatre, however, were introduced by growing numbers of black professional entertainers who took the stage after the Civil War. Black minstrel troupes soon boasted as members well-known comedians like Billy Kersands and Bert Williams and some of the first black

popular songwriters in American music history, like James Bland who wrote "Dem Golden Slippers" and "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny". From the start, black minstrels' attitudes towards racial oppression was marked by ambiguity. Thus, Kersands and Williams were extraordinarily popular with black audiences despite the fact that they inherited from their white competitors the images of thick-lipped, boisterous, razor-toting blacks. Towards the late 1870s when white minstrel groups abandoned the plantation scenes in favor of novelty shows and vaudeville acts, Haverly's Colored Minstrels and the Georgia Minstrels advertised themselves as "natural children of bondage", who recreate in their "naturallist" show "de good ole' plantation" where "de darky will be hisself once more and forget that he eber had any trouble."21 Yet, at the same time the romanticized image of the "darky" was interfused with elements of genuine Afro-American culture and protest against oppression. Inspired by the Fisk Jubilee Singers' revival of authentic slave music, many black minstrels expressed antislavery feelings, while others concentrated on sentimental songs about the black family, one of the strongest emotional refuges under slavery and in post Civil War turmoil. Black minstrels then did not uniformly legitimize whites' distastes for blacks by testifying that blacks, too, shared anti-black feelings. Although black people must have laughed at stereotyped minstrel characters for some of the same reasons whites did, theirs - as Robert Toll argues - was also "in-group laughter of recognition, even of belonging":

> The blacks that attended minstrel shows...were probably not concerned with what impression whites would get from the show or with how well blacks measured up to white standards. It was the difference between the black bourgeoisie with their eyes focused on whites and on middle-class standards and the masses of black people whose perspectives were essentially confined to their group and to Afro-American culture. Certainly, all blacks could recognize that Kersands, McIntosh, and Williams performed caricatures - distorted images greatly exaggerating a few prominent features. Unlike whites, they knew the diversity of black people; they knew all blacks were not like these stage images...But they also probably knew black people who shared some of these traits. They laughed at the familiar in exaggerated form.22

However much blacks and whites may have shared some of the same responses to stereotypes of blacks, whites overwhelmingly took delight in finding their worst prejudices confirmed by performers who themselves belonged to the oppressed and ridiculed race. Because audiences were inclined to accept black minstrels as authentic plantation Negroes, one critic was able to argue that Haverly's Colored Minstrels depicted plantation life "with greater fidelity than any 'poor white trash' with corked faces can ever do", thereby disproving "the saying that a negro cannot act the nigger."23

"Acting the nigger", acting out white fantasies about blacks was not only the dominant rationale of blackface minstrel shows, but was also ideally suited as an ideological rationalization of the anxieties of white settlers in South Africa attempt-

ing to come to terms with the strength of precapitalist social formations and independent African political power. Thus when the world-famous Christy Minstrels first came to South Africa in 1862, the stage was set for the rise of a form of popular entertainment which in many ways resembled the development of the minstrel show in the U.S.A.

4.

The seaports of Cape Town and Durban were important stops en route to Australia and the East, and thus on August 20, 1862, two decades after the first appearance of the Virginia Minstrels in New York, the Christy Minstrels opened a short season at the Theatre Royal in Harrington Street in Cape Town. The press stressed the fact that

> the fame of the distinguished party who have earned so wide a celebrity as pourtrayers (sic) of Negro character had preceeded their arrival in Africa. Besides, the character of the entertainment is eminently suited to the tastes of the people here...Moreover, so essentially true to life - especially African life - in many of its phrases, are the 'sketches' of these clever impersonators of Negro character, that they could scarcely fail to please.24

In Durban, audiences were inclined to believe that the "negro oddities" were "as true to life as possible", and expressed astonishment "that so large an amount of local knowledge could have been acquired in so short a time." Moreover, the "coloring of the skin justifies a breadth of treatment in representing the grotesque, which would not otherwise be obtainable. What would seem silly and distorted in an actor of our race, loses its insane aspect when done by a mock ethiopian."25

The Natal Mercury and the Cape Argus critics were probably as removed from "African life" and "Negro character" as the Christy Minstrels, but they were certainly correct in predicting that the Christies' "'venture' in coming to the colony is likely to prove the most successful essay of the kind ever attempted here."26 In the next three decades, blackface minstrel shows became the dominant form of popular white musical and theatrical entertainment in South Africa, perhaps only second in popularity to the public lecture and the circus. Amateur minstrel troupes mushroomed in the most remote provincial towns, and in the major centers of English culture like Kimberley, Durban, and Cape Town audiences were often able to chose between two minstrel entertainments on the same night. British regiments soon had their own permanent minstrel troupes that enjoyed high patronage from the colonial ruling elite. While for soirees under such patronage

minstrels ensured that only cleaned up minstrel material was presented, working-class audiences soon discovered in minstrelsy one of their most favored forms of releasing racial hatred. On the Kimberley diamond fields, in the twisted logic of racism, and confusing the victims of minstrel "humor" with its perpetrators, Africans were frequently abused as "Christy Minstrels".27 However, the influence of American minstrelsy was not confined to Anglo-Saxon forms of racist ideology, but also reached deep into Dutch Boer and Cape Coloured culture and folk song. From at least 1869 the Amateur Coloured Troupe under Joe Lyal presented almost weekly full-scale minstrel shows to Cape Town audiences,28 almost two decades earlier than the first "coon" carnivalists were marching in the streets of Cape Town on New Year's Day of 1888.29 By the late 1870s minstrel tunes had become so popular that the well known Afrikaans folk song "Wanneer kom ons troudag, Gertjie" was sung to the tune of George Frederick Root's "Just before the battle, mother", a minstrel tune composed during the American Civil War in 1864.30

From the very beginning, African audiences had been introduced to the new entertainment genre. In March 1871, The Ghost, one of the most popular "Negro farces" of the day, was "performed for the benefit of coloured people" in Durban. "The astonishment depicted on the darkie's faces at the wonderful feats of the spectre"31 that the white audience and the Natal Mercury correspondent discovered, might in fact have been owed to the shock felt at the crude racist mockery of the show. One may speculate about the relevance to the racist psychology of the fact that the "several white people" present at the occasion not only took delight in watching the play, but also in watching the perturbed victims of their laughter. Be this as it may, by the early 1880s, the racial stereotypes of minstrel shows must eventually have become accepted, albeit transformed by the "laughter of recognition", by the growing African urban population. In 1880, at least one black minstrel troupe, the Kafir Christy Minstrels, was operating in Durban, which the Natal Mercury paternalistically described as "a troupe of eight genuine natives, bones and all, complete who really get through their songs very well."32 By the late 1880s the minstrel craze had faded and audiences throughout the country preferred more sophisticated forms of entertainment like limelight shows, light opera provided by numerous travelling English companies, and the ever popular circuses.

5.

