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The missionary as government agent on the Eastern Frontier: 1818-1830

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Chapter 1

The Relationship between Autocratic Rule, Humanitarianism and the Demand for Labour at the Cape: 1795-1814

The Evangelical Revival which swept Europe and Great Britain towards the end of the eighteenth century resulted in the formation, amongst others, of the London Missionary Society. In March, 1799 Dr van der Kemp arrived in South Africa as one of its first missionaries, carrying with him a letter addressed to the Christians of South Africa. The practical result of this address was the formation of the first South African Missionary Society - "Het Zuid Afrikaansch Genootschap ter bevordering van de Uitbreiding van Christus Koningrijk" (1).

The constitution of the new Society contained sixteen articles, of which the fifth is important as the first statement on relations between missionaries and the Colonial Government. Article Five read:-

> "The attention of the Directors of this Society is most earnestly directed to the general duty of every Christian, to render all submission and reverence to the temporal Power, for the Lord's sake, and carefully to refrain from anything which may be repugnant to the rules that have been promulgated in things civil and ecclesiastical" (2).

Dependent upon the good graces of the British Government which had only recently established itself at the Cape and which was already setting a new tone of authority hitherto unknown and soon to be resented by many, this first Missionary Society submitted to temporal authority. This act set a precedent and thenceforth the Government of the Cape, in the form of the Governor, regarded all missionary activity as falling under its control (3).

In 1803 the Batavian Republic took over the Cape and Commissioner de Mist expressed a strong opinion on the subject of the Society. He feared its encroachment on the preserves of the

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(1) Du Plessis, pp. 91-93.
(2) Ibid., p. 93.
(3) At least until the end of the Somerset regime, 1826.

Dutch Reformed Church, which was the official church of the country (1). Thereupon followed a period noted for the differences between the Directors of the newly formed Society and de Mist. The Directors "had occasion more than once to question their wisdom in drawing up that irrevocable fifth article, which delivered them, bound hand and foot, into the power of the Government", and the Government during the Batavian period was not sympathetic towards the Society (2).

The opinion of de Mist with regard to the work of the Missionary Society was "that the true work of a missionary society was to labour among the heathen far beyond the confines of settled congregations" (3). This was the intention of Dr van der Kemp, as a representative of the London Missionary Society. The desire to penetrate into the areas "beyond the confines of settled congregations" meant that the missionaries would have to move towards the boundaries of the Colony and beyond. Desired by van der Kemp and approved by de Mist, this tendency was to cause friction when the British reoccupied the Cape in 1806, for "The English brought the beginning of a revolution to the Cape" (4). The British demanded submission to the Rule of Law and this particularly with reference to the frontier (5). If the missionaries were to proceed beyond the boundaries of the Cape to reach the outlying native inhabitants, then they must form part of a pattern of control, become part of the governmental system and submit to the Government as the first missionary society had done.

It is with this growing pattern that this investigation is concerned. It seeks to show how, during the period 1818 to 1830 the British Government at the Cape tried to exert its control over the missionary in the interior beyond the Cape Eastern Frontier and use him for purposes other than his true calling, and how this attempt failed, largely - but not entirely - because those to whom the

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(1) Du Plessis, p. 94.
(2) Ibid., p. 95.
(3) Ibid., p. 94.
(4) De Kiewiet, p. 30.
(5) Ibid., p. 42.

missionaries came to preach to rejected men who were, in effect, trying to serve both God and Mammon.

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The history of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society in South Africa during the first generation of the nineteenth century is the story of the progressive alienation of well-meaning men from the sympathies of the Government and the colonists. The motives for this alienation of the missionaries from each are not the same, although there is an overlap. This overlapping of motives has resulted in confusion in accounting for the mutual parting of the ways (1).

It is necessary to hazard a separation of motives, in order to be able to demonstrate that the relationship of the colonial authorities towards the missionaries who acted as Government Agents between 1818 and 1830 was not a new one; it was a continuation, with variations, of a relationship which had been established at almost the first contact between missionary and Government.

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(1) As in Schutte, p. 174 ff.

The opportunity may be taken at this stage of showing briefly the confused nature of the reasoning employed by Schutte in accounting for the alienation of the L.M.S. missionaries from the colonial authorities and the Boers.

Schutte lists as the first factor which alienated both "colonial farmer and Government" from the missionaries, the "slandering campaign" conducted against them, resulting in the "Black Circuit" Court of 1812 (pp. 176-177). The examples quoted as evidence that the colonial farmers and Government were both alienated relate only to colonial farmers (pp. 177-180). Schutte then shifts his discussion from the alienation of the missionaries from the colonists to their alienation from the <u>local</u> authorities (p. 180). Much is made of the enquiry instituted by Sir Rufane Donkin in 1821, but there is no convincing link in the chain of reasoning which makes one feel that because the missionaries accused certain local authorities of misdemeanours (e.g. Colonel Cuyler (p. 180) that the <u>Government</u> (which was, after all, the Governor) was alienated. Is it reasonable to use Donkin as an example, neglecting Somerset and other Governors?

This transposition of logical entities in discussing the role of the "slandering campaign" in accounting for the alienation is most unsatisfactory, and gives no clear picture of why, essentially, the alienation took place in each case. Schutte's thesis shows up the L.M.S. and Dr Philip in an unfavourable light. This may be the result of impartial historical investigation; but the manner in which Schutte has handled his material in building up his case leads one to believe that his theories were formulated before the evidence was consulted.

It was Dr van der Kemp's desire to undertake mission work amongst the Kaffirs beyond the borders of the Colony (1) and the Directors of the London Missionary Society approved of this (2). The Directors were anxious not to cause the Government any annoyance and to secure its friendship and co-operation in their ventures (3). It was, after all, only through the good graces of the newly established, autocratic British Government at the Cape - deeply suspicious of the reactions of the Boers and the Kaffirs along the frontier (4) - that the missionaries could establish themselves in their chosen field of labour. Against this virtual clientship of the missionaries to the Government the London Missionary Society did not protest. Whether by reason of prudence, because it was only through the Government that they could operate at all, or because of unconcern at the position, because they could not foresee the ultimately detrimental results thereof, the Directors of the Society made no attempt to throw off the tutelage of the Government during these early years. When, during the Governorship of Major-General Dundas (5), two Bushmen captains came to Cape Town asking for instruction, Dundas and Fiscal Van Ryneveld pressed for the establishment of missionaries amongst these people. Edwards and perhaps Kicherer were likely people for the work, and van der Kemp agreed to these proposals, and also to the request by Dundas that the missionaries should

> ".... not only take their spiritual concerns at heart, but also ... correspond about their political concerns to Governor Dundas, at the particular request of His Excellency" (6).

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(1) Clinton, p. 9.
I have used the term "Kaffir" throughout to describe those tribes of the south-eastern Bantu located on the Eastern Frontier during the years under discussion. Generally it is used to designate the AmaXhosa (C.H.B.E., VIII, p. 35).
(2) Clinton, p. 9[illegible].
(3) Ibid., p.11.
(4) Theal (Records), III, p. 368.
(5) Acting-Governor, November, 1798 - December, 1799. (Walker (History), p. 130).
(6) Clinton, pp. 14-15. The quotation was in connection with Edwards only, but may be accepted as a general statement of policy.

This may be regarded as the first attempt by the Government to make use of the missionaries as political agents. Van der Kemp did not object to the requirement. He thought the demand reasonable (1). The Directors, too, saw the arrangement in a favourable light.

> "We trust," they wrote, "that Brother Edwards, by his mission to the Boschemen will be able to forward such information to General Dundas, as may be expected from him; and that such a reciprocity of protection and benefit may be established, as shall lead to the most important and happy consequences" (2).

Van der Kemp made four journeys into Kaffirland (3). He was not successful in his endeavour to propagate the Gospel. One of the reasons for the failure of his mission was that the frontier Boers were not co-operative and made the task of the missionaries more difficult by informing the Xhosa that the missionaries had come to betray them (presumably to the Colony) (4). Here we find the genesis of the attitude on the part of the Xhosa which regarded with suspicion all missionaries suspected of being connected with the Colony (5). Read, who had accompanied van der Kemp on his fourth journey into Kaffirland, explained to Colonel Collins, some eight years later, that in view of the experience afforded by his former visit to Kaffirland

> "he thought it better that the natives should have no reason to suppose that he had any connection with the colonial government" (6).

Thus, by 1801, not only had the suspicions of the Xhosa been aroused in connection with missionary endeavour, but the Government (7) was also beginning to have qualms about the operation of

/van der Kemp ...

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(1) Clinton, p. 15.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Clinton, p. 16. The frontier at this stage was the Great Fish River. The term "Kaffirland" and "Caffraria" are used throughout this thesis to describe the land east of the frontier of the Colony. This applies throughout the thesis, even after 15th October, 1819 when the frontier line was changed slightly.
(4) Clinton, p. 18.
(5) And, for that matter, missionaries generally, whether "Government Missionaries" or not.
(6) Theal (Records), VI, p. 108.
(7) As embodied in the person of Sir George Yonge (installed as Governor 10th December, 1799, dismissed 20th April, 1801. (Walker (History), p. 130).

van der Kemp in Kaffirland, amongst Gaika's people. With a legacy of insubordination on the frontier it was natural that the Governors at the Cape should regard with suspicion all who entered these areas. Sir George Yonge was no exception. Not only did he suspect van der Kemp, and missionaries in general, of carrying on mercantile pursuits instead of propagating the Gospel, but he believed them to be spreading "Jacobin principles" (1). For these reasons he refused to allow any other missionaries to follow van der Kemp beyond the frontiers of the Colony (2). It is clear that the principal motive in this prohibition was that the missionaries were regarded as potential promoters of disorder on the eastern frontier; and disorder was anathema to the autocratic regime of the British which breathed a new spirit of law and order into the confused legacy of the days of weak Company rule (3).

The interlude of the Batavian Republic was a regime which was liberal (4) but not permitting insubordination. This period saw an active outburst of the latent antipathy between the Government and the missionaries; the regime might change, but the fundamental causes for disagreement remained.

Van der Kemp and Read had been allowed to establish the mission station of Bethelsdorp near the frontier of the Colony on the shores of Algoa Bay in February, 1803 (5). Here van der Kemp not only disseminated the Gospel to the Hottentots but also doctrines which amounted to an inculcation of the belief that they were an oppressed race (6). In November, 1803, the Commander of

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(1) Theal (Records), VII, pp. 338-340.
(2) Ibid., p. 340.
(3) In spite of Dundas' prohibition missionaries continued to cross the frontiers of the Colony but not the Eastern Frontier, e.g. Anderson in 1801 established himself at Klaar Water. Apparently the Governor did not consider the northern and north-eastern frontiers as fraught with the same dangerous possibilities as the Eastern Frontier.
(4) Walker (History), p. 140.
(5) Clinton, p. 34.
(6) Schutte, p. 186.

Fort Frederick, Captain Albertini, reported to General Janssens that:

> "als ingesetenen naa de school koomen om Hottentotten te huuren onderlaat de Heer Van der Kemp nooit aan deselven in presentie van die Ingesetenen uitdrukkelyk te zeggen, dat zy volkomen vry zyn en van deese geen tik behoeven te veelen .... Doenmaals als de Veldcornet Muller beesig was de Stroopers aan Blandarivierberg te vervolgen en de Heer Van der Kemp daartoe om enige volk aansprak, weigerde deselve sulks niet, maar zeyde teffens aan de Hottentotten: gy hoeft het niet te doen, het moet met u vryе wil geschieden, want niemand kan u dwingen en ik alleenig ben hier Baas" (1).

De Mist on numerous occasions complained about opposition from Dr van der Kemp in the matter of recruiting Hottentots for the Cape Regiment. Once, when some recruits deserted and were told by the commanding officer to turn back, they replied:

> "Wy behoorden tot het bataillon van Jesus en de heer Van der Kemp is onze Generaal. Wy hebben met de Generaal Janssens niets te doen" (2).

When Dr van der Kemp observed that the Batavian Government regarded Bethelsdorp - being under direction from England - as a species of "imperium in imperio" (3) he was admitting the truth of the matter in more than one sense.

The very background of the L.M.S. missionaries was indicative of their mode of approach to the Government at the Cape. The L.M.S. was a British Society with British nonConformist traditions and the missionaries came from states where it was the accepted mode of procedure to criticise the Government (4). It is not likely that with such a heritage the British and Dutch members of the L.M.S. were likely to take autocratic rule lying down when it seemed to encroach upon what they believed to be their preserves.

The Second British Occupation of the Cape brought with it neither an alleviation of the autocratic spirit nor a change of disposition on the part of van der Kemp at Bethelsdorp. In 1807

/Colonel Cuyler ...

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(1) Quoted in Schutte, p. 186.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Transactions, II, p. 150.
See also: Philip, I, p. 91,
Theal (Records), XXXV, p. 349.
(4) Marais, pp. 141-142.

Colonel Cuyler complained about his conduct, lamenting that his attitude was "fallacious, insolent and haughty" (1). He went on to say:

> "It is impossible I can be answerable for the tranquility of this part of the Colony committed to my care, while so lawless and turbulent a character who has so much influence with the savage nations, is suffered to act as he pleases" (2).

The most significant feature about van der Kemp as far as Lord Caledon was concerned was that

> "he does not appear to me to have at all times sufficiently weighed the support which is due from every community to the established Government, by which its existence is protected" (3).

By 1812 the fears for the safety of the community had not abated. The Commissioners of Circuit felt that the mission institutions must always remain under the vigilance of the magistracy, as

> "considering themselves above being obliged to obey the laws is a thing which would give such a predjudicial and dangerous example to their disciples, that all other good laws and everything else which might be taught them would not be able to weigh against it." (4).

While this relationship was developing between the British Government and the L.M.S. only one further L.M.S. station was established beyond the frontiers, to the north-east (5). To deny missionaries permission to proceed beyond the frontier would be a negation of the humanitarian spirit which, emanating from Britain, demanded fulfilment (6). But there was no reason, as far as cautious Governors were concerned, why the missionaries should not be diverted to those distant areas where they could do little harm to the growing pattern of the Rule of Law (7). So long as they did not display any inclination towards disrupting the peace of the frontier generally their operation at a distance were approved of. Of the inhabitants about Anderson's mission at Klaar Water Lord

/Caledon ...

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(1) Quoted in Schutte, p. 187.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Theal (Records), VII, pp. 172-173.
(4) Theal (Records), IX, p. 79.
(5) Bethesda, 700 miles north-east of Cape Town (1808). (Lovett, I, p. 537).
(6) By 1812 the humanitarian spirit had shown no signs of diminishing. (Theal (Records), IX, p. 76).
(7) See above, p. 6 (footnote (3)), and for a later application of this device see Chapter III below, p. 46.

Caledon wrote in 1809:

> "..... it gives me sincere pleasure to bear testimony of their exemplary conduct, and to mention that not only have they given assistance to Government when required, but that no individual of their respective followers has been since my arrival in the Colony ever accused before any magistrate of a transgression against the law" (1).

Unlike van der Kemp within the Colony the extra-colonial missions were not, at this stage, causing the Government any misgivings with regard to their relationship to the efforts of the autocratic regime to establish the Rule of Law. Nevertheless their connection with the Government was one of subservience (2). They could be recalled at any moment and instructed to operate within the Colony, whereas mission stations already established within the Colony were hardly likely to be shut down; such a move would be flouting public opinion in England (3). Herein lay the weakness of the extra-colonial mission stations: the argument that their closure was necessary for the safety of the frontier was likely to bear a great deal more weight in England than a similar argument in connection with missions within the Colony (4).

The gradual tendency of the Colonial Government to tighten its hold upon the L.M.S. stations within the Colony was, naturally, noticed by van der Kemp.

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(1) Quoted in Clinton, p. 76.

(2) By virtue of the Proclamation of 1803 by which no L.M.S. missionary could proceed beyond the frontiers without authority (Transactions, II, p. 234).

(3) Macmillan, (C.C.Q.), p. 62.

> "... its (Exeter Hall) hold on the public conscience was so strong that it sufficed to make British public opinion in the nineteenth century the most formidable court of appeal in the world for oppressed native peoples everywhere."

(4) As in the case with the Glasgow Missionary Society station at Balfour which was in a frontier area where the border was undefined and which was abandoned in 1829, by order of the Colonial Government. This action was philosophically received in England as a necessity:

> "We wish not to intermeddle with the government of the country. What may seem to us severe, because it has particularly touched our mission, may, nevertheless, be perfectly just and necessary" (G.M.S.Q.P., No. 5, p. 1).

When Lieut-General Grey was acting Governor (1) van der Kemp approached him with a list of grievances (2). Under Dundas the missionaries had been responsible to the Governor of the Colony; under Janssens they had been subjected to the commanding officer at Fort Frederick and then to the landdrost; indeed the submission had gone so far that Landdrost Cuyler had even subjected the institution to the authority of the veld cornet (3). Grey responded by limiting the power of the landdrost over the institution and placing it directly under his own orders (4). These concessions are more apparent than real. They protected the institution against arbitrary action by such a man as Colonel Cuyler, who had little sympathy with mission institutions (5) but merely reaffirmed the complete control by the Governor.

Taking into consideration this background the inference regarding the extra-colonial missions is obvious. Should the need arise for their services in any form they would have to respond to the requirements of the Government. If not, their activities would be summarily curtailed and the chances were that their

/grievances ...

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(1) January to May, 1807 (Walker (History), p. 130).
(2) Philip, I, p. 117.
(3) Ibid., p. 118.
(4) Ibid.
(5) Depending on the sympathies of the historian towards the mission institutions, varying judgements are expressed on the actions of Colonel Cuyler. Representative of such opinions are Clinton, writing to vindicate missionary policy in South Africa, who makes out a hard case against Cuyler. Schutte, in writing his thesis, throughout implies that he has little sympathy with Dr Philip and the missionaries in general; he is sympathetic towards Cuyler. Others, such as Macmillan, whose view towards the missionary institutions is largely impartial, reflects this in his reluctance to pass an opinion on the actions of Cuyler. In the case of Clinton and Schutte one can infer immediately that their sympathies are "prejudices" and not the result of historical investigation.

The truth of the matter seems to be summed up by Commissioner Bigge who saw the struggle of the local authorities (of which Cuyler was a representative) against the canvas of growing autocratic rule:

"... it is not very surprising that the local government should have hesitated in giving its sanction to the accumulation of so large a portion of the labouring population in one place, and subjecting it to a species of theocratic influence, which might operate unfavourably to that of the civil authority" (Theal (Records), XXXV, p. 349). (A fuller discussion of this judgement follows below: p. 18 ff).

grievances would not easily be remedied in the face of utilitarian arguments by the Government. Generally speaking, the Governors (and the one Commissioner-General) at the Cape during the period 1795-1826 may be regarded as sympathetic towards the dominant predisposition of the age. They countenanced philanthropism provided it did not interfere with the business of Government (as indeed it did in the case of van der Kemp) (1). Distance was apt to lend enchantment to the view of the South African scene (2) as far as the philanthropists in England were concerned, and one of the preoccupations of successive Governors was to create a nice balance between their obligations towards the demand for missions to satisfy the cravings of humanitarianism and the more immediate needs of the Colony, the troublesome frontier (3), and the population which was rapidly losing what little sympathy it possessed for the missionaries.

This latter development requires some attention, for it complicated the fundamental and somewhat straightforward relationship between the Government and the missions which has already been described.

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For a hundred and fifty years Cape society had been built on the principle of slave-holding. Its legacy was an attitude on the part of the European colonists which regarded all people of colour as inferior and fit only to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water; for such folk the benefits of Christianity, education and civilisation were unnecessary (4). Therefore, by its very <u>raison d'etre</u> missionary enterprise at the Cape incurred the hostility of the colonists. Before the end of the eighteenth century the feeling against the Moravian missionaries at Genadendal was evident (5). The dominant reason for the disaffection which

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(1) Schutte, p. 187.
Theal (Records), IX, pp. 7-8.
(2) See William Philip's judgement on Exeter Hall (Macmillan, (C.C.Q.), p. 62).
(3) H.A. Reyburn in "The Critic", October, 1936, p. 50.
(4) Walker (Frontier), p. 7.
Marais, p. 137.
(5) Marais, pp. 137-138.

had already reached a dangerous degree of intensity at the beginning of 1795 was the fear which the Boers felt for their labour supply (1). When the British took over the Cape and showed their intention of protecting the mission institution at Baviaans Kloof, it was not long before the Boers were friendly towards the missionaries. The reason was not because they were enamoured of the British humanitarian principles.

> "At the beginning of 1795 a number of Boers for the first time told the missionaries that they considered the Genadendal Hottentots better servants than any they had yet employed. This opinion gradually became wide-spread and proved of considerable assistance to the mission" (2).

Throughout the generation to come Boer favour for the mission institutions was proportionate to the amount of labour which they were suspected of <u>not</u> harbouring (3).

The shortage of labour at the Cape was "chronic" (4), and was intensified in 1807 by the ending of the slave trade. The position was so bad by 1807 that Caledon was confronted with the necessity of increasing the "labouring population" (5). But however bad the labour position was, it is wrong to suppose that the general policy of the Governors

> "was determined by their anxiety to ensure the farmers with a supply of Hottentot labour",

and that this gave rise to such measures as the 1809 Proclamation by Caledon (6). To see Hottentot legislation in 1809 in the light of labour requirements only is to deliberately ignore the broader setting of British rule. Caledon's Proclamation was as much "a law ... passed in the interests of order and efficient administration" (7) as a device for encouraging Hottentots to take up service with the farmers. By 1809 the greater part of the Hottentot labour

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(1) Marais, p. 137.
(2) Ibid., pp. 139-140.
(3) Whether the missionary institutions harboured labour or not is immaterial. The suspicious attitude on the part of the Boer is the important factor (See Walker (History), p. 155, footnote 3).
(4) Marais, p. 122.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Macmillan, (C.C.Q.), p. 155.
(7) Marais, p. 123.

force was already in the service of the farmers (1).

It is all too easy to fall prey to the supposition that the Boers' demand for labour was the central factor governing relationships between the Government and the missionaries if one loses sight of the wider issues which embrace the frontier and its turbulent inhabitants, Boer as well as Bantu. Since peace had been established in 1803 between Boer, Bantu and Hottentot, there had been a period of comparative peace on the frontier; if by "peace" we mean the absence of war and the continuation of the perpetual clamour for land and security of tenure where Black and White mingled freely (2). To investigate this position Collins had been sent to the frontier in 1809 to report (3). The primary motive of this interest in the frontier was to establish a tranquil state of society where the long arm of the law would predominate. It was largely to promote this ideal that the Circuit Courts were established in 1811 (4). The legacy of the Circuit Court of 1812 was one of bitterness on the part of the Boers, for they were summoned to answer charges of alleged cruelty to Hottentots, a concept completely alien to people who had grown up under the lax administration of the Company days (5). But there was also another element present in the operations of the Circuit Courts which touched the Boers in the raw: the fact that they had been called to answer charges laid by people of colour.

Here we have another vital element in the relationship between Boer and missionary, but one which was certainly less constant in its operation. I have mentioned how the missions were suspect from the start for the privileges which they bestowed upon the Hottentots, privileges which the Boers regarded as likely to destroy the basis of their racial superiority (6). Mention has

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(1) Marais, p. 123.
(2) Macmillan (B.B.B.), p. 31.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Marais, pp. 119-120.
H.A. Reyburn in "The Critic", October, 1954, p. 52.
(5) Theal (History), pp. 262, 289.
Macmillan (C.C.C.), p. 91.
(6) See above, p. 11.

also been made of the fact that Governors were likely to support humanitarianism (which promoted the ends which the Boers feared) as long as it did not interfere with the business of government. Throughout the period since the first establishment of the missions until the open revolt of the Boers when they trekked into the interior in 1834 the feeling was growing that the old caste barriers were being broken down. But it is a mistake to suppose that the Government supported the missionaries in their crusade against the Boers wholly on philantrophic grounds. When the missionaries called for redress of wrongs done to Hottentots which led to the "Black Circuit" Court of 1812, there is no reason to believe that the Government was entirely actuated by humanitarian motives in conducting the court (1). Rather, the "Black Circuit" Court was an emanation from the authorities who were bound "by their instincts and traditions to stand for the Rule of Law" (2). The promotion of the ideals of humanitarianism as a <u>constant</u> factor in the relationship between the Government and the mission institutions did not exist. The constant factors in the relationship (3) were not emotional principles (4) emanating from England and were therefore

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(1) Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 160:

> "It is difficult to trace how far, if at all, the Government was influenced by the agitation of the early missionaries in bringing the ill-usage of Hottentots under the penalities of the common law."

(2) Macmillan, op. cit., p. 160.
The reverse is true for the Boers. They realised the deeper implications of the "Black Circuit" Court. It was not so much that they resented answering charges made by the missionaires on behalf of the Hottentots, but that they were called upon to answer charges <u>at all</u>. (H.A. Reyburn in "The Critic", October, 1934, p. 56).

(3) i.e. the necessity for the Rule of Law and the desire to do away with any grounds for allowing the Boers to believe that the institutions harboured labour.

(4) Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 52:

> "The Evangelical Revival from which the missionary movement sprang began in a reaction against the tyranny of reason, and its great achievement was to rediscover and emphasize the personal and emotional elements in religion ...". Also pp. 61-62: "... the interests of the subject races made a strong appeal to the sympathy and imagination of the British people. This was perhaps also a source of weakness, so that the sentimental and uncritical emotions of Exeter Hall quite early began to shake confidence ... even among the elect."

less liable to variation in personal interpretation. The striving for the Rule of Law and the desire to do away with any grounds for the suspicions of the Boers that the mission institutions harboured a supply of labour, are fundamental and constant factors because the South African milieu shaped them (1); they arose out of the needs of the area of settled conquest in which the British Government operated to foster its rule. To curb a restless frontier and mould wild characters to accept unaccustomed restrictions was a prime necessity; it was not essential to promote the Christianising of the Hottentots and the Bantu except in so far as it was necessary to satisfy religious feeling in England (2) and to satisfy the personal feelings of individual Governors. To allow the Boers to continue to believe that the missions withheld a ready supply of labour was to invite further restlessness in a frontier community already famous for chafing at the bit (3); therefore the uncontrolled

/dissemination ...

(continued from p. 14)

If William Philip, one of Dr Philip's sons, at Hankey, some years later realised the emphemeral nature of the emotional evangelicalism (Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 62, footnote 1) then surely Governors, who had greater responsibilities towards the Colony (viz. to foster law and order) would be moved by necessity to ignore the humanitarian demands.

p. 15

(1) The 1820 Settlers exhibit an example of how the South African milieu subordinated humanitarian feelings. There must have been a considerable number amongst the Settlers who were of a humanitarian frame of mind when they came to South Africa, and settled near the frontier. Not many years later the Settlers are described by Macmillan as:

"absorbed in their own task of reclaiming a new district from barbarism - with little sympathy or attention to spare for the neighbouring barbarians - the Bantu indeed being dangerous and hostile neighbours" (Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 120).

(2) H.A. Reyburn in "The Critic", October, 1934, p. 50.

(3) Illustrative of the restive tendencies of the Boers is the case of the Boer who was so exasperated at the thought that van der Kemp refused to encourage institution Hottentots to go into farm service that he went to Cape Town and demanded permission from Janssens to shoot him. Appropriately enough to the theme of this chapter Janssens in reply asked "whether he had not seen the gallows since he arrived at the Cape?" (Transactions, II, p. 241).

The fear of insurrection on the frontier died hard. In 1851 Somerset pointed out to Bathurst that the Slachter's Nek Rebellion

"would not have been calculated to cause too much

dissemination of Christianity, where the process was likely to promote disorder, was undesirable (1).

And into this pattern Sir John Cradock fitted admirably (2). In less than a year after his arrival he had cleared the Zuurveld of Xhosa, driving them beyond the Fish River and erecting block-houses to hold them out; he had appointed deputy landdrosts at Cradock and Grahamstown and controlled the distribution of farm-land (3). These actions have been applauded as "the most decisive step yet taken to establish the rule of law on the Eastern Frontier" (4). But, Walker continues, "That rule was displeasing to some of the frontiersmen" (5). And it was precisely because, during his Governorship, ~~that~~ the Rule of Law was actively promoted that Cradock was constrained to grant what one might be tempted to term concessions to the Boers which the necessity of the situation demanded. To further antagonise the Boers would mean greater friction. Therefore the missionaries must suffer as tradition imputed them with harbouring labour (6). Hence we find

/Cradock ...

(continued from p. 15)

> sensation, had it not been for the serious revolts which took place in the same part of the country under the former Dutch and British administrations and the apprehension it at first excited of similar consequences possibly ensuing" (Theal (Records), XI, p. 4).

p. 16

(1) At least two ways in which disorder would be promoted may be mentioned. First, crimes were committed on nearby farmers by the inhabitants of the institution (Theal (Records), X, p. 92). Second, relations between the Boers and the Hottentots would tend to harden (and possibly lead to restlessness generally in society) because the Hottentots were encouraged to disobedience and discontent through the missionaries listening to their complaints against the Boers (Moodie, II, p. 294).

(2) Governor at the Cape from September, 1811 to April, 1814. (Walker (History), p. 130).

(3) Walker, op. cit., pp. 159-160.
Even the control of the distribution of farmland was an extension of the Rule of Law (H.A. Reyburn in "The Critic", October, 1934, pp. 43-44).

(4) Walker (History), p. 180.

(5) Ibid.

(6) The missionaries themselves contributed towards magnifying the suspicions of the Boers that the institutions were reservoirs of labour (Moodie, II, p. 291).

Cradock writing to the Rev. John Campbell in February, 1814:

> "You are well aware, that the disinclination to encrease, or even maintain the institutions already established in this Colony is almost universal, and that the general alarm and outcry is, that if they are permitted to enlarge or disseminate, the most fatal injury will ensue to the agriculture and sustenance of the community" (1).

In the words of Macmillan:

> "The authorities were bound by all their instincts and traditions to stand for the Rule of Law. But in seeking to establish this fundamental principle, the Government had always to reckon with the clamorous colonial demand for labour, and was itself honestly of opinion that the economic prosperity of the country depended on the services of the Hottentots" (2).

That this latter belief should have existed amongst some of the Governors was fortuitous rather than standing in the relationship of cause and effect to the Boers' demand for labour. Had they not believed in such a necessity for promoting the economic prosperity of the Colony, they would still have had to adopt such an attitude in order to diminish a possible cause of friction between themselves and the Boers. Cradock, above all, was acutely aware of the necessity for removing obstacles of this nature:

> "..., the most cautious circumspection is to be exercised in the promotion of the desired good, and as little as possible are we to hurt the feelings, or attack the prejudices, of a body of people who with good dispositions it is always to be recollected from the peculiarity of their situation are yet unused to severe control, and are even to be taught in a mild manner the operations of the Law" (3).

This note of caution in the dealings of the Cape Governors with the Boers was not limited to the Eastern Frontier. Lord Charles Somerset saw economic prosperity of the Colony as the sine qua non for an orderly society which would incline towards a favourable acceptance of autocratic rule, particularly after the Slachter's Nek Rebellion had flurried the population. He decried the Colonial Secretary's check placed on "colonial improvement" by the

/appropriation ...

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(1) Theal (Records), IX, p. 350, Cradock to Campbell, 10th February, 1814. (My own italics. Obviously a reference to incipient disorder).
(2) Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 160.
(3) Theal (Records), IX, p. 9, Cradock to Colonel Vicars, 14th November, 1814.

appropriation of the whole of the surplus revenue to the support of the army, hinting that this might cause disappointment and possibly "discontent and commotion" on the part of the colonists (1). Not long afterwards, in trying to beg an increase in salaries for the public officers in the administration he still considered that the art of governing included the factor of conciliation (2).

It fell to the lot of Commissioner Bigge some years later, when time had allowed the fundamental issues to assume their rightful proportion in relation to the events of the times, to sum up the relationship of labour to the Rule of Law as follows:

> "..... it is not very surprising that the local government should have hesitated in giving its sanction to the accumulation of so large a portion of the labouring population in one place, and subjecting it to a species of theocratic influence, which might operate unfavourably to that of the civil authority" (3).

Throughout the years 1795-1814, therefore, it was clearly not the fact, as such, that a possible pool of labour was being created which caused concern to the Government, but the intimate relationship of that fact to the necessity for the smooth running of the Colony. The fear of the Government for the continued existence of, and the supplementing of, a species of "imperium in imperio", where not always obvious, was always operative in the background (4).

/A brief ...

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(1) Theal (Records), XI, p. 335, Somerset to Bathurst, 17th May, 1817. One must take into consideration, however, the fact that Somerset was exaggerating to some extent in order to augment the garrison: hence the implied threat to Bathurst that "I shall not have adequate means to repel them" (i.e. the discontented colonists who might become unruly).

(2) Theal (Records), XI, pp. 393-394, Somerset to Bathurst, 10th October, 1817.

(3) Theal (Records), XXXV, p. 349.

(4) I mentioned that the promotion of the humanitarian ideals by assisting mission institutions could not be considered a constant operative motive in the relationship of the Government to the missionaries (See above, p. 10). This is particularly true when one considers the personal inclinations and convictions of various Governors. Cradock was sufficiently convinced of the necessity of evangelisation to assist in establishing a new mission at Theopolis; Somerset, on the other hand, while paying lip-service to the humanitarian demands, closed down institutions beyond the frontiers and was extremely reluctant to promote new missions within the Colony itself (See below, Chapter II).

Cradock was, to be sure, sympathetic towards the missionary enterprise (Clinton, p. 98), but only in so far as it did not interfere with the business of Government (which was, for practical purposes, the promotion of the Rule of Law) (Theal

A brief comment is necessary on the emphasis laid by many historians on the fact that one cause of the alienation of the L.M.S. missionaries from the Government was that the L.M.S. institutions failed to promote industry, encouraging idleness instead (1). But taken in isolation, idleness is not something which should evoke adverse criticism. Idleness assumes importance only when it is placed into the context of the Cape Colony during the years of the growing concept of the Rule of Law.

First, as I have attempted to show, the Cape Governors, for matters of policy, thought it necessary that the mission institutions should not be allowed to create the impression that they were reservoirs of labour (2). How much more so, then, should they not be allowed to give the impression of being reservoirs of <u>idle</u> labour.

But this is incidental to the true purpose behind the demand for "industry" in the institution at Bethelsdorp, at any rate as expressed by Caledon, for one (3).

> "If," wrote Caledon to Castlereagh in October, 1809, "in the year 1804 this barren spot could not sustain a population of three hundred and twenty souls, it requires no argument to show that without an improved system of agriculture, which has not been the case,

/the ...

(continued from p. 18)

(Records), IX, pp. 7-8). Therefore he helped the Rev.J.Campbell to establish Theopolis, but significantly rounds off an adjuvant letter by drawing Campbell's attention to the necessity of the missionaries submitting to the authority of the landdrosts and the magistrates. "Without the performance of this indispensable condition, there will be perpetual complaint and irritation" (Theal, op. cit., p. 352). However, in view of the discussion on p. 20 below, footnote (1), this humanitarian gesture at Theopolis on the part of Cradock may be suspect as an outright attempt to promote law and order in that area.

Dr John Philip saw the relationship in its correct proportions with regard to Caledon and Cradock. "The Earl of Caledon and Sir John Cradock .... had too much integrity of character, and too much benevolence, to allow them to listen to such a proposition; (i.e. that Bethelsdorp be abolished and its inhabitants dispersed amongst the farmers) but the design was not to be abandoned (by the Boers) ...." (Philip, I, p. xix (of the Preface)).

<u>p. 19</u>

(1) e.g. Theal (History), I, p. 231.
(2) See above, p. 15.
(3) Where "industry" is taken to mean productive agricultural labour; this is the sense in which it is generally used throughout this period.

> the same space in the year 1809 is less calculated to afford maintainance for double that number; the obvious consequence of which is this, that the Doctor having neither a religious, civil, or military control over the majority of his followers, he cannot protect his neighbours against their depredations" (1).

Once again the motive behind the cry by the Government for "industry" on the part of the inmates of Bethelsdorp was that lack of industry endangered the Rule of Law on the frontier.

Dr. Philip, when penning his volumes in the cause of civil rights for the Hottentots realised only too fully that it would be disasterous to associate in any way the demand by the missionaries for civil rights with any suggestion that the system of government was being endangered, an outlook clearly influenced by taking cognizance of the basic desires of Lord Charles Somerset (2):

> "We ask for nothing unreasonable, nothing illegal, nothing new. We have nothing to say in politics. The question under discussion is a mere question of civil rights. We have advanced no suggestions about the new charter of justice. We are the advocates of no particular form of civil government for the colony. We have offered no particular directions about the machinery of government desirable in such a country. We have recommended no checks but such as are necessary to prevent one class of British subjects from oppressing and destroying another. In what we propose we suspend no weight upon the wheels of government" (3).

He, as others before him, realised the essential otherness of missionary institutions and their operations, which, by virtue of their calling, were different to systems of government, cells apart which were within the system of the Rule of Law and yet not of it. This explains the continual bickering with the civil government and all the appearances of the unresolved conflict to which we have drawn attention.

> "Considering the beneficial effects which have attended the labours of the missionaries, it may be a matter of surprise .... that in the means

/recommended ...

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(1) Theal (Records), VII, p. 173.
This motive may even account for the extension made by Cradock to missionary enterprise by helping the Rev.J.Campbell to found Theopolis "to relieve Bethelsdorp" so that "all the hopes and prospects of united Christianity and utility to the world will be realised" (Theal (Records), IX, p. 352).

(2) For an exposition of Somerset's desires see below, Chapter II.

(3) Philip, I. pp. xxv-xxvi (of the Preface).

> recommended to the government for the improvement of the natives, I should have dwelt so little on this point. In reply to this objection, it is only necessary to remark, that in asking protection for the people, from colonial rapacity and cruelty, we ask all the efficient aid which government can afford us in the prosecution of our labours. Government may support an ecclesiastical establishment among a people professing Christianity; but a missionary society, possessing the efficiency necessary to bring savages or barbarians into a state to call for such a provision, is an apparatus, which human government can neither fabricate nor conduct with success" (1).

Moodie, when due allowance is made for his slighting attitude towards the missionaries, saw the danger from another angle.

> "It is thus that those villages which the missionaries have formed for the purpose of instructing the Hottentots and converting them to Christianity, have gradually become petty governments, where, from the influence they have gained by espousing their cause against the other classes, they exercise a kind of despotic authority over them, and foment a feeling of hostility towards the Whites, which has already partially disorganised the frame of society, and occasioned innumerable evils, that militate against the prosperity of the colonists.
>
> It is this love of power and this busy meddling spirit, which intermix themselves with the best meant but injudicious exertions of the missionaries in South Africa, that have principally occasioned the dislike and jealousy with which they are viewed by the greater portion of the settlers. Until the abuses arising from the temporal power acquired by the missionaries over the Hottentots are removed, by the break-up of their stations, their exertions will be attended with much more harm than good to all classes of the inhabitants of the colony" (2).

Moodie was primarily concerned about the disruptive effect of Hottentot insolence upon the society of the Colony, the natural result of ~~a conflict~~ tension between a people taught to look upon themselves as the equals of those who had been their masters for so long (3). But whatever the manner in which the disruptive influence of the missionaries worked, the ultimate source from which it grew was the same: the tendency of the institutions to become "petty governments"; "imperium in imperio".

With the coming of Lord Charles Somerset, a person not

/inclined ...

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(1) Philip, I, p. xxvii (of the Preface).
(2) Moodie, II, p. 297.
(3) Ibid., pp. 293-294.

inclined to tolerate opposition to his authority (1), this struggle between the Government and the missionary institutions for the determination of whether the missions should remain within the pattern of Law or not, was naturally intensified, and more especially so where the missionary institutions beyond the frontiers of the Colony were concerned; for it was here that uncontrolled institutions were most likely to prove themselves troublesome. That they should either be controlled or disbanded were the only alternatives, and in the former alternative, if the missionaries accepted such restrictions, lay a danger that they would be used by the Government for the regulation of secular affairs. Philip maintained that human government could not conduct the spiritual work of missionaries; time was to reveal the truth of his implied ~~opposite~~ converse proposition, that missionaries could not conduct the temporal work of government.

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(1) This opinion of Somerset's character is not only provided by sketches such as Theal's (History), I, p. 281, which gives one the impression that he was a man intolerant of opposition, but the general evidence consulted in connection with this thesis leads one to the same conclusion.