



FROM THE NOTEBOOKS OF LIONEL FORMAN

BLACK
and **WHITE**
IN S.A. HISTORY

LIONEL FORMAN ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

1/6

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Lionel Forman

An Introduction to this Anniversary Booklet

By RAY ALEXANDER



LIONEL Forman's untimely death on October 19th, 1959, at the age of 31, deprived our people of a true scholar and deep thinker. He crammed much into his short life and what he has written shows the qualities of a rare person.

He combined great sincerity and passion for truth and justice with a fine mind and a sense of responsibility towards the workers and oppressed. He felt with them and devoted his gifts of intellect and leadership to the cause of their liberation.

This was recognised by the leaders of the Congress movement, Chief A. J. Lutuli and Dr. G. M. Naicker, in their messages to his wife when they said: "His loss will be deeply felt by all freedom-loving people. His courageous stand in the freedom struggle will always inspire us."

The student and political leader were fused in him to form a complete and balanced whole. Many-a-time he exclaimed to me when coming across a striking passage in a dusty newspaper file or old record, or when thinking about a new theory: "This is important, here is something that the people ought to know."

Always his thinking and researches were directed only to one aim, and that was to create a full and equal South Africa in which men and women of all races could work and live together without fear and without the degradation of colour discrimination.

This spirit animates the collection of essays which have been brought together in this volume. They are only a small part of the large work on a People's History of South Africa on which Lionel was engaged at the time of his death. They reveal his determination to penetrate to the roots of South Africa's colour bar system, to trace it to its very beginning and to examine it in all its parts.

The Way to Freedom

The more he studied and wrote, the more convinced he became that the way to freedom lay through a recognition and glad acceptance of South Africa's multi-national composition. Only when each national community was free to develop its own special qualities, could all sections of the population make their full contribution to the cause of liberation.

Lionel believed that the ultimate solution to our problems lay in the

establishment of a Socialist society. South African history and the social order could be understood only in terms of conflicting classes and the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists. At the same time he recognised the existence of national communities that cut across the class divisions. His main interest was to explore and discover the

relations between class and national groups.

He had only begun to sketch out his ideas when he died. These essays are in the nature of raw material rather than a finished product, yet, characteristic of his quick mind and capacity for work, they are full of interest for scholar and layman alike.

EDITOR'S NOTE

THE purpose of these essays, and of this booklet, is to trace the relationship between White and Black in South African History. We are told, in our history books and by many of our politicians, that the white man's mission in South Africa was a civilising one, that he rescued the indigenous inhabitants from barbarism, strife, disease and ignorance and showered on them the blessings of the Western way of life.

Lionel Forman shows that the truth is very different. Van Riebeeck may have come to establish a refreshment station to supply the ships of the Dutch East India Company on their way to India; but he also set in motion a process which has continued to the present day—the theft of the land, property and freedom of the indigenous peoples, the establishment by force of the "baasskap" of the White man over the Black man, the creation of a system of society in which power, profit and privilege were reserved for "Europeans only," while to the Non-Europeans was reserved the role of hewer of wood and drawer of water for evermore.

And yet not for evermore. For Lionel also shows that throughout our history our peoples have bravely resisted oppression and fought strenuously for their rights and freedom. In these pages it will be shown how the seeds of present resistance to Nationalist tyranny were planted by our forebears in days gone by. From the study of their past achievements our peoples can draw inspiration for the struggles for freedom which still lie ahead.

Of the ultimate outcome there can be no doubt. The people's cause will triumph. It is to be hoped that this booklet will carry out Lionel's wish that his work might make some contribution towards the solution we all so devoutly desire.



(Before the white man came to South Africa, the African people living here had a well-ordered system of social organisation, an organisation that was based on the recognition of each man's human dignity.

This chapter commences at that period of our history before the Dutch arrived and life was governed by the tribe.—Ed.)

IN tribal society the chief was, as a general rule, anything but a despot. On the contrary, the tribal system of government was democratic. Although the chief usually had an inner circle of advisers—relatives and influential sub-chiefs—all matters of tribal policy had to be taken to a great tribal council which was broadly representative of the whole tribe and included all sub-chiefs and headmen of local divisions of the tribe. In some cases his council was in effect the governing body of the tribe. The Basotho required in addition that important matters be taken before a general assembly of all the adult men.

Chapter

One

TRIBAL DEMOCRACY

At these assemblies there was complete freedom of expression and speakers did not hesitate to contradict or criticise the chief. A chief could not act without the agreement of the people.

The tribal democracy extended to the village level as well, each district of the realm having its local headman, responsible to the chief, with his local council, from the decisions of which an appeal lay to the chief.

The reason for the essentially democratic nature of the tribe was, of course, not that the chiefs were a particularly benevolent species of men but because it was only by leaving the power with the people that the chief was able to keep power.

(He had no standing or professional army to carry out his will. His armed force consisted of a people's militia, the tribal regiment, which consisted of the able-bodied men who were called up for military service when needed. He could only rule with their consent freely given.—Ed.)

For citizenship in a tribe was not determined by birth but by voluntary allegiance to the chief. If he ruled wisely and for the benefit of the whole tribe, his tribe, his power and his wealth would grow by the accession to him of dissatisfied members of neighbouring tribes less happily ruled.

But if the chief ignored the wishes of his people he would stand helpless while his tribe diminished and split until at last someone ousted him from power and took over the chieftainship.

A sovereign can only enforce a law upon a majority which disapproves of that law if he has an effective apparatus of coercion, something in the nature of a police force.

And the formation of a class of persons whose task is law enforcement is dependent on the development of an economy in which there is an advanced division of labour—an economy which has raised itself above the general subsistence level of African tribal society.

Chief Dependent on People

Thus it was that the sovereign was dependent for the maintenance of law on the people themselves. It was because the people themselves acted against those who offended against tribal custom that it was so difficult for Sir Jacob Dirk Barry to make Chief Cetywayo understand that there is a difference between a good law and a law to which the whole nation agrees—a principle obvious to Sir Jacob, who, as Judge-President of the Eastern Districts Court, headed a judicial system which spent much of its time enforcing "good laws" which were heartily detested by almost the entire black populace.

Thus, although there had evolved among the Africans a well-developed system of political institutions, there were still no political organisations, that is, organisations formed by the subjects of a state with the purpose of influencing or

compelling the making and un-making of laws by exerting pressure on the lawmaker, or by overthrowing it and replacing it with a new apparatus of law-making and law enforcement.

This was not because there were no political intrigues and conflicts within the tribe. Dynastic disputes, for example, were not infrequent. If the chief was unsatisfactory a palace assassination might remove him to make way for a more acceptable relative. But no class of people with a lasting grievance against the state resulting from dissatisfaction with their lot in life could come into being because if such a group came into being and could not obtain redress it could—and did—simply move across to another tribe, or move away and form its own tribelet.

No Slave System

There was no fundamental clash of interests between different groups within the tribe. When the harvest was good the whole tribe feasted. When it was bad all were hungry.

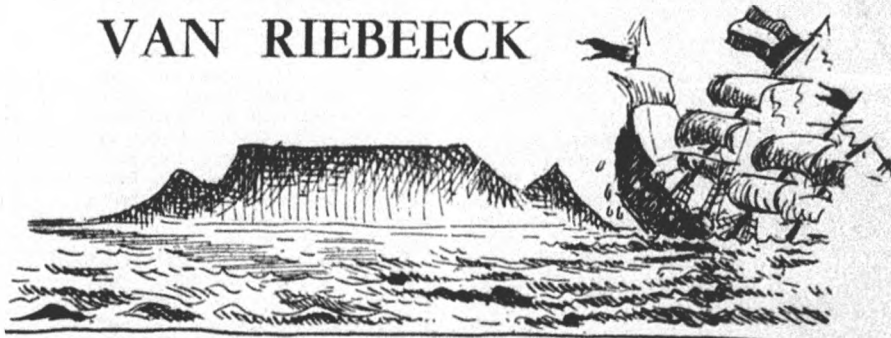
This situation would no doubt, have changed in the course of time.

The chief and his relatives and councillors were a privileged group within the tribe and as the wealth of the community grew with the development of new and better methods of production they would—if they had followed the course of economic transition taken by similar primitive communities in other countries at earlier times—have formed the nucleus of a new slave-owning class.

(Such a development was in fact taking place among the Tswana of Bechuanaland who had enslaved the Masarwa and held them under a form of domestic slavery.—Ed.)

As it was, however, the Europeans disrupted the course of African economic development before any transition to a slave system could take place and the powerful machinery necessary for the maintenance of such a state did not yet exist.

IN THE DAYS OF VAN RIEBEECK



HOLLAND is today a small nation of little world importance, but in the seventeenth century she was a major power.

Through the Dutch East India Company, established in 1602 she came to dominate the extremely valuable trade with India. The sea route from Europe to India was via Southern Africa, and Dutch ships, like those of England and other trading nations, frequently stopped at the Cape to obtain water.

In March 1647 a Dutch ship, the Haarlem, was wrecked at the Cape and the survivors spent a year there.

When they were rescued and returned to Holland, two of the officers of the Haarlem, Leendert Janssen and Nicolaas Proot wrote a glowing report on the possibility of establishing a refreshment station there for the Company's ships, a half-way house breaking the murderously long journey from Amsterdam to the Dutch East Indies. Food was plentiful, the soil fertile, and the African tribes were friendly.

Their year at the Cape had proved, they said, that any description of the natives of the Cape as "a brutal and cannibalistic people of whom nothing could be ex-

pected" was nothing more than idle "sailor's talk." It was true that Netherlanders had sometimes been killed by them but that was because the Europeans had taken their cattle by force.

The Company decided to set up a small refreshment station.

But who were they to send? Who was going to take on the job of commander of a non-existent grocery five thousand miles from civilisation?

Hopefully they offered the post to Proot. He turned it down with thanks.

Ex-Thief van Riebeeck

Then they remembered a man called van Riebeeck. He was a company official in Japan, who had been caught red handed stealing his employers' goods and shipped home. He had got away with a fine and the sack, and for years he had been pestering the company with pleas for reinstatement.

It had been the convoy on which he was travelling home in disgrace which had stopped at the Cape to

pick up the Haarlem survivors, so he had some qualifications. He had spent eighteen days in South Africa.

That matter of embezzlement? Well, there wouldn't be very much for him to steal at the Cape!

Van Riebeeck was back in the service of the Company.

He was given the Janssen and Proot Memorandum to read and he zealously drew up lengthy comments. He took issue at once with the Memorandum's estimate of the African Khoi-Khoi at the Cape. They were, he said flatly, "a brutal lot, living without conscience" almost as if he were grooming himself as the Founder of White Civilization and putting those liberalists Janssen and Proot in their place.

The Company wrote out clear and explicit instructions. The Natives were to be treated with the utmost friendliness. Under no circumstances were they to be molested.

On April 7, 1652, van Riebeeck landed at the Cape with two hundred others—including his two stepdaughters and three or four other women.



Autshumao, Chief of a small Khoi-Khoi tribe, the Goringhaikonas, numbering fifty, came to greet van Riebeeck on his arrival. The tribe had long bartered peacefully with ships which pulled into the bay for fresh water and any food available, and Autshumao had acquired a working knowledge of English.

Chief Autshumao went down in peace to the ship, thinking that like all the others it would rest a while and go away.

He went in peace to greet van Riebeeck, and he did not know that van Riebeeck would stay, and he, Autshumao, would in time be thrown into chains and imprisoned on an island, and that his people would be driven from the Cape to disappear from the face of the earth.

Autshumao, Chief of the Goringhaikonas:

Harry the Hottentot.

Herry is the name the Dutch gave him; Harry the translation the English historians have adopted. And not only have the Khoi-Khoi been physically destroyed, but the name by which they called themselves has been buried with them, and the nickname the Europeans gave them—Hottentot—is known throughout the world.

Fortunately for the Dutch, Proot's estimate of the tribesmen was proved correct, van Riebeeck's wrong. For when they were most vulnerable the inhabitants made no attempt to harm them. Small groups of Dutchmen frequently wandered far from the Fort into the heart of the African country, and never suffered the slightest harm from the tribesmen—indeed, they were always assisted by them. Nor could this have been due to any fear of retribution, because the tribesmen were highly mobile, moving in unlimited territory which was well known to them and unencumbered by the heavy guns without which the Dutch were helpless. And the Dutch were possessed of highly valued copper and other wealth which must have been a source of rich temptation to the tribesmen.

"Let's Take Their Cattle"

At first Dutch and Khoi-Khoi lived at peace. But only eight short months after he landed, van Riebeeck wrote this of his unsuspecting neighbours:

"Would it matter so much," he begged the directors, "if one deprived them of some six or eight thousand cattle? For this there would be ample opportunity, as

we have observed that they are not very strong—indeed they are extremely timorous. Often only 2 or 3 of them would drive a thousand cattle within range of our cannon, and it would therefore be quite easy to cut them off. We notice also that they trust us in everything and without any fear come close to the Fort to graze their cattle. We make them even more fearless by encouraging them still more and more with friendly faces and kindly treatment, firstly, to see whether in course of time anything good might be done with them in the shape of trade or something else for the benefit of the Honourable Company, and, secondly, through their confidence in us, to be in a better position easily and without a blow to deprive them of their cattle and take these for the Honourable Company, should we at any time receive the order to do so. It is really too sad to see so great a number of cattle, to remain so much in need of them for the refreshment of the Company's ships, and yet be unable to obtain anything worth while in return for merchandise and kind treatment."

"Let's Have Slaves"

The original plan was to send the captured Africans to India as slaves. Later van Riebeeck set his sights higher and suggested that they be kept at the Cape in slavery:

"We could get excellent service from these people on the islands in flaying seals etc., and with the meat of these could feed them sufficiently without giving them anything else. It will have to happen one day or we shall derive no benefit from them at all."

(The directors of the Company rejected van Riebeeck's suggestion to enslave the Khoi-Khoi because they said a Khoi could not be enslaved in their own country unless they were first totally subdued and the Company could not and would not embark on such a tremendous undertaking.—Ed.)

The Khoi-Khoi began to know of these plans too late, and to fight back too late. The Journal entry on February 10th, 1655 says:

"Only last night it happened that about 50 of these Natives wanted to put up their huts close to the banks of the moat of our fortress, and when told in a friendly manner by our men to go a little further away, they declared boldly that they would place their huts wherever they chose.



"If we were not disposed to permit them to do so they would attack us with the aid of a large number of people from the interior and kill us, pointing out that the ramparts were badly constructed of earth and scum and could easily be surmounted by them; and that they also knew how to break down the palisades, etc."

Passive Resistance

And then the Dutch had their first experience of a form of passive resistance. It was very effective. None of the tribes near the settlement were willing to barter their cattle. Trade was practically at a

standstill, and van Riebeeck was beginning to get desperate.

To break the blockade, van Riebeeck sent, on that day, a party of seven men into the interior to try to establish trade with more distant tribes.

Their trip is in itself remarkable evidence of the peaceful attitude of the Khoi-Khoen. For during the nineteen-day journey the party met several parties of Africans, one of them 70 to 80 strong, all of which received them in friendship. "They always laid their assegais and weapons aside and as good friends approached our men," reads the Journal.

A brisk trade in cattle commenced once more and the Dutch received a new lease of life.

White Settlement and a Slave Economy

Five years after the arrival of van Riebeeck's little band, the Company for the first time allotted land to nine of its servants and encouraged them to become permanent settlers.

And then came South Africa's next important immigration wave—the men and women whose labour created the basis of modern civilisation in South Africa—the slaves.

In 1658 about 400 West African slaves were brought to the Cape—the forerunners of thousands of miserable souls from India, Java, Ceylon, East and West Africa, Madagascar.

(Many of the slaves introduced from Asia were prisoners of war and political exiles who had been seized in the colonial wars fought by the Dutch against the Javanese.—Ed.)

We must pause and remember those slaves. And we must honour them as the White historians have not. These immigrants contributed more, far more, than the Huguenots about whom there is no dearth of praise; they suffered more, so much more on their long and bitter journey than did anyone on the Great Trek.

It was not unusual for a third of the men and women in the slave ships to die on the voyage, and for another third to die within three months of their arrival.

They were sold to the white settlers as farm labourers, herdsmen and domestic servants. Some were left as servants by Company officials and some were set to work on public amenities and Company buildings.

From that time, right until 1834 the agricultural and pastoral industry, the only important industry of the colony was to be based on slave labour.

At first the whites, being inexperienced, were inefficient slave-owners. The slaves managed to escape in large numbers.

Those of them who came from Africa knew only that they were still in Africa and their homes were somewhere to the North. As soon as they regained their strength after the dreadful conditions of the sea journey they made for home. And the settlers had to go on paying their instalments on the human flesh without having its use.

Blame Africans

That made them very angry indeed, and they established a custom which has become firmly entrenched as a very pillar of white civilisation for the centuries ahead. They blamed it on the Africans.

Had not the Khoi-Khoen women been seen surreptitiously passing food and drink to the slaves? Well, then!



A SLAVE MARKET

His value is his flesh to those buyers who callously lounge about. That he is a human being means nothing to them.

The absurd conviction held by van Riebeeck, that the primitive Khoi-Khoin were stealing the slaves is one of the best illustrations of the need to treat with the utmost caution the manifold accusations which are made against the Africans throughout his Journal.

When the farmers came to him, literally in tears, at the loss of the men and women they had bought, van Riebeeck decided that he was strong enough and had sufficient backing to risk the kind of action against the Africans which he had been itching to take almost since his arrival.

Arrests

He arrested two sons of Gogoso, chief of the Goringhaigwa, wealthiest of the Khoi-Khoin clans, who happened to be sitting, unconscious of any danger, in the yard of the Fort.

Then van Riebeeck arrested Khamy, one of the leading Goringhaikonas (the other neighbouring clan), although it was clear even to the Commander that they could have known nothing of the disappearance of the slaves.

An invitation was then sent to Chora, chief of the other neighbouring tribe, to visit the Fort. This suspicious man did not respond, but fled from the neighbourhood with his whole tribe.

The arrests, of course, did not lead to the return of the slaves, because the tribesmen had had nothing to do with their disappearance. Two weeks after the chiefs had been locked up, van Riebeeck began to feel that the situation was getting critical. He called a meeting of his council.

"The point has now been reached," he wrote on 3rd July, 1658, "at which the seizure of Shacher (i.e. Osingkima one of the arrested chiefs) had become widely known throughout the country. This caused the greatest possible sensation."

Van Riebeeck now began to be fearful that the cattle trade, upon which he was still dependent, would

stop once more. And there were in ease of attack now only 97 white men at the Cape, of whom twenty were invalids left behind by a passing fleet of ships.

Autshumao Betrayed

But the Khoi-Khoin did not attack. Instead the frightened chiefs, believing that their lives were at stake, turned traitor. They united in protesting that the Company's troubles were being caused not by them, but by Autshumao. Only let them go, and they would support van Riebeeck in any venture he might undertake against Autshumao.

The delighted Council resolved "to entice Harry into the Fort by means of fair words and then to seize him."

Where Chora, who had far less knowledge of the white man, had fled at the sound of fair words,



Autshumao came without hesitation to the Fort—within the hour.

He joined the other prisoners.

Then a party of soldiers was sent to fetch Autshumao's cattle.

And so Chief Autshumao, just six years and three months after he had hastened to the beach to welcome Jan van Riebeeck, found himself South Africa's first political prisoner on Robben Island. Many more were to follow.

And the slaves continued to run away. This was solved by a resolution requiring that all except infants and very old people were to be kept at all times in chains.

The two prisoners, Osingkima and Khamy, released from jail as a result of their betrayal of Autshumao, returned to their tribes. It was the time of year when they norm-

ally moved away from the Cape seeking fresh fields, so they were able to turn their backs on the Fort and there were soon no Khoi-Khoin to be seen.

Six months later, when the peninsula grass was rich and succulent once more, the tribes returned with their cattle.

They found every inch of peninsula grassland closed to them. Those who had betrayed Autshumao were left with no alternative but to follow Autshumao's path. As he had done five years before, they seized a herd of cattle and killed its owner.

"Kill"

The Dutch at once declared a war of extermination.

They decided to call in the services of the prisoner Autshumao, to lead them to the tribesmen. After carefully placing on record that they had no intention of keeping their promise, they promised Autshumao freedom and great rewards if he would do their bidding, and a boat was sent to fetch him from his prison on Robben Island.

Under the threat of death he was forced to lead the way to the camping places of his compatriots. All in vain. There were sentinels watching from every hill.

But the Dutch, reinforced by soldiers from passing fleets, ranged far and wide on horseback, killing every black man they found. Then there was peace once more.

Autshumao duly learned that the promises made to him of freedom and riches were worthless. He had the sea trip to Robben Island once more. A good sailor by now, he managed to launch a leaky boat from the Island and to make a courageous escape to the mainland.

Dutch power was consolidated. The tribesmen were further weakened by some European illness (smallpox) to which they had no resistance and an estimated 20% of their number died.

In 1672 the Company made its occupation "legal" by paying two Khoi-Khoin chiefs about ten pounds worth of brandy, tobacco

and beads for the whole of the territory from the Cape Peninsula to Saldanha Bay.

Resistance Ends

And then, twenty years after the first arrival of the Dutch, the Khoi-Khoin tribesmen launched their last and most determined campaign of resistance.

The Cochoquas, a powerful tribe, led by Chief Gonnema came down to the Peninsula and began the campaign in the same way as had their predecessors, by the seizure of isolated herds.

But now there was a garrison of 100 white men at the Fort, many of them mounted on ponies.

Five of Gonnema's men were caught in a cattle raid and taken to the Fort. They were all flogged, three were branded and banished to Robben Island for fifteen years.

For three years Gonnema's men continued to harass the Dutch, with little real effect.

Then Gonnema withdrew to the interior and cut off the trade routes to the Fort.

Very soon the scarcity of meat in the Fort was once more felt. For four years the blockade was kept up, and the Dutch were completely powerless to break it.

But the Khoi-Khoin were not aware of the success their campaign was achieving. They knew only that they were forced to keep their own cattle in the mountains away from good pasturage. When they sent envoys they were eagerly received by the Dutch and a peace treaty was signed.

This was virtually the end of the Khoi-Khoin resistance to white expansion and conquest. Apart from a small group who made off into the interior, the tribesmen, deprived of their pasture, were forced to trek into the arid desert or to seek a livelihood as menials and labourers.

(A large proportion were to die from the effects of smallpox, measles and other diseases introduced by the whites.—Ed.)



Chapter

Three

A ROBBER ECONOMY

DURING the 18th Century the Cape Colony was a slave economy. Slaves, equal in number to free colonists, did all the manual work and were the source of all value.

The most profitable investment available was that in slaves and as in all slave societies the abundance of human labour militated against investment in machinery and other capital equipment, and weakened the incentive and initiative of the whole population.

But the chattel slaves, working in relatively small groups on the farms, in a territory unknown to them, and subject to the utmost terror, were in no position during the period of Dutch rule to offer any direct challenge to the rule of slave owners.

The slave revolts were aimed not at overthrowing the slave system but were revolts against individual owners. They were either attempts to escape originally or, where they were initially desperate uprisings against unbearable cruelty, they were followed immediately by flight.

The first hundred years of slavery at the Cape are bloody with such revolts. Within a year of the first introduction of slaves, van Rie-

beeck's own slaves attempted without success to rise and escape to the sea.

In 1660, 15 slaves and 14 Company servants conspired to escape. There were similar escape-revolts in 1707, 1714, 1719 and 1765.

When it is remembered that the punishment for escaping or uniting to escape, was hanging, strangulation or being broken on the wheel, and that even if escape succeeded the chances of survival in the unknown interior, or out at sea, were infinitely small, it is readily appreciated how appalling the lives of those of the slaves must have been, and how cynical the comments of the historian; that the slaves were well treated at the Cape.

The class struggle of slaves and colonists took the same form—instead of a direct challenge, which was impossible, an attempt to escape from exploitation.

But for the colonist this trek to the interior, so glorified by the text books, was a far easier matter than it was for the slaves. And while the whites moved to new pastures, the slaves moved to certain starvation unless they were lucky enough to fall in with a Khoi-Khoen clan which might take them in.

In the course of their spreading out over the interior the Europeans killed the Batwa (Bushmen) and Khoi-Khoen in their path ruthlessly. The picture of savage slaughter is as gruesome as any the school-book historians paint of Tshaka's wars.

By the middle of the 18th century the Europeans "finally succeeded in dispersing and almost exterminating the Bushmen" in the words of historian de Kock. Not only were these almost defenceless people wiped out—in one single big raid in 1774, 500 were killed and 239 taken prisoner for the loss of one of the aggressors. Prisoners were treated in a most barbarous fashion, either by their captors on the spot, or with the sanction of the authorities at Cape Town, where, at the Castle, they were hanged, broken on the wheel or had their ankle-sinews cut preparatory to being imprisoned for life.

Boer and Bantu Meet

The Boers and the Bantu met in the middle of the eighteenth century, but for a long time the advance parties of both Boer and Bantu lived in peace as neighbours.

In 1780 the Company proclaimed the Fish River, along its entire length, as the frontier, thus including within the colony the Zuurveld, the desirable cattle country between the Fish and Bushman Rivers which, on his visit to the frontier, van Plettenburg clearly recognised to be Xhosa territory.

In December 1779, matters came to a head as the result of the criminal activities of a family of Boer thieves, the Prinsloos, described by the local Landdrost as "harmful and unrest-causing inhabitants."

Eight or nine Xhosas were killed. There were no Boer casualties.

Cattle, Land Seized

Now, eager to seize the Xhosa lands, two Boer commandos took the field, killed many Xhosa and stole large herds of cattle.

Boer appetites were whetted. Another large group of armed cattle thieves was called together in October 1780 under a Company-recognised Commandant, Adriaan van Jaarsveld.

An earlier exploit of which van Jaarsveld boasted gives an illuminating insight into the qualities which made up a Boer hero of the period.

On one occasion, out hunting the Batwa people, he had twelve hippopotamuses shot and left lying on the banks of the Zeekoe River. The hungry tribesmen found the meat, and while they were feasting van Jaarsveld's Commando opened fire, killed 122 men, women and children and captured 21 others—only five people escaped.



Van Jaarsveld with his mixed Commando of about 130 armed Boers and Khoi-Khoen used a similar trick against the Xhosas. He went among the Imidange people who received him in peace. Then he threw a quantity of tobacco on the ground, and as the men ran to pick it up, the Commando opened fire.

The school history books call this "The First Kaffir War." In fact it was nothing else but a large-scale cattle robbery, in which none of the white robbers lost his life but very many of the innocent victims did.

In 1781 no fewer than 5,330 head of seized Xhosa cattle were divided among the members of the Commando.

The "war" had no lasting effect on the "frontier."

More Xhosas than ever before crossed the river and made "frontier" homes on the Zuurveld. Economic contact between black and white revived and was intensified, though illegal.

Black-White Trade

Xhosas went for the first time in considerable numbers to work for the Europeans, and to trade with them. Sometimes they were treated fairly and benefitted from the contact. Very often they were cheated or robbed.

During the early 1780's the rains fell and there was an abundance of pasture for the cattle.

As long as there was rain and bellies were full, there was peace—uneasy peace, but peace nevertheless.



His future—hemmed in by barbed wire?

In 1785, in an attempt to bring the frontier Boers under control, the

Company created the Cape's fourth administrative district, Graaff-Reinet, made up of the Eastern portions of Stellenbosch and Swellendam, and with borders on the Fish River. It included in the North-East a new strip of Xhosa and Batwa territory, that between the Fish and the Baviaans and Tarka Rivers.

But underneath the peace, there were those who were preparing for the next big cattle grab. In 1788 a Graaff-Reinet official wrote to Cape Town: "Some of the inhabitants here have already for a long time wished to pick a quarrel with the Xhosas in order that, were it possible, they might make a good loot, since they are always casting covetous eyes on the cattle the Kaffirs possess."

Boers Steal More Cattle

The Boers kept up a steady complaint that the Xhosas were stealing their cattle—blaming any loss—whether straying, the attacks of wild animals, thefts by fellow-Boers, or by hungry Khoi-Khoi herdsmen—on the Xhosas. Even so, the tabulation of their complaints from January 1790 to May 1793 compiled by Marais from the official records, shows a total loss of only 493 cattle and two sheep—a figure which pales into insignificance when compared with the 5,330 cattle stolen by the Boers from the Xhosas in 1781. There can be little doubt too



that the number of Xhosa thefts in these years was at the very least equalled by Boer thefts from the Xhosas.

The Boers complained of Xhosa assaults and aggression but the Company's own records show that the Europeans were in no position to make indignant accusations. Hooligans among them shot, raped, locked up, thrashed and kidnapped Xhosas, without punishment by the authorities.

One of the most notorious, Coenraad de Buys, "took such cattle as he fancied out of the Xhosa kraals, had them driven to his farm, and when the Kaffirs complained, he made them lie on the ground and beat them almost to death. He had ordered the Hottentots Plootje and Piqueur to shoot among the Kaffirs, of whom the former killed five and the latter four."

Ndlambe

In 1793, Ndlambe, the Paramount chief of the Xhosas West of the Fish, was eager to attack the Xhosas living on the Zuurveld, the Isidange who, he considered, were fugitives from his rule.

A group of Boers joined with Ndlambe to launch a war against the Xhosas, the blame for which Landdrost Maynier subsequently unequivocally placed on the shoulders of the Boers who had provoked, to use his own words, "a peaceable nation", a "peace-loving people."

They attacked some Zuurveld clans seizing 1,800 cattle in two days, killing a number of their owners and taking others including several children prisoner.

Then the Boers took fright when they saw how great a force Ndlambe had, and they fled. And Ndlambe, having thus been deserted by his allies, went back to his home across the Fish.

The Boers fleeing in panic without having been attacked, the Zuurveld Xhosas were left in control of the territory. Some of them were able to settle old scores. The farm of the hated Coenraad Buys was burnt to the ground and all his cattle seized.



AFRICANS AND WHITES BARTERING
The Xhosa gave the Whites goods they badly needed—in return they were often robbed. (See p. 14.)

Africans Fight For Boers

Landdrost Maynier tried to organize a Commando but he could collect together only 80 Boers. The rest had all run away. He called an emergency meeting and asked van Jaarsveld to raise a second commando, but this hero made a host of weak excuses. Four other officers approached also refused. Their horses were sick, they said.

Maynier had to lead the Commando himself.

Reinforcements arrived from the Western Cape and a combined Commando of 200 wagons advanced against the Xhosas. Such a force was irresistible and many Xhosas were killed. No fewer than 10,000 cattle were seized and 160 women and children kidnapped.

The main burden of the fighting was carried not by the Boers, but by the Khoi-Khoi. At all stages in our history we see it. The Europeans did not conquer the African peoples. They managed affairs so that Africans did most of their fighting for them.

Khoi-Khoi far outnumbered Boers in most of the Commandos. They were placed in the most dangerous situations, suffered far more casualties than the Boers did, and they did this for remarkably little reward. After the campaign all they got was one or two cattle each—and Maynier had to justify himself to the Boers for giving the Khoi-Khoi anything at all.



Just as in the raid of 1780-81 the Boers did not lose a single man in action in this campaign. The only casualties on the "European" side were Khoi-Khoi, three reported

killed, three wounded. Many hundreds — perhaps thousands — of Xhosas were killed however, for the tribesmen were, in open country, quite helpless against armed horsemen.

This campaign can only be described as an ignominious failure for the Boers.

They had been beaten not by the whole Xhosa people, but by one



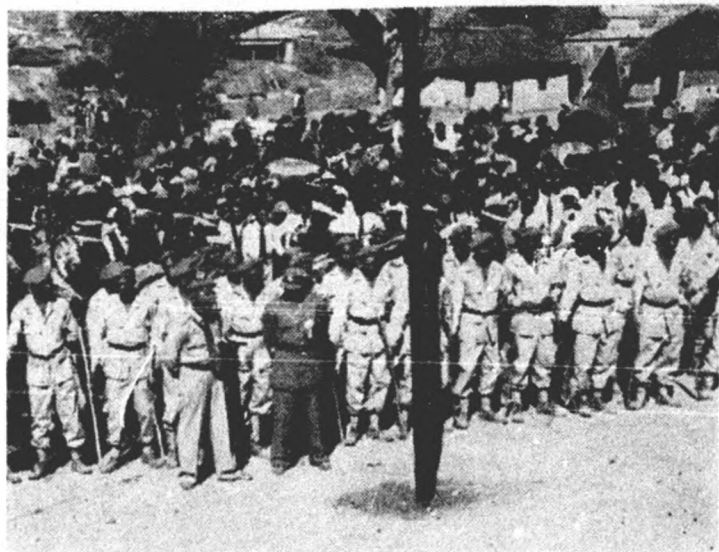
small part, those who lived cut off from the main body, the Isidange of the Zuurveld. If Ndlambe, Paramount chief of the Xhosas, had allied himself with his Isidange countrymen, instead of with the whites, the Boers would have suffered a real defeat.

As it was, the fighting ended in the maintenance of the status quo, with the Xhosas retaining control of the Zuurveld.

In the course of the chase the huge cattle loot had diminished, most of the cattle having had to be abandoned. The remnants were divided up and the demoralized Boers returned home.

Boers Complain

Now the Boers began to fight among themselves. They complained at the smallness of the cattle haul, complained about the way it was divided, complained because the Xhosas were still living on the Zuurveld.



AN AFRICAN ARMY

At all stages in our history we see it. The Europeans did not conquer the African peoples themselves. They managed affairs so that Africans did most of the fighting for them. (See p. 16.)

And so greedy and shortsighted were they that they even complained because a small share of the loot had been given to the Khoi-Khoi, who had borne the main danger of the fighting.

The frontier Boers carried on a continuous campaign for the resumption of hostilities, calling on the Company not only to drive out the Isidange, but also to attack the Boer ally, Ndlambe.

Maynier had far more sense than to support such a foolish policy. But he painstakingly made it clear that this was not because of any considerations of morality. The sole reason was that the Boers were still too weak. "It is impossible to oppose the Xhosas by force, with any hope of success—at least until Providence makes our hands somewhat more free and we find ourselves in a condition to attack them with force and to bring them to obedience. For as experience has alas, more than too well proved, we

should run a much greater risk of making matters worse, than of improving them."

Against the Batwa, Providence made Maynier's hands more free. During 1794, 340 Patwa were killed by Commandos.

There was a striking difference between the vigour with which the frontier Boers called for the formation of Commandos and that with which they responded when they were called upon to come and fight in a Commando.

Marais in his book "Maynier and the First Boer Republic" has produced a stack of evidence to show how difficult it was to get the frontier Boers together and keep them together in Commandos. One example given is the call to Commando in June 1790 to which only one Boer and ten Khoi-Khoi responded. The official responsible resigned in disgust, declaring: "I cannot do Commando only with Hottentots but with human beings."

BRITISH OCCUPATION

Chapter Four



LIKE Holland before her, Britain was interested in the Cape only as a military base and stopping place on the way to India, whose trade too, she had taken from Holland.

A large armed force was kept at the Cape, new harbour works were built and the colonists benefitted from the expenditure.

For the Xhosas, a change in the rulers of the country across the Fish made no immediate difference at all.

Nor were the Boers much affected at first. The Graaff-Reinet "republicans" hopefully petitioned the newly arrived British General Craig to seize for them the land "unto the Konab, or it may be unto the Kat River," and surrendered without a fight in February, 1797.

In due course yet another proclamation arrived forbidding intercourse with the Africans, this time signed by a British authority. And the Boers continued to hold intercourse.

In May 1797 Ngqika (Gaika) the chief of the Xhosas came of age and claimed the chieftainship from the Regent Ndlambe.

Ndlambe resisted and was held prisoner, and his followers, including his brother Jabisa, crossed the Fish and made their home on the Zuurveld.

Divisions of tribes into two new tribes, outward expansion and the resulting wave of movement as each tribe was pushed into conflict with the next were frequent occurrences in our history.

In this case it was the Europeans on the Zuurveld who were forced to flee in haste from the path of the Xhosas, who were fleeing from Gaika. Within a few days Xhosas controlled the whole territory between the Fish and the Sundays River.

This did not prevent the Boers from moving back into the Zuurveld too.

By September 1798 about one-third of the 148 Boer families who had lived in the Zuurveld at the time of the 1793 attack on the Xhosas were back in their homes, farming once again side by side with the Africans.

The British had taken over the policy of the Company, based on a frontier at the Fish River and the

driving of all the Xhosas over that River.

Now with their forces in the area, the British were ready for their first trial of strength with the Xhosas and in April, 1799, Brigadier General Van der Leur organised a Commando to fight the Xhosas.

Khoi-Khoi and Xhosas Unite

One of the most important things about this campaign was the fact that the event which Maynier had foreseen—the union of Khoi-Khoi and Xhosas—took place.

Numbers of Khoi-Khoi had taken advantage of the British action against the Graaff-Reinet rebels to organise independent hostilities against their Boer oppressors.

One of the British units returning from the action against the rebel Boers disarmed a large group of these Khoi-Khoi, led by Klaas Stuurman, and recruited them to march together with the British.

But when the Commandos prepared to march against the Xhosas, Stuurman decamped with 700 men, 300 horses and 150 guns, and joined Ndlambe. In a battle on June 27th, 1799, a Boer Commando was routed and for the first time two Boers were killed. Boer resistance ceased for some time. When this news spread a number of Khoi-Khoi labourers left the white farms to join Stuurman.

Their defection caused consternation among the Boers and Van der Leur's reports about their "panic-stricken" and dastardly conduct show that he developed an utter contempt for their fighting qualities.

The British General Dundas himself had to lead an army to the rescue, and he had to be content with an armistice which amounted to a complete defeat. The Xhosas retained their positions and were stronger than ever on the Zuurveld.

Because of the new unity between Xhosa and Khoi-Khoi the first British authorised attack on the Xhosas had been even a bigger

failure than the previous attempts of the Boers.

British Divide and Rule

The British now began a determined campaign to divide the Khoi-Khoi from the Xhosa and the Xhosa among themselves. They immediately offered negotiation with the Khoi-Khoi leaders and in October 1799 they agreed to conclude peace on condition that the government should protect them against the ill-treatment of the Boers in the most efficacious manner, and should ensure that when they served the Boers they should be well paid and well treated.

The method of implementing this promise to ensure fair treatment for the Khoi-Khoi farm labourers was to establish a labour register, in which the terms of the contract between farmer and worker were recorded. This was, as Marais remarks, "the beginning of Masters' and Servants' legislation in South Africa."

As a means of splitting the Khoi-Khoi from the Xhosas it was an immense success; seven hundred Khoi-Khoi workers leaving Stuurman to come to work on the farms. Wages were six to twelve rix dollars per year or, more usually, six to twelve sheep, or one head of cattle. Contracts were almost always for a year.

At the same time General Dundas imposed his own form of control of "wanderers." The Boers were given permission to shoot any individual Khoi-Khoi who "wandered about."

The old dreary story now repeated itself. The Boers began to agitate for a new attack on the Xhosas, and reacted with the utmost horror at attempts to enforce the obligations in the labour contracts, not only on the Khoi-Khoi, but also on the Boers.

The efforts of the missionary van der Kemp, which were actually having the effect of breaking up the

Xhosa-Khoi-Khoi alliance, also infuriated the Boers. In their shortsighted arrogance, they complained because the missionaries were teaching the Khoi-Khoi "reading, writing and religion and thereby putting them upon an equal footing with the Christians; especially that they were admitted to the church at Graaff-Reinet."

The Khoi-Khoi left the farms once again and prepared to resist another attack.

Another "War"

Diplomacy was abandoned once more. The British authorised the Boers to try to smash the Xhosa-Khoi-Khoi alliance by force.

A Commando attacked Stuurman's settlement in 1802 and another "war" was under way. Once again, fighting the Khoi-Khoi, the Boers suffered casualties, the son of the Commandant being killed in the first raid. Having seized all the cattle they could make off with, the Commando was returning to its camp when Stuurman's men, together with a number of Xhosas fell upon them. The Commando surrendered and handed over its loot, and the Africans, showing a great deal more mercy than was ever shown to them, allowed the Boers to proceed on their way.

A second Commando therefore took the field. Composed of 568 Boers, 132 Khoi-Khoi marksmen and 102 wagons, it killed more than 200 people and captured a great number of cattle—12,600 in one place.

But a month after he had made this report, the leader of the Commando, van der Walt, was killed in action and his death caused a panic. The Commandos decided to divide up the cattle and go home.

These cattle thieves now withdrew leaving the remaining Boer families to face the anger of the entire African population which had been aroused by the raids. A mass white exodus followed.

At the end of 1802 yet another Commando went into action without success, and on December 26, the officials of the Batavian Republic

(the Cape had reverted for a short time to Dutch rule) immediately on taking over from the British ordered an end to hostilities.



AN AFRICAN WARRIOR
The Africans showed a lot more mercy than was shown to them.

When they occupied the Cape for the second time in 1806 the British sent Lieutenant Colonel Richard Collins to report on the border situation. In 1809 he recommended, in effect, the implementation of the demands of the Boers—the driving of Ndlambe and the Xhosas from the Zuurveld and the seizure of

their land as far as the Koonap River.

On October 18, 1811, the British ordered Colonel Graham, the frontier Commandant to implement this plan. And in March 1812, Walker reports matter-of-factly "A large force of troops and burghers swept 20,000 Ndlambis and Gumakwebes beyond the Fish." (A History of Southern Africa by Eric A. Walker.)

By any standard this British action ranks high as a war atrocity. 20,000 people whose home had long been the Zuurveld were suddenly swept away by force, and thrown destitute among a people unwilling and economically unable to receive them—the Nggika Xhosas.

Hintsa

The Paramount chief of the Xhosa was Hintsa, but the British finding that the lesser chief Ngqika could be bought over to betray his people, dealt with him as if he were the supreme ruler, though Ngqika himself protested that he could not speak for other chiefs.

More and more Africans were now finding themselves forced to work on European farms. It is likely that most of these were for one reason or other outlaws from their own tribes.

These people had to choose between existence as semi-slaves on the farms or starvation.

In addition the farmers were keeping children seized in the wars as "apprentices" differing from slaves only in that their owners had no legal sanction and they were not bought and sold.

The British persisted with the futile attempt to prevent integration. More laws were passed ordering the farmers to dismiss their African servants. In 1812 an army was again mobilised to drive Ndlambe back over the Fish River. The British being far stronger than the Company had been, managed to enforce the separation more effectively than previously.

Backed by British military might, the farmers increased their demands. Previously they had asked only for the cattle and the land of the Africans and had demanded with the greatest vigour that every black man should be driven across the Fish River and beyond. Now, having experienced the value of African labour, they did not want the government to drive all the Africans away any more. Their servants should be allowed to remain.

The buying over of Ngqika was linked with the beginning of the reversal of the official policy of economic segregation.

Trade with Xhosas

Rapidly expanding British capitalism was eager to develop all markets for her wares, and in 1817 the governor Lord Charles Somerset established a half yearly trade fair at Grahamstown, with a view to a trade that had been carried on between Xhosas and Boers since the first days of contact.

But only special Xhosas were entitled to come and trade. This valuable privilege was reserved for those having a pass from Ngqika. The chief was thus given a trade monopoly by which he enriched himself. Somerset now came to an "agreement" with Ngqika for the application of the so-called "spoor law" which was a method of recovering stolen stock known to several tribal systems. If the spoor of stolen cattle led directly to a particular clan, the owner was entitled to recover the cattle or recoup himself at the expense of the kraal.

Enforced by one clan against another the spoor law was one thing. But enforced by mounted gunmen against tribesmen it was quite another.

The missionary J. Brownlee described it this way:

In addition there was no way of checking the farmer's statements of how many cattle they may have lost, and as we have seen, the farmers exaggerated thefts shamelessly and used the law as a cloak for massive thefts of their own.

Ndlambe and his people having been forced back among Ngqika and his, it was inevitable that there should be strife amongst the Xhosas.

When the strife came in 1819 the British used it as an excuse to cross the Fish River. They attacked Ndlambe and seized a large number of cattle.

Divide and Rule Intensified

The British now began to put into operation the policy of divide and rule whose techniques they had perfected in India. They saw the Tembus as a useful potential ally against the Xhosas.

They attacked the Xhosas on February 6, 1829. Basing his description on missionary reports, Shepherd tells us: "The soldiers went from village to village with torch in hand, till the whole country was lit up with the flames of its own dwellings."

Chief Maqomo who had been converted by the missionaries, seeing his country going up in flames told the military commander: "The teacher has told me God will judge all men according to their deeds. You have overcome me by the weapons that are in your hands. But you must answer for this. You and I must stand before God. He will judge us. I am a man who does not know God. Yet I rejoice, He will judge."

It was certainly becoming crystal clear that the British, to use the words of H. Lawson "brought calamities compared to which the cattle raids of the Boers had been mere flea bites. The British way was not composed of cowardly cattle thieves but of ruthless and dehumanised mercenaries whose profession was destruction. Moreover, they appeared in their thousands where the Boers had mustered only a few hundred. When they attacked

the African people, the damage they were able to inflict was tremendous."

An even more successful application of the divide and rule policy was the adoption of the advice of Maynier on the treatment of the Khoi-Khoi. The crude Boer policies which had driven these valuable fighters into alliance with the Xhosas, were changed drastically.

In 1828, all legal discrimination against the Khoi-Khoi was abolished. And the following year about 3,000 Khoi-Khoi together with some "loyal" Xhosas were given land at the Kat River Settlement which had just been seized from the Xhosas.



This policy, a typically Liberal policy, killed three birds with one stroke. It served to quiet those in Britain who were disturbed by the treatment of the Xhosas; it won the Khoi-Khoi as loyal subjects of the British Empire, and it also gave them a vested economic interest in opposing any return of the Xhosa to their territory. Indeed, the Kat River Settlement fought the Xhosas in the next war.

The 50th Ordinance of 1828 and the emancipation of the slaves in 1834 mark the emergence of a new political entity in South Africa—the Coloured People, composed of that portion of the descendants of the unions between Europeans and Non-Europeans who do not pass as white, together with the Khoi-Khoi and freed slaves. The Coloured people as the result of this master stroke of British diplomacy were for a very long time to remain allies of the Europeans.

This was the desperate position of the Xhosas in the 1830's:

On one side, where they had previously to contend only with a handful of Boer settlers, now their land was occupied by 5,000 British immigrants driving their herds far into Xhosa territory, hungry for more land, ready to fight and backed by a powerful army.

British Ruthlessness

It is in this period that we are able for the first time to obtain a direct description of events by people not blinded by their enmity towards the Africans. Until now we have had to rely on facts gleaned from boastings of wickedness, or rationalisations of it, or from ugly facts which neither a flood of words nor even complete silence could hide.

The sympathetic eye-witness accounts beginning in the 1830's are invaluable not only for the picture they give of the period, but also for the clues they give into past events.

In 1830, Dr. Philip described the way the British were with complete callousness harrying Paramount Chief Maqoma and others from one place to another, and this in time of "peace."

"Several of the chiefs, with their people, are without any fixed residence," he reported. "They have no security that the place they were in today would be theirs tomorrow," one of Ngqika's sons complained to him.

Nor did Maqomo fail to point out to the British that the people whose land they were seizing were the people of Ngqika who had been the faithful servants of the British, and the Chief they were oppressing was the son of Ngqika. The Missionary Ross summed it up: "We used Ngqika as long as he served us. When he failed to conquer Ndlambe, we did so ourselves and then took Ngqika's territory."

A Missionary recorded at the end of 1833: "As the Xhosas are now thronged upon each other, their

cattle will be in such great numbers that at the first drought they will find themselves poor and dying with hunger."

When the drought did come in 1834, the Europeans made matters even worse by pushing across the "frontier" into the African lands to compete with the Xhosas in the quest for sustenance.

Emancipation

They were trekking, among other reasons, because slaves were to be emancipated at the end of the year, and they were fleeing the Colony with their slaves, some of them in chains.

In one of the forays the Europeans wounded Chief Xoxo, the brother of Tiyali. In tribal law royal blood was sacred.

There was drought and starvation piled upon despair as the Xhosas watched Europeans, Khoi-Khoi, Tembu and Fingo eating up the land. Despair piled upon burning anger at the White cattle robbers who shed even the blood of the chiefs.

On December 21, 1834, Maqomo and Tiyali led 12,000 men in a desperate march into the colony.



They laid waste everything in their path, including the newly built Lovedale mission station. For the first time they killed a number of traders, who because many of them were blatant murderers were a class they hated.

But—unlike many of the white warriors—they did not kill or rape or molest the women, nor did they kidnap or in any way harm children. The toll of white lives throughout the whole territory was less than that frequently exacted by a Com-mando on a single kraal in the course of one campaign.

The school-book historians who roll out with relish the stock phrases about the "terrible ravages" of the barbarians are often less loquacious about European fighting methods. The Colonel Harry Smith whose name they revere was by his own confession, a fighter as barbaric as any. "You gallop in," he said "and half by force, half by stratagem, pounce upon them (the Africans) wherever you find them, frighten their wives, burn their homes, lift their cattle and then re-turn home in triumph."

Hintsa Murdered

By now the Xhosas had had experience of the folly of massed attack against the guns of the Europeans, and, using the rocks and the bush, they avoided a head-on clash



CHIEF HINTSA

He came to negotiate peace with the British at their summons and was shot.

with the armies sent against them.

But there was no way they could save their homes and crops from being burnt or their cattle from being seized.

From far in the interior at the end of April, 1835, the Paramount Chief Hintsa came voluntarily to negotiate a peace. The terms of surrender dictated on May 10 were not very merciful. The whole territory between the Keiskama and the Kei was to be taken from the Xhosas, and they were to pay 50,000 head of cattle and 1,000 horses.

In breach of any law of war or peace Hintsa was held prisoner as hostage for the payment of the cattle demanded.

THE DAY AFTER THE DIC-TATION OF THE PEACE TERMS HINTSA WAS KILLED.

The British explained that he had "tried to escape." His body was mutilated. This the British did not explain.

But they did hold a formal in-quiry. It honourably absolved all the officers immediately concerned.



Chapter Five

THE STRUGGLE WITHIN A COMMON SOCIETY

(The period of military struggle and conquest comes to an end between the 1880's and 1905 when the Bambata Rebellion was defeated. During this period the Africans now subject to white rule carried on their struggle against oppression within the framework of a common society. The battle is no longer fought between two independent states: that of the white man and that of the tribe. It is a struggle between ruler and ruled.—Ed.)

AFTER the adoption by the British in the 1850's of a policy of non-interference in the interior, the Cape Colony enjoyed a long period of peace on the Frontier. The knowledge that Britain would not send military aid was a great peace-maker.

But the opening of the diamond fields led to an immense increase in the need for African labour on road-making, harbour and railway projects.

Shortly after he became the Cape's first Prime Minister, John Charles Molteno visited King-williamstown and urged upon a deputation of chiefs "the importance of coming into the colony to see the railway works, and of earning money with which to purchase valuable property such as cattle, sheep and horses."

In 1877 Sir Bartle Frere was sent to the Cape as the new Governor and the Transvaal was annexed.

Following a clash between 40,000 stray Gcaliba Xhosas, led by Chief Krelu and the vassal (slave) Fingoes, Frere summoned Krelu to his presence. Krelu, with more prudence than his father Hintsa, who had in 1835 obeyed a similar summons and been shot, refused. Frere thereupon "deposed" Krelu, announced that the Gcaleka country would be taken by the Europeans and sent in his troops to smash Krelu's army and seize their weapons.

In the course of the fighting Frere deposed the fiercely independent Molteno ministry, when it

sought to establish the right of the Cape to control the troops in its own territory. Molteno was replaced by John Gordon Sprigg, "Sir Bartle Frere's dummy" as P. A. Molteno bitterly describes him. "Responsible government was now replaced by personal rule, through a ministry selected and held in power by Sir Bartle Frere and willing to carry out his behests."

"Vigorous Native Policy"

The Sprigg government immediately launched what it called "a vigorous Native policy" aptly described by James Rose-Innes as "the pink forerunner of that red-blooded policy of oppression, which since Union has been so influentially and persistently advocated."

The first Sprigg measure making for the ending of tribal differences, the consolidation of the Africans as a single political entity, was the singularly ill-named Peace Preservation Act (Act 13, of 1878) introduced some six months after the letter from the new British Colonial Secretary, Hicks Beach to Frere, asking "Can anything be done to put a stop to the importation and sale of arms to Natives?"

With the hypocrisy which is characteristic of legislation affecting Africans, the Act did not say what its real purpose was—the total disarmament of all Africans without exception, and of the Africans only.

It simply provided that all private citizens must hand their guns and ammunition in to the authorities, who would then return them to "proper persons." Those not in this category would lose their guns and receive monetary compensation.

The essential fact about the Disarmament Act was that it was no longer necessary to place so great an emphasis on the gaining of tribal allies in the game of divide and rule. The Xhosas as a result of British intervention were crushed and it was no longer necessary to

"pamper" the Fingoes. The Europeans, British-backed, were strong enough to reduce the Africans to a single level. The distinction between Fingo and "Kaffir" became increasingly fine until it disappeared altogether.

The government did not even pretend to distinguish between the Fingo and Tembu allies whose arms had played so great a part in destroying Kreli and Sandile. All were to be disarmed alike, including the sons of Britain's staunch African ally, Moshoeshoe of Basutoland.

The Africans of the Cape, for whom their guns, next to their cattle, were their dearest possession, had long been alert for any disarmament threat, and the Cape officials had been at pains to dismiss these fears as groundless.

When in 1876 the Orange Free State Government had disarmed the Africans of the Witzieshoek Reserve, the rumour had spread to nearby Basutoland that this was part of a concerted plan and that the Cape (of which Basutoland was then a part) intended to pursue a



similar course. "I was able," governor's agent Colonel Griffiths reported "to allay the fears of the Chief Letsie of the Basotho's by treating the rumour with contempt and telling them how unlikely and absurd it would be of us first to grant permits at the fields and thus to arm those we intended shortly to disarm."

Two years later the Disarmament Bill was published.

There was nothing the frontier tribes could do about the new law. The Fingoes, completely dependent on the European authorities, handed in their guns, as did the broken remnants of the Xhosas.

Basotho Victory

The Basotho were another matter altogether. First they sent a deputation to Britain to petition the Queen against the law, and then, when they found that it was the Queen's law they took up their 18,000 rifles in defence of their right to retain them.

In September 1880, the Cape police moved in.

Neighbouring African tribes rallied to the support of the Basotho. By October, "every tribe, the Griquas included, were against the Government," according to missionary Brownlee, including even a section of the Fingoes.

In the face of determined resistance the government was unable to impose the law and on April 11, 1881, fighting ended with the withdrawal of the Cape police, their mission unaccomplished.

It was therefore the Basotho who won the first political victory of an African people against an oppressive law imposed upon them as subjects of a white government in South Africa and they won their victory by armed revolt.

The Basotho lives lost in repelling Sprigg's police were certainly not sacrificed in vain, as the present Constitution of Basutoland testifies. Ironically, the very success of the Basotho revolt made it of small importance in the history of African political organisations in South Africa for it was so complete that the Basotho of Basutoland were able to break from the mainstream of South African political development.

Pass Laws

The Disarmament Law was only one aspect of the deliberate policy to put an end to the privileges enjoyed by the "satellite" tribes, and to reduce all the Africans to a single level.

The Pass and Vagrant laws operated in exactly the same way.

The Pass Laws themselves were nothing new.

The pass was originally in the nature of a passport. Until 1828 there had been a total prohibition upon the entry of Africans into the Colony, but an Ordinance of that year (Ord. 49 of 1828) enabled the Africans beyond the colonial frontiers, who were all foreigners in terms of the Cape Law, to enter the Colony in order to obtain employment.

Africans who came into the Colony without a pass were liable to imprisonment. They could be arrested by any landowner and if their arrest could not be effected without killing them, the law specifically provided that such killing was justified. (Ord. 2 of 1837, Section 4 ff).



In 1857, with the growth of the permanent African population within the Colonial border it had become necessary to legislate to prevent "Colonial Fingoes and certain other subjects of Her Majesty from being mistaken for Kaffirs, and thereby harassed or aggrieved." To this end a system was evolved for the issue of "certificates of citizenship" to all Fingoes, "any Kaffir or other Native foreigner" who could prove that he had spent ten consecutive years in employment within the Colony. At least 99% of the employment period had to be employment other than as a hard labour prisoner. Even certificates of citizenship, however, could not be altogether effective in preventing Fingoes and other black subjects of Her Majesty from

being harassed or aggrieved, for there was still no way of distinguishing at sight between a Native foreigner and a native Native. As a result it was necessary to carry the certificate of citizenship on any journey away from home.

Vagrancy Act

The Vagrancy Act (Section 11 of Act 22 of 1867) as amended by Act 23 of 1879) supplemented the pass laws and effectively plugged any loopholes in them. It provided that any person found wandering abroad and having no lawful means of support "could be arrested and unless he could give a good and satisfactory account of himself" he was deemed to be an "idle and disorderly person" liable to imprisonment for up to six months, hard labour, spare diet and solitary confinement.

In the hands of the administrators of the "Vigorous Native policy," and with white tempers still hot from the "war" of 1877-78 these laws became a source of great hardship to the Africans irrespective of tribe.

From about 1878 the authorities ignored the provisions of the Act favouring the holders of certificates of citizenship and every African who wished to travel from one place to another was required to take out a pass.

As a result a man wanting to go to Kingwilliamstown had first to get a pass from his magistrate, which would take up one day. Then he must have it endorsed at Komgha, where he lost another day. In Kingwilliamstown he must report his arrival and departure and on his way back report again at Komgha. Finally he had to return the pass to the magistrate.

Further, Africans who went out in an emergency or without their papers found themselves liable to arrest and detention, in which case they might once again be taken into custody many miles out of their way to the nearest lock-up.

In a letter to G. Rose Innes, Under Secretary for Native Affairs,

the Resident Magistrate at Kingwilliamstown wrote in July 1881, that the withdrawal of the rights previously associated with the certificates of citizenship was "one of the sore grievances which the Fingoes have against us . . ." He added that "there is a very bitter feeling on the part of both Kaffirs and Fingoes against the Government. There is now a warm sympathy between them, which never before existed . . . the Fingoes and loyal Kaffirs say that for their loyalty they have simply been punished, and made the laughing-stock of those who have fought and rebelled . . . and that their attachment to the Government is now a thing of the past . . . They have at present no faith in our honesty, truth or 'justice' and they openly state that they have been driven to this by our harsh treatment of them."

Christian Express

In October 1889 the Christian Express, which, only eight years before, had painted so joyous a picture of the new life opening for



the Africans, etched out the new scene:

"The Natives of this country are at the present time more desponding, hopeless and untractable than they have been for a generation previously. The loyal are puzzled, bewildered and irritated; and those who are disloyal are exasperated and becoming almost dangerous. This is aggravated by want, which is now beginning to make itself felt in numberless villages. The last three or four years have witnessed a great change for the worse in the relations of the two races.

"There are four Acts—all of which press heavily on the Natives . . . The Disarmament Act, Vagrant Act and Branding Act and the Pass Act. Three of these are new and the fourth has been resuscitated. They are the chief legislative landmarks of the last few years. The Native people had no real voice in their enactment, and no means of opposing their becoming law. But they have taken up an attitude of resistance—and they fight where they can, and they say they will rather go to prison than obey some of the mildest of them—the Branding Act."

The Branding Act was a measure requiring that all cattle be branded with a distinctive mark (Act 8 of 1878). Its purpose was probably to assist in tracing thefts, but was seen by the people as an introductory step either to the confiscation

of their cattle or to the imposition of new taxes. The suspicions were strengthened by the fact that in practice the law was applied to Africans only.

The combined effect of the Disarmament, Pass, Vagrancy and Branding Laws was to speed up the political unification of the Africans by withdrawing the "privileges" which were the main source of friction between the Fingoes (and their satellite tribes) and the Xhosas.

THE RESULTING CONSCIOUSNESS THAT ALL AFRICANS — IRRESPECTIVE OF TRIBE AND IRRESPECTIVE OF ANYTHING THEY MIGHT DO TO INGRATIATE THEMSELVES WITH THE STATE — HAD A COMMON POLITICAL