Thus stood things when McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers landed in Cape Town in June 1890. Audiences in the

predominantly English towns still favored minstrel tunes and vociferously applauded McAdoo's renditions of old-time favorites like "Massa's dead" and "Old Black Joe". Although McAdoo's performances featured predominantly jubilee hymns, the strange mixture of authentic slave music and white mimickry of blacks contributed much to the confusion about genuine Afro-American culture that had reigned since the early visits of the Christy Minstrels and which was reflected in the words of one Pretoria critic:

To a certain extent the performance is of the form of the Christy Minstrel entertainments, but are devoid of the vulgarities and forced humor of that class. In point of fact, 'Christianised Christies' may be taken as descriptive of these performances. Nearly all the pieces sung are deeply imbued with a religious quality, but it is expressed in a way that, although natural under the circumstances, might be considered somewhat irreverent.33

A few months prior to McAdoo's arrival in South Africa, Durban audiences had shown a similar misunderstanding when they were first introduced to a well disposed, but misguided attempt to perform the sacred songs of the slaves in South Africa. On April 26, 1889, a certain Mr.MacColl who claimed to have seen the Original Jubilee Singers in England, presented a concert of "jubilee hymns" in the Berea Hall, in an effort "to afford those who had not heard them a glimpse into log cabin life during a wave of revivalism." The program featured songs like "Steal away to Jesus", My Good Lord's been here", and "Turn back Pharaoh's Army". Especially the latter "caused some amusement", when a Mr. Jas.Watt in the solo part sang "in all seriousness that he's 'Gwine to write to Massa Jesus'."34

The criticism of irreverent expression in the sacred songs of the slaves was typical of the white response. White audiences could not understand that slaves personalized Christianity and could refer to God in no better terms than those of the master-servant relationship of the plantation. Thus, "what whites took for profanity usually was one or another kind of respectful religious imagery."35 As we shall see later, it was perfectly in the logic of the beginning American - South African discourse that it was one of the most prominent representatives of the agrarian bourgeoisie rather than of the white urban population in South Africa, who with typical paternalistic sensibility, came closest to an understanding of the slave religion and sacred songs.

Be that as it may, when McAdoo and the Jubilee Singers presented the original songs, audiences throughout South Africa celebrated the troupe as one of the finest performing groups that had ever visited the southern part of the continent. The opening night in most towns visited usually concentrated on jubilee hymns such as "Steal Away to Jesus", "Go down Moses", "I am Rolling through an unfriendly world", "The Gospel Train", "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", "Good News, the Chariot's Coming", and others.

Ravished audiences praised the outstanding musicianship of the troupe. "Singing such as given by the Virginia Concert Company," noted the Cape Argus, "has never before been heard in this country."

Their selection consists of a peculiar kind of part song, the different voices joining in at most unexpected moments in a wild kind of harmony...it is without doubt one of the attributes of the race to which they belong, and in their most sacred songs they seem at times inspired, as if they were lifting up their voices in praise of God with hopes of liberty.36

The Governor of South Africa, Sir Loch, and Lady Loch attended the opening night in Cape Town, a fact little surprising if one bears in mind that the liberation of the slaves in 1834 - albeit not for philanthropic principles, but out of a severe shortage of "free" labor37 - was one of the ideological foundations of Cape liberalism. Such feelings, however were not universally shared by a population of white settlers whose ideological frame of reference - as Martin Legassick has shown - from the start involved inclusion as well as exclusion.38 This explains the outright hostility awaiting the Jubilee Singers in places like Worcester, where every performance was "marred by the rowdyism of some of the young men."39 In Bloemfontein, in a letter to The Friend, "Justice" expressed his surprise "that a certain sector of our community have shown a disposition to ignore them because their skins are black,"40 and in King Williamstown McAdoo "had to rebuke the rowdy element amongst 'the gods'."41 In general, however, such antagonism was limited, and thus it was somewhat incomprehensible to the Daily Independent that, despite the "sanctimonious" character of the program, the Queen's Theatre was not filled with "'goody goody' people, philanthrophists, and negrophilists" but with "audiences of a more mixed character than have perhaps ever been gathered" in Kimberley.42

However, the positive reception that greeted the Jubilee Singers throughout South Africa, was not only due to the Cape liberal tradition, but also to the ease with which the versatile impresario established communication with virtually any type of audience. Thus, the second and following nights of an appearance in a town catered more to the colonial taste, and featured ballads, glees, songs from the classical repertoire, and sometimes even entire "Scottish" programs. The program presented in King Williamstown on October 17, 1890 may be taken as a typical example:

PART I.
Glee....."Jingle Bell".....C.A.White
Virginia Concert Co.
Duett....."Maying".....A.M.Smith
Misses Gibbons and Allan.
Solo....."Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep".....
Mr.O.M.McAdoo.
Quartette....."Moonlight will come again".....

Misses Jackson & Harris.
Messrs. Collins and E.McAdoo.
Solo.....'Good Bye".....Tosti
Miss Belle F.Gibbons.
Medley....."Popular Airs".....Jubilee Singers
Virginia Concert Co.
Ladies' Quartette....."Greeting to Spring".....Wilson
Misses Gibbons, Allan, Jackson, and
Madame Ball.

PART II.
Glee....."The Bells".....Jubilee Singers
Virginia Concert Co.
Solo....."We met too late".....King
Miss M.E.Allan.
Glee....."The Moonlight Dance".....White
Virginia Concert Co.
Solo....."My Star of Eve (Tannhauser)".....Wagner
Mr.M.H.Hodges.
Quartette....."Come, where the lilies bloom".....
Misses Gibbons and Allan.
Messrs. Hodges and O.M.McAdoo.
Solo....."La Zingarellas".....Campana
Madame Ball.
Glee....."The Kimberley Band".....Jubilee Singers
Virginia Concert Co.43

In later years, the program was complemented by lady elocutionist Julia Wormley's "dramatic recitation" of "The Pilot's Story". Wormley had joined the Jubilee Singers in August 1891, together with soprano Kate Slade and Mattie Allan's brother, baritone Robert S.Allan. In 1890 Guiseppe Verdi had visited South Africa with an opera company - a fact which McAdoo could hardly ignore in his attempt to control a sector of the competitive entertainment market - and so his show later included "30 Minutes of Grand Opera" featuring "Selections from 'Bohemian Girl' and 'Il Trovatore'."

The Jubilee Singers' first tour of South Africa closed with a last performance in Cape Town on January 25, 1892. After a three-year tour of Australia, the troupe returned to Cape Town on June 29, 1895. In addition to Orpheus McAdoo himself, his wife Mattie (née Allan), Belle Gibbons and R.H.Collins, the new Jubilee Singers now included the sopranos Laura A.Carr, Jennie Robinson and Mamie Edwards, the contralto Marshall Webb, the tenor Will P.Thompson, and the Boston conservatory professor C.A.White as pianist.

Until February 1897 the program remained unchanged, when McAdoo decided to restructure the entire show. Mounting difficulties with some members of the company, and a saturated market must have induced McAdoo to give - as the Pretoria The

Press put it - the jubilee hymns "a well-earned repose."44 McAdoo travelled to New York, to recruit a new company, and when he returned in mid-June 1897, he brought with him 8 new artists and named the new troupe "Minstrel, Vaudeville and Concert Company". In addition to the old audience favorites Will Thompson, Mamie Edwards, Jennie Robinson, Belle Gibbons, Mattie Allan, Hodges,and Collins, McAdoo had hired the vocal soloists Dietz and J.Smith, the dancer Louis Love, the banjo soloists Willard Smith and Madeline Shirley, the dancer, comedian and female impersonator Jerry Mills, the juggler Joseph Jalvan, and the "Black Melba" Susie B.Anderson.

Following the broader trends of black minstrelsy in the United States, it was McAdoo's aim to introduce to "the theatrical and music-loving public the genuine American negro as a comedian, singer, dancer, banjoist and general mirth-maker."45 The new program followed the standard three-part minstrel format. The first part consisted of minstrel tunes such as Stephen Foster's "Massa's in de Cold Ground" and "Home Sweet Home", "I'se Gwine Back to Dixie", and above all the jokes and antics of the "Tambos" Louis Love and Joe Jalvan, and the "Bones" Willard Smith and Jerry Mills. One such joke, a variation of a staple Afro-American joke, shows the close parallels in the forms of popular ideology produced by the black experience in the frontier and plantation situation:

One of the corner men asks a brother where he would like to be buried when he died. The brother replied that he would like a resting place in a nice, quiet Methodist cemetry and then asked where his questioner would like to be laid. The latter answered: "In a Dutch cemetry." "Why?" asked the brother. The answer was: "Because a Dutch cemetry is the last place the devil would go to look for a black man."46

The second half of the program, the "Grand Olio", consisted of dances, and the acrobatic acts performed by juggler Jalvan. Especially his contortionist act "Ferry the Frog" aroused much admiration, despite the fact that sometimes on the same night and in the same town, Frank E.Fillis' Circus presented Jalvan's compatriot and juggler Zarmo, the "£100 per week star and wonder of the age."47

The program ended with "America's Latest Novelty", the Grand Cake Walk or "The Negro Minuet". Later this component of the show alternated with the "negro sketch" "A Theatrical Manager's Troubles with His Office Boy", the plantation "drama" in two acts "Good Old Georgia in '49", or the skit "Trilby's Wedding, Or, Life on the Mississippi River". Almost four decades after the first appearance of the Christy Minstrels in South Africa, McAdoo's minstrel acts for a short time revived the interest in blackface minstrelsy which had faded since the late 1880s. Although American white minstrel troupes for long had left the plantation scenes to the black competition, colonial companies such as even the white, "respectable" Ada Delroy's Company featured minstrel acts such as James Bell's "Senegambian

Oddities."48

However, McAdoo and the Jubilee Singers were not only fluent in their relations with English colonists, but also with sectors of the Boer population. Most likely McAdoo avoided the "Dutch cemetry" joke at a concert at the Huguenot Seminary in Wellington. Following the report of a teacher with connections to Hampton, the concert established cordial relations between the black American artists and the ultra-conservative audience:

It is wonderful to see our staid Dutch people to go into ecstasies over them, and our servants who were allowed to go into the anteroom to listen to them were taken right off their feet.49

The kind of relations the Jubilee Singers established with "staid Dutch people", could perhaps not be illustrated better than by a highly unusual meeting between McAdoo and the man whose regime was the supreme manifestation of Boer supremacist and paternalistic ideology. In February 1891, Transvaal President Paul Kruger not only set foot into a theatre, probably for the first time in his life, but when the Jubilee Singers sang "Nobody knows the trouble I have seen", it is reported, tears ran down "the rugged features of the President."50 It is perhaps one of the most peculiar moments in McAdoo's career in South Africa that the jeremiad of one of the descendants of Ham should have touched the heart of a man whose rule was built on the firm belief that these very descendants should be eternal drawers of water and hewers of wood. But, like slaveholders in the antebellum American South, Boer farmers, themselves highly religious people, were capable of deeply rooted paternalistic feelings.

Paternalism, as Eugene Genovese has shown, bound slaves and slaveholders together in an ideology of superordination and subordination that, from the slaveholders' point of view, defined involuntary labour as a legitimate return for protection.51 But this common ideology also had its advantages for the slaves. The "impossibility of the slaves ever becoming the things they were supposed to be," reminds us Genovese, "constituted a moral victory for the slaves themselves. Paternalism's insistence upon mutual obligations...implicitly recognized the slaves' humanity."52 Despite the differences between frontier and plantation, Kruger's agrarian consciousness comprised elements of paternalism that made him, the lord and master, vulnerable to the assertions of the slaves' humanity expressed in the "sorrow songs".

In a second private audience, five years later, Kruger showed himself less emotional, but nonetheless highly flattered by McAdoo's statement "that there were only four great Republics in the world - the Transvaal, the Free State, France, and America." Kruger probably had America's advanced know-how in segregation in mind, in declaring that the Boers regarded America as their pattern, and that they were striving to imitate it.53

Kruger's tears may have been flattering for McAdoo, but they glossed over the harsher segregationist everyday practices of Kruger's bureaucrats. When McAdoo married Mattie Allan in Johannesburg in January 1891, the fashionable event was worthy of the attention of the local press,54 but what bride and bridegroom may not have been aware of were the inquiries the Johannesburg Magistrate made about the legality of marrying Orpheus McAdoo and Mattie Allan, whom he described as "almost white - her father is a white and her mother is an octoroon."55

Harassment was, however, by no means restricted to officially sanctioned discrimination. Located on a somewhat less sophisticated level was the attempt by one Pretoria hotelier to ease the Jubilee Singers of £27/10. Before the Pretoria Magistrate, Henry S.Pollington of the Clarendon Hotel accused McAdoo of welshing one week's board and lodging for the entire company. However, McAdoo was able to prove that his company had not stayed at the Clarendon, and absolution from the instance was given with costs in McAdoo's favor.56 Five years later, in Middelburg, a resident at the Transvaal Hotel who "never knew that Americans were yellow and black" complained to the local Magistrate "that coloured people were staying at the same hotel as white persons." Yet, here as in Pretoria, the courts ruled in McAdoo's favor.57

McAdoo must have greeted this fact as a pleasant change from U.S.practices, but in reality he had to ascribe it to his status as an "honorary white" which the English colonies and the Boer republics were prepared to grant to all bona fide black American citizens. Although the number of black Americans in South Africa, according to Clement Keto, never exceeded one hundred at any given time during the 1890s,58 their presence was a source of constant worry for the Boer and colonial governments, and frequently an embarrassment for American representatives in the country. However, desirous to foster friendly relations with the United States, the Kruger regime made several attempts to negotiate an agreement with the United States regulating, amongst others, the status of black American citizens. Negotiations were slowed further by an incident in 1893 which involved a black U.S. citizen named John Ross, who worked on the Delagoa railway. Ross had been brutally assaulted by a white policeman after answering back to a verbal abuse by a white coworker. Memoranda flew back and forth between the U.S. representatives and authorities of the Transvaal Republic, and Ross, backed by the U.S. Department of State, eventually filed a lawsuit against the Kruger Republic for damages totaling $10,000. Although in the end the U.S.government

"made the Boers pay" - as Bishop Turner later put it - friendly relations were soon restored and all black Americans resident in the Transvaal were required to register at the Consular Agency in Johannesburg and to be issued with special passes identifying them as black U.S.citizens.59 This arrangement probably not only relieved the U.S. Consul of the burdensome duty of having to protect his black fellow countrymen, but also suited Ross's own efforts to maintain a fairly privileged class position with regard to his African brothers. When the Volksraad passed Law No.31 in 1896 requiring all blacks seeking employment in the mines to wear a metal badge, Ross, who was now working as an engineer with the Netherlands Railway Company, feared that coloured persons "would be placed on a level with the raw, savage, totally uneducated aborigine."60

Of all the black Americans resident in South Africa, McAdoo and his Jubilee Singers were probably the least happy about these arrangements. We have seen that McAdoo in his first letter to General Armstrong had expressed strong disagreement with the pass laws. This, however, did not stop him from addressing a personal letter to Kruger, requesting protection for himself and his company as "citizens of a Sister Republic"61 With the support of Transvaal Prime Minister General Joubert, who impressed on Kruger McAdoo's intention of "founding churches and schools"62 the request was granted. George F.Hollis, the U.S.Consul in Cape Town, later boasted that his letter to Kruger63 had "paved the way for courteous treatment among a people prone to despise the blacks." His hopes that "this visit will have its effect on colonial feeling"64 may have been premature at that stage, for the high protection sometimes failed to produce the desired immunity. In following years, McAdoo and other members of his company like Collins were arrested, and the annoyed impresario eventually felt the need to voice his rejection of the inferior status of blacks in the Transvaal. This he did, very effectively, from the stage of a Johannesburg theatre, in the presence of Z.A.R. officials. Angry about the inopportune publicity, the U.S. Consular agent in Johannesburg sent a report to the Consul General in Cape Town, reprimanding McAdoo that "there was no truth in his statement". Relations between McAdoo and the U.S. agent had been strained, and when McAdoo called upon the agent and asked for action in the matter, the agent told him

> that he had no case whatever. I further told him that I considered him entirely in the wrong in bringing those men here from the States without bringing Passports with them and...calling upon me immediately upon his arrival to know if it was necessary to have any protection for them in order that they would not be stopped or molested in any way by Police Officials.65

With his public speech and the pressure he put on the U.S. representatives, Orpheus McAdoo became the first black American citizen to protest the pass laws. After the Boer War, when the Milner regime abolished the "honorary white" status, black Americans pelted the American Consulates with applications to

defend their rights. Like John Ross, some of these applicants were more concerned about the fact that they were made to "wear a pass" like a "native in his barbarous State"66 and saw no link between their own inferior status and the oppression of their African brothers.

7.

While the white response to the Jubilee Singers reflected the whole ambiguity of intra-colonial social relationships, McAdoo's message about political emancipation and education was received with undivided enthusiasm among African audiences. The admiration must have crossed internal class divisions within the African community of an Eastern Cape frontier town such as King Williamstown, even if it was somewhat hampered by problems of linguistic communication. The Kaffrarian Watchman reported that during the Jubilee Singers' visit to the town in October 1890 some obviously more rural contemporaries

> could not quite understand what sort of people they were. Some of them hesitated to class them as Kafirs, as they seemed so smart and tidy in appearance, and moved about with all the ease and freedom among the white people that a high state of civilization and education alone can give. Occasionally, however, a Kafir would salute a 'Singer' in his own language, and when he failed to get a reply he would look puzzled, exclaim Kwoku! and walk away wondering how his 'brother' did not return the salute.67

Education and a high state of civilization were precisely the goals the African elite was striving for and were the unshakable ideological foundations of their political and social involvement within the established colonial structures. Thus, it is little surprising that it was Josiah Semouse, a young employee in the Kimberley post office, who wrote the first African eulogy of the Jubilee Singers. McAdoo and his troupe performed in the town that was then by far the most advanced city in South Africa and "a supremely British place,"68 between July 31 and August 16, 1890. Semouse, and some of his friends like Patrick Lenkoane and possibly Solomon Plaatje,69 must have been in the audience in the Kimberley Town Hall, when the Jubilee Singers, on the last day of their stay, presented a concert for "Natives and Coloured People."70 A few weeks later, Semouse's enthusiastic article on the "Great American Singers" appeared in the Morija-based mission-monthly Leselinyana:

> Gentlemen, I do not find the words to describe the way in which these people sang. Unless I am mistaken, I can say that they sang like angels singing Hosannah in heaven. All the people on the diamond fields agree that they sing better than anybody else, white or black.71

The readers were then given a detailed description of the physical appearance of the visitors from America, their yellowish colour "like that of the Hottentots" and their "big

mouths, as huge as those of the Basotho." What must however have left the deepest impression on the young Semouse and his friends, were McAdoo's reports on black educational achievements in the U.S.A. After a lengthy outline of slavery and emancipation, the article culminates in an ecstatic description of these achievements and in a passionate call for national emancipation:

Hear! Today they have their own schools, primary, secondary and high schools, and also universities. They are run by them without the help of the whites. They have magistrates, judges, lawyers, bishops, ministers and evangelists, and school masters. Some have learned a craft such as building etc.etc. When will the day come when the African people will be like the Americans? When will they stop being slaves and become nations with their own government??2

Semouse's feelings were echoed, if somewhat more eloquently, by John Tengo Jabavu, editor of Imvo Zabantsundu and leading African politician of the time. But Jabavu must also have had the interests of his white liberal friends in mind in his carefully worded eulogy and call for educational progress that avoids all reference to nationalist aspirations:

It would strongly savour of presumption for a Native African of this part to venture a critique on his brethren from America, who are now visiting this quarter of their fatherland, and whose position, socially, is being deservedly pointed at on all hands as one that Native here should strive to attain to. As Africans we are, of course, proud of the achievements of those of our race .Their visit will do their countrymen here no end of good. Already it has suggested reflection to many who, without such a demonstration, would have remained sceptical as to the possibility, not to say probability, of the Natives of this country being raised to anything above remaining as perpetual hewers of wood and drawers of water. The recognition of the latent abilities of the Natives, ...can not fail to exert an influence for the mutual good of all the inhabitants of this country. The visit of our friends, besides, will lead to the awakening in their countrymen here of an interest in the history of the civilization of the Negro race in America, and a knowledge of their history is sure to result beneficial to our people generally.73

In the African communities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the products of extensive American missionary activity since the mid-19th century, McAdoo's visits evoked no less enthusiastic responses, albeit tinted with a strong religious sentiment. African correspondents in the Edendale-based Protestant mission paper Inkanyiso Yase Natalcelebrated the Jubilee Singers as "our music heroes". Interestingly, when McAdoo returned to Pietermaritzburg in 1895 with his remodeled minstrel troupe, the Inkanyiso correspondent regretted the fact that "their previous performances were better than today's."74

During one of their stays in Kimberley, McAdoo and the Jubilee Singers, apparently anticipating a prolonged stay and involvement in South Africa, had founded The Citizen, the first known 'coloured' newspaper. The paper only lasted for four issues, and later appeared, under different ownership, as South African Citizen.75 Notwithstanding this fact the paper was not averse to testify that "Mr McAdoo's Minstrels...showed the superiority of the American coloured people over the South African."76

In agreement with the prevailing optimism reigning among the African petty bourgeoisie, Semouse and Jabavu may have overestimated the role of education. They were correct, however, in predicting the beneficial effects that were expected from McAdoo's tour. Visits to Adams College and Lovedale had persuaded McAdoo that the "Kaffir race is the most powerful in this part and the most intelligent."77 At Lovedale, the "African Hampton", Orpheus' brother Eugene came to the conclusion that the institution

is a great power for good, and in that town of Alice, where its influence is chiefly felt, we found a more respectable class of natives than in any other part of the country we visited.78

In a letter addressed to Armstrong McAdoo informed the general of his plan to offer a $70 scholarship to "an earnest Christian boy" to take up studies at Hampton Institute.79 The news was greeted with "gratification" but Armstrong also felt the need to clarify that "the only relation of Hampton to the 'Virginia Concert Company' ...is that of friendly interest in the welfare of its leader and proprietor, Mr Orpheus McAdoo, and the four other Hampton graduates and ex-students in his company."80 In South Africa, McAdoo's announcement caused some disturbance, for he found himself summoned to appear before a committee of unsympathetic whites who enquired whether he was "singing to educate Negroes" or for his own business. One angry minister bluntly declared that "if it is to educate the Kafirs and Zulus, you will never succeed in Africa."81 McAdoo's reply that it was his own enterprise and that he could do with his money what he liked, seemed to have settled the dispute, for a few weeks later Titus Mbongwe embarked on the trip to Hampton.

Titus Mbongwe was a young clerk in Kimberley, when he heard the Jubilee Singers in the concert in the Town Hall that had left such a deep mark on the minds of many of his African friends. McAdoo found him "unusually intelligent"82 and offered him the passage to Hampton and a scholarship. After a fitting send-off party and concert in the Beaconsfield Town Hall, Mbongwe left Cape Town on October 23, 1890, his suitcase full of papers containing "a lot of information about Africa, life and educational progress in Africa"83 and a paper on the "Natives of Cape Colony" that McAdoo had asked him to prepare for Hampton. On November 12, the train that was to take him from Plymouth to London, collided with another train, killing Mbongwe and a great number of other passengers.84

The news of Mbongwe's death distressed McAdoo and deterred "many gentlemen who had intended to go to America after New Year."85 The tragic news had not yet reached South Africa, however, when five young men in King Williamstown, inspired by Jabavu's column, decided to demonstrate their "interest in the history of the negro Race in America" and applied to Hampton In-

stitute for admission. K.Charles Kumkani and Samuel Cakata wrote that

from the year 1889 we was desire to be, are in the college, unfortunately we were on account of being very poorest because our perrents they are on a position red Blankets. Will you please grant our petition which we required, we want you to receive us to candidature, my Lord we are very poor, but we desire the educational...Mr.Orpheus M.McAdoo he gave an interesting account of your educational, and we ask him if we must start away with him, and he said we must send our application.86

William W.Stofile also offered himself "as a scholar who is desirous to be educated in the American Institutions,"87 but despite his initial encouragements McAdoo advised Hampton that "it does not feel justified in paying their way."88 Armstrong, for his part, had considerations of a broader political nature in mind, for he held that

it might be a good thing to help some over for the sake not only of themselves but to show the unbelieving Dutch boers and other colonists what American practical education can do for the natives to-day as in the past.89

However, Stofile's and his friends' hopes failed to materialize as did those of Isaiah Bud-M'Belle, a young teacher at the Wesleyan School in Colesberg. Bud-M'Belle saw the Jubilee Singers during their two days stay in Colesberg in August 1890, and asked McAdoo for a bursary. McAdoo, having stretched his purse to the limits by supporting Titus Mbongwe, encouraged Bud-M'Belle to approach General Armstrong directly. Bud-M'Belle's credentials and his complaint that "in South Africa a coloured man gets no sound education,"90 were certainly not lost on the General, but nothing further came of his application. The teacher was soon to move to Kimberley where he eventually became an influential member of the Kimberley African community and close friend and brother-in-law of Solomon Plaatje. Many years later, as a court interpreter, he renewed his contacts with the Jubilee Singers and in 1897 formed the Philharmonic Society together with Sol Plaatje, H.R.Ngcayiya,91 and Will Thompson. During the <u>debut</u> of the Society Bud-M'Belle rendered minstrel tunes like "Picking on de Harp" and "Close the Shutters, Willie's Dead".92 Especially in the latter song, he must have excelled, for he repeated it soon afterwards - again with the indispensable Thompson - as a member of the white Diamond Minstrels, certainly a novelty in the usually segregated musical circles of the town.93

Of all the young aspiring Africans in Kimberley and other towns, none was perhaps more impressed and more determined to obtain the benefits of an university education in America than a young woman from Fort Beaufort named Charlotte Manye. At the time of McAdoo's visit to Kimberley, Charlotte taught at the Wesleyan School. Her <u>debut</u> as a soloist in the Beaconsfield Town Hall on September 8, 1890 proved to be Mbongwe's farewell concert, in which he himself sang "You can't always tell."94 Mbongwe's admission and imminent departure to Hampton must not only have infused

Charlotte with even more determination to pursue her ambitious goals, but the concert also inspired Albert Walklett, a minister with some musical talent, to form a group of African musicians modeled on McAdoo's Jubilee Singers. This was Charlotte's chance, and when the "African Jubilee Singers", under the leadership of two white musicians, Walter Letty and J.Balmer embarked on a tour of the Cape Colony in January 1891, Charlotte felt closer to her dreamt-of education than ever. After a conflict ridden tour, the group that now also included Josiah Semouse, Charlotte's sister Kate and a number of Lovedale students, left for England. The enterprise ended under disastrous circumstances, but this and the fact that the white promoters Balmer and Letty had abandoned Semouse and the other choristers in London, counted little in the eyes of the energetic Charlotte. In Sheffield she had met the Bohee Brothers, a black American minstrel troupe, whose leader George Bohee - according to her sister Kate - persuaded Charlotte that "England was a godforsaken country, but America was God's own country."95 And so Charlotte did not think twice when Balmer and Letty made plans for a North American tour in February 1893. After a successful tour of Canada and the East Coast, the adventure again ended in a fiasco, and the entire choir, deserted by Letty and Balmer in Cleveland, Ohio, were offered shelter by the African Methodist Episcopal Church official C.Ransom.96 The rest is history: Charlotte was soon admitted to Wilberforce University, from where she wrote glowing letters to Kate, who in turn showed them to her relative, Rev. Mokone, by then a leading figure in the emerging Ethiopian church. Mokone's church affiliated with the A.M.E. and Charlotte Manye returned to South Africa, where she played a prominent role in the woman's branch of the ANC, and until her death in 1939, as a social worker in the A.M.E. Church.97

However unambiguously and enthusiastically Josiah Semouse, Tengo Jabavu and Charlotte Manye responded to the Jubilee Singers, one paradox remains unsolved. Africans praised the musical abilities of the American visitors, but the evidence does not indicate that they attached any particular political significance to the message expressed in the slave songs, nor that they demonstrated a special interest in the "peculiar institution" that gave rise to the songs.

Unlike the negro slaves who never viewed their predicament as punishment for the collective sin of black people,98 Inkanyiso saw slavery as a punishment for the "ignorance of not knowing about God."99 Whether this assessment was due to American white missionary influence remains to be seen, but the paradox is that the "sorrow songs" moved a man to tears who was blind at the injustice suffered by blacks in his country, but the same songs hardly provoked any comment from Africans in the fatherland. The answer lies not only in the fact that racial oppression under slavery was many times harsher than racial exploitation in South Africa. Blacks in the American South and South Africa also responded in different ways to their inferior social position,

most notably perhaps in their use of religious ideology.

Although Christianity, as Genovese has argued, internalized relations of lordship and bondage and therefore served as the perfect legitimization of the slaveholding society,100 the slaves, in embracing the Christian faith and worldview, at the same time had forged their "most formidable weapon for resisting slavery's moral and psychological aggression."101 The spirituals were both the ritual balm on the wounds of dehumanization and the battle cry of that resistance.

In South Africa, African resistance to domination and oppression, well into the early 20th century, had at its command a far wider arsenal of weapons, including open armed revolt. Thus, for the African elite who was rooted in strong, independent peasant communities of the Eastern Cape and Natal, Christianity was primarily a premise of their involvement in colonial society and only rarely a weapon against its unpleasant side effects. However, it was never the spiritual foundation for the struggle of an entire class against its total submission. Thus, plantation and frontier, not only forced the oppressed black people to interpret the gospel according to their differing environments, but these interpretations also explain the relative indifference to the spiritual essence of the slave songs among South African blacks.

8.

McAdoo's and the Jubilee Singers' reactions to South Africa were complex and by no means uniform. They were the reactions of people who themselves often came from vastly different socio-economic backgrounds and who had wide-ranging experience of racism and oppression in countries as diverse as the United States, Australia, and England. Frequently, their views reflected concrete material interests. Thus, when the Jubilee Singers were asked to postpone their appearance in the Queenstown Town Hall in favor of a meeting held there by the Loyal Colonial League, McAdoo hastened to cable: "Strongly sympathy compels the Jubilee Singers to forego concert on Saturday in favor of League Meeting."102 We do not know whether McAdoo's pro-colonial sentiments were genuine, but they certainly gave him a full house the following Monday. At least one member of the company, however, is known to have harbored strong imperial sympathies. In 1895, Mamie Edwards, the "Brown Patti" visited some of the mission churches and schools in Kimberley and discovered that the "English people take quite an interest in them." This persuaded her, she wrote to The Freeman, that "of all the people that God in his own divine power ever made, the English people are the people, and surely they must be the chosen ones."103 Yet, Mamie Edwards' imperial

sympathies also prevented her from understanding the coercive nature of the colonial regime. While in Kimberley, she also visited the compounds, like Will Thompson had the previous year. As for Thompson, he had shown great interest in the diamonds but less in those who dug them. He expressed disappointment that the laborers did not speak English, and noted little more than the fact that they lived in compounds and were "only allowed out in the city twice a year."104 Mamie Edwards, however, observed that the miners were "guarded by soldiers or men employed as such to prevent any one escaping" and that "they never leave their compound from the day they come in until their contract is out." Nevertheless Edwards must have believed the official story told her by the tour guides that the compound was to be regarded as an institution designed "to prevent the natives from throwing diamonds out to parties not interested in the mines or fields for any other purpose than stealing", rather than to police the work force.105 Instead of frustration, anger, and revolt, she saw in the men behind barbed wire "a very good and generous kind of creature."106

It is by no means coincidental that Mamie Edwards shared with most of her English speaking colonial contemporaries the myth of the good natured "native", who "if he likes any one ...will give his life for him."107 It was the same image of the southern Negro portrayed in the minstrel show, the nostalgia for "Good Old Georgia" which McAdoo's company and other black minstrel troupes had revived and which Mamie Edwards believed to recognize among the Kimberley mine laborers.

Time and again, students of the black American experience in South Africa have stressed the role of black missionaries in shaping nascent African political consciousness. We have seen how the Jubilee Singers indirectly, through Charlotte Manye and the "South African Choir", unleashed a chain reaction of events that eventually led to the establishment of contacts between the A.M.E. and the Ethiopian church in South Africa. As a result of these contacts, Bishop Turner visited South Africa in 1898, convinced that "color is no bar in Africa", that "the condition of the educated colored man is a thousand-fold better than in America" and that, generally, South Africa would be the Afro-American's Zion.108 For a moment it looked as though the Jubilee Singers identified with Turner's emigration campaign. Upon his arrival at the Johannesburg railway station the Bishop was greeted by the Jubilee Singers "in a manner highly complimentary and even flattering."109 What brought the two men together was probably more a keen sense of public relations than common political ideals: ideals which in any case would have interfered with McAdoo's business goals. Both he and some members of his troupe had previously expressed doubts about the wisdom of emigration schemes despite the enthusiastic if somewhat incredulous response of Africans in the Kimberley Town Hall who joked: "Come back! Come back to Africa, the country of your

forefathers!"110 Mamie Edwards, for instance, was far less optimistic about the educational prospects for blacks than Turner, and therefore believed that black and white cooperation would have a deeper impact on African political emancipation than black American mass immigration. She apparently came to this conclusion after meeting Dr.Butler, a wealthy southern Georgian, who underwent a miraculous transformation from a "red hot Democrat" to someone who

learned to love the Negro as himself and is now willing to fight for their rights. Why is it? Because the whites turned on him to kill him and the natives saved his life, and now he takes his hat off to every one he may chance to meet by the wayside, it does not matter who or where. How I wish a few more would come out here - I mean the whites - not the blacks - there are quite enough blacks out here now.111

Turner eventually returned home, deeply disappointed. Despite the preferential treatment he was given as "honorary white", he finally had to realize

that the white man is here to stay, and he intends to boss the country. The only hope,then, left the negro to become a manager of a nation is in Liberia or Central Africa.112

For McAdoo, the South African experience was directly linked to his childhood as a slave - or so it was at least in the letters he wrote back home. In the statements he made in South Africa, as we have seen, he saw things in a more differentiated light, a fact which is not necessarily owed to sheer courtesy alone. The Jubilee Singers' position in South Africa not only reflected the ambiguous status granted as foreigners and performing artists, but also much of the same precarious situation most educated Africans found themselves in. The fact that this situation was determined by their relative class position rather than their colour is born out by the experience of Captain Harry Dean, one of the most colourful black American visitors to South Africa at the turn of the century.113 Dean, who was engaged in transporting African laborers by boat between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and East London, later described his dilemma as follows:

I was suspected of social climbing when I mixed with the European colonials, and suspected by the government of ulterior motives when I mixed with my own race.114

McAdoo and the Jubilee Singers, as we have seen, did not share the enthusiasm about an African homeland for black Americans, many of whom were pressed by Jim Crow laws and lynchings in the United States. They were fluent in their relations with all classes and groupings of colonial society - with the exception perhaps of the African laborers - and in addition to the highest state protection, Orpheus McAdoo at least enjoyed a class position which raised him above suspicions of social climbing or of presenting a threat to the various territorial governments. The description The Freeman gave of him shortly after his departure from South Africa to Australia in mid-1898, is indeed in-

dicative of McAdoo's economic success and social position:

He is prosperous, and an Australian by adoption. He was a classmate of Booker T.Washington. In his accent he is decidedly English. He dresses well in the style of the English upper class...He wears a few diamonds within the bounds of propriety...From all indications he is a through gentleman from tip to tip.115

Orpheus McAdoo's prosperity was however probably not equalled by that of his employees. This discrepancy frequently led to disputes and the temporary departure of some members, but particularly to that of Will Thompson. The Pittsburgh born baritone and former member of a jubilee troupe known as the Fisk-Tennesseans joined McAdoo's company in 1895. His eventful career between the time he joined McAdoo's troupe and their departure to Australia in June 1898 is a fascinating example of the difficulties a black professional entertainer must have encountered in making a living in South Africa. We first meet Thompson in July 1896 as the manager of the Colonial Concert Company which presented benefit concerts both for the Perseverance School in Kimberley116 and Mamie Edwards, who had also left McAdoo's employ.117 By November Thompson is back with the Jubilee Singers touring the Transvaal. By the end of the month differences must have reappeared, for Thompson and Edwards are back in Kimberley with the Colonial Concert Company.118 Here, Thompson not only helps out with Bud-M'Belle's Philharmonic Society, but within less than two years also becomes involved with the Diamond Minstrels as manager and musical director.119 Will Thompson's and Mamie Edwards' departure must have caused considerable chagrin to the impresario, for as we have seen, in February 1897 McAdoo decided to travel to New York to recruit replacements for Thompson and Edwards.

The success of the new Minstrel, Vaudeville and Concert Company, which McAdoo brought back with him, and a possible increase in salary must have convinced Thompson to settle his differences with McAdoo. By August 1897 we find him back with the company touring the Eastern Cape and Natal, only to lose track of him again a month later. In January 1898, finally, he is reported as a member of the Cape Town-based, predominantly "coloured" Buffalo Glee and Concert Company with I.Bud-M'belle, who by now could have become a close business associate of his. The concert was a benefit for the Rev. Buchanan's Mission in the Transkei and in the audience sat Orpheus McAdoo, probably interested in assessing how serious a threat Thompson's activities were to his own.120 However, just like Thompson's previous ill-fated attempts to compete against McAdoo on the highly volatile colonial entertainment market, the Cape Town troupe did not last and soon afterwards we find Thompson back with McAdoo for the last time before his departure to Australia. On the night of April 4, 1898 the curtain in the Durban Theatre Royal rose on McAdoo's minstrel entertainment presented by a somewhat depleted company. The reason for this "awkward predicament"- as the Natal Mercury called it - was that Messrs. Willard Smith, Joe Jalvan, Louis

Love and Miss Shirley had been offered one pound a week extra by a "rival manager" and declined to appear "unless their present engagement was made equally remunerative."121 This was refused and the dissatisfied singers, their number increased by Messrs. Godfrey, Will Thompson, and Miss Mamie Edwards, decided to form their own "Coloured Minstrel Company."122

Collins' arrest in Inchanga a few days earlier, the strike in Durban and looming Anglo-Boer hostilities expedited McAdoo's decision to leave South Africa with the rump of the Minstrel, Vaudeville and Concert Company, thus concluding one of the first and one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of the black American experience in South Africa.

9.

McAdoo sailed for Australia and soon formed a new company, the Original Alabama Cake-Walkers. But even in Australia, as lessee of the Palace Theatre in Sydney, stiff competition with rival American minstrel troupes and mounting difficulties with his employees made his life uncomfortable. Orpheus McAdoo died in Sydney on July 7, 1900. In a letter to The Freeman, minstrel Gauze claimed that the "minstrel company he brought out was the cause of his death. I never traveled with such people before."123

Nothing much is known about the further fate of the "Coloured Minstrel Company". Only Will Thompson resurfaces first in June 1898 as pianist of the Balmoral Minstrels,124 and then in October 1898, as a member of the American Salesman Variety Company,125 both resident companies in Kimberley.

Orpheus McAdoo's and the Jubilee Singers' legacy lived on in South African black performing arts. After World War I, spirituals became increasingly popular among the urban elite, but nobody played a greater role perhaps in spreading Afro-American sacred songs than Reuben T.Caluza, one of the most influential black composers in South Africa in the 1920s. In 1930, Caluza obtained a bursary to pursue music studies at Hampton Institute, where he came under the influence of Nathaniel Dett, the great initiator of the revival of Afro-American sacred music.

While Caluza's role in South Africa remained within the aesthetic and ideological confines of the African middle-class, the jubilee legacy re-emerged one more time among migrant workers on both sides of the Atlantic. Both in the industrial centers of Alabama and South Africa, workers created vibrant vocal styles that are indebted to the jubilee tradition. Among steel mill workers in Birmingham, Jefferson County, a male gospel quartet style emerged which resembles iscathamiya, a choral style

developed by Zulu migrant workers in Johannesburg and Durban since the early 1930s.126

NOTES

1. Report of Tr. L'Estrange relative to his arrest of Mr. R.A.Collins of the McAdoo Minstrels. Natal Archives, Minister of Defence, Minute Papers, vol.26, LW 1624/98

2. Times of Natal, March 30, 1898

3. John W.Cell: The Highest Stage of White Supremacy. The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1982: 22

4. Op.cit., p.4. See also Martin Legassick, 'The frontier tradition in South African historiography,' Shula Marks, Anthony Atmore, eds., Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa. London, Longman, 1980, pp.44-79

5. Op.cit., pp.12-13

6. Op.cit., p.22

7. I am indebted to Dale Cockrell, College of William and Mary, for first directing my attention to McAdoo and the Jubilee Singers, and for sharing with me his insights into the role of minstrelsy in Durban .Most of all I have to thank Doug Seroff from Nashville, Tennessee, who is currently working on a book on the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Doug not only passed numerous documents and references on to me and gave permission to quote from his manuscript, but also shared with me, through an extensive correspondence, many thoughts and ideas. I owe him a far greater debt than he probably realizes. Helpful were also Fritz Malval of Hampton University Archives, and the staff of the South African Library in Cape Town.

8. In an interview with the Friend of the Free State, August 25, 1891, McAdoo gave 1880 as the date when he joined Loudin's troupe.

9. Information compiled from various materials kept in the Archives of Hampton University.

10. Fredonia Censor, October 6, 1880, quoted from Doug Seroff: Unpublished manuscript, p.4. The entire preceeding paragraph owes much to that manuscript and Doug Seroff: 'On the Battlefield. Gospel quartets in Jefferson County, Alabama,' G.Haydon, D.Marks, eds., Repercussions. A Celebration of African-American Music. London: Century Publishing: 1985, pp.30-53

11. Fredonia Censor(?), c.September 29, 1879, quoted from ibid. p.5

12. The Chicago Tribune, April 29, 1881, quoted from Seroff, p.55.

13. The Evening Journal, April 28, 1881, quoted from Seroff, p.54.

14. This account of the Fisk Jubilee Singers owes much Doug Seroff's unpublished manuscript, but the exact background to McAdoo's rupture with Loudin still remains unclear.

15. The Freeman, May 3, 1890. A short biographical sketch of Mattie Allen appeared in Journal of Negro History, v.22, January 1937, p.131.

16. McAdoo to Armstrong, London, 1890, Hampton University Archives

17. Cleveland Gazette, October 31, 1891

18. Southern Workman, November 1890, p.120

19. Cape Argus, July 8, 1890

20. G.Chase: America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, p.264.

21. Quoted from Robert C.Toll: Blacking Up. The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America. London-Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, p.209.

22. Op.cit., pp.257-58

23. Op.cit., p.202

24. Cape Argus, August 21, 1862

25. Natal Mercury, October 7, 1865. I am indebted to Dale Cockrell for this and the following quotes from the Natal Mercury. A fuller treatment of minstrelsy in Durban will be found in an article Dale Cockrell is publishing in a forthcoming issue of American Music.

26. Cape Argus, August 21, 1862

27. Matthews: Incwadi Yami.p.193

28. Cape Mercantile Advertiser, September 20, 1869

29. Lawrence Green: Grow lovely, growing old. Cape Town, Timmins, 1951, p.193

30. Jan Bouws: 'Het Muziekleven in de Kaapkolonie gedurende die tweede helft van de Negentiende Eeuw', Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap, 1946: 100-108, p.105

31. Natal Mercury, March 7, 1871

32. Natal Mercury, December 28, 1880

33. Transvaal Advertiser, February 2, 1891. In another strange parallel between forms of popular consciousness in both countries, this statement recalls the confusion among early audiences of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in New York in 1871 about the alleged "combination of Ethiopian minstrelsy with sacred things" in the unfamiliar slave songs. Quoted from Seroff, p.7.

34. Natal Mercury, April 27, 1889

35. Eugene Genovese: Roll, Jordan, Roll. The World the Slaves Made. New York, Vintage Books, 1976, p.631

36. Cape Argus, July 1, 1890

37. This question has been dealt with in greater detail in Susan Newton-King's article 'The labour market of the Cape Colony,' Shula Marks, Anthony Atmore, ibid., pp.171-207. See also the seminal article by Stanley Trapido, 'The friends of the natives: merchants, peasants and the political and ideological structure of liberalism in the Cape, 1854-1910,' ibid., pp.247-274

38. Legassick, ibid. p.58

39. Worcester Advocate, March 27, 1897

40. The Friend of the Free State, August 18, 1891

41. Kaffrarian Watchman, October 15, 1890

42. Daily Independent, August 11, 1890

43. Kaffrarian Watchman, October 17, 1890

44. The Press, Weekly Edition, September 25, 1897

45. Cape Times, June 28, 1897

46. The Freeman, April 12, 1897

47. Cape Argus, January 21, 1898

48. Cape Argus, June 15, 1898

49. Southern Workman, October 19, 1890, p.104

50. Transvaal Advertiser, February 9, 1891

51. Genovese, op.cit., pp.3-7

52. Op.cit., p.5

53. Cape Argus, October 8, 1896

54. Transvaal Mining Argus, no date, quoted in Port Elizabeth Telegraph, February 3, 1891

55. Landdros to Staats Secretaris, January 3, 1891, Transvaal Archives, SS vol.2650, r98/91. I am indebted to Renata Robertson for a translation from the original Dutch.

56. Transvaal Archives, Landdros Pretoria, H.Siviele Hof van Landdros, vol.276b, H.S.Pollington v. O.M.McAdoo

57. Cape Argus, October 8, 1896

58. Clement Keto,' Black Americans and South Africa, 1890-1910', A Current Bibliography on African Affairs, vol.5, series II, 1972:383-406

59. Keto, ibid. pp.387-88

60. Quoted from de Waal, E.: 'American black residents and visitors in the S.A.R. before 1899', South African Historical Journal, 6, 1974: 52-55, p.54

61. Orpheus McAdoo to Paul Kruger, November 25, 1890, Transvaal Archives R 16459/90

62. General Joubert to Paul Kruger, July 9, 1890, Transvaal Archives R 1410/91)

63. An excerpt of this letter appeared in the Southern Workman, November 1890, p.110

64. Hollis to Armstrong, August 5, 1890, quoted in Southern Workman, November 1890, p.110.

65. U.S.Consular Agent Johannesburg to U.S.Consul General, Colonel J.G.Stowe, April 9, 1898. Microfilm A 686/337-338

66. Harry Dean and James Brown to Secretary of State, Johannesburg, August 28, 1903, quoted from Keto. op.cit., p.388.

67. Kaffrarian Watchman, no date, quoted from Southern Workman, January 20, 1891, p.134.

68. Brian Willan: 'An African in Kimberley: Sol T.Plaatje, 1894-1898',Shula Marks, Richard Rathbone, eds., Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa. African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930. London, Longman, 1982: 238-258, p.238

69. Plaatje later fondly remembered seeing the Jubilee Singers as a young man. Negro World, February 12, 1921

70. Diamond Fields Advertiser, August 15, 1890

71. Leselinyana, October 1, 1890. I am indebted to Naphtalie Morie for a translation of this text as well as of all following quotes from this newspaper.

72. Ibid.

73. Imvo Zabantsundu, October 16, 1890

74. Inkanyiso Yase Natal, November 15, 1895, p.2

75. See 'Gemel', 'Coloured Newspapers that I have known', Cape Standard, March 29, 1938. I am indebted to Tim Couzens for bringing this article to my attention.

76. South African Citizen, December 1, 1897

77. McAdoo to Armstrong, no date, quoted in Southern Workman, November 1890, p.120.

78. Eugene McAdoo to the Editor, no date, quoted from Southern Workman, January 1894, p.15.

79. Southern Workman, February 1891, p.146

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. McAdoo to Armstrong, no date, quoted in Southern Workman, November 1890, p.120.

83. Leselinyana, January 15, 1891

84. ibid., a detailed report on Mbongwe's death also appeared in Inkanyiso, October 1, 1891.

85. Leselinyana, January 15, 1891

86. K.Charles Kumkani and Samuel Cakata to Armstrong, October 31, 1890, quoted in Southern Workman, February 1891, p.146.

87. William W.Stofile to Armstrong, November 3, 1890, quoted in ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Bud-M'belle to Armstrong, September 16, 1890, Hampton University Archives

91. Ngcayiya, a future head of the Ethiopian church and then the A.M.E. in South Africa, had already seen the Jubilee Singers during their visit to Burgersdorp between November 1-3, 1890. Ngcayiya was then a teacher at the local Wesleyan Mission School, and McAdoo's visit must have inspired him to try his hand at a choir along the lines of McAdoo's troupe. On November 3, he organized a "musical evening", highly applauded by the local press: "The gift of song and the sense of harmony seem natural to the coloured race, and nothing but efficient training is wanting to enable our native talent to compare favourably with their American cousins, the Jubilee Singers." Burgersdorp Gazette, November 6, 1890

92. Diamond Fields Advertiser, March 13, 1897

93. Diamond Fields Advertiser, May 11, 1897

94. Diamond Fields Advertiser, September 13, 1890

95. Interview with Kate Makhanya (Manye), conducted by Margret McCord, now Mrs Nixon, in Durban in the early 1960s. I am indebted to Mrs Nixon for providing me with a transcript of this interview.

96. Beverdy C.Ransom: The Pilgrimage of Harriet Ransom's Son. Nahsville, Sunday School Union, n.d., p.73

97. I am currently preparing a manuscript on the history of the "South African Choir" entitled "Heartless Swindle - The South African Choir in England and the United States, 1890-1894".

98. Genovese, op.cit., p.245

99. Inkanyiso, December 13, 1890

100. Genovese, op.cit., p.167

101. Op.cit., p.659

102. Queerstown Free Press, May 1, 1896

103. Freeman, October 26, 1895. I am indebted to Doug Seroff for

this and all the following references from the Freeman.

104. Freeman, January 11, 1896

105. TheFreeman, October 26, 1895

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid.

108. Voice of Missions, February 1, 1898

109. Voice of Missions, June 1, 1898

110. Leselinyana, October 1, 1890

111. The Freeman, October 26, 1895

112. Voice of Missions, April 15, 1898

113. Other illustruous visitors during or after the Boer War were A.M.E.Bishop Levi J.Coppin whose book Observations of Persons and Things in South Africa (Philadelphia, n.d.) is an important document on the early history of the A.M.E. Church in South Africa, and F.Z.S.Peregrino, editor of the South African Spectator and author of, among others, Life Among the Native and Coloured Miners of the Transvaal (Cape Town 1910). On Peregrino, see also C.Saunders:'F.Z.S.Peregrino and the South African Spectator', Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library, 32, March 1978, pp.81-90

114. Harry Dean: The Pedro Gorino: The Adventure of a Negro Sea-Captain in Africa and on the Seven Seas in his Attempts to found an Ethiopian Empire. New York, Houghton and Mifflin, 1929, p.79.

115. The Freeman, January 4, 1899

116. Diamond Fields Advertiser, August 8, 1896

117. Diamond Fields Advertiser, August 8, 1896

118. Diamond Fields Advertiser, November 30, 1896

119. Diamond Fields Advertiser, May 11, 1897

120. South African Citizen, January 19, 1898

121. Natal Mercury, April 5, 1898

122. South African Citizen, May 4, 1898

123. Freeman, October 6, 1900

124. Diamond Fields Advertiser, June 25, 1898

125. Diamond Fields Advertiser, October 1, 1898

126. See Seroff: On the Battlefield, op.cit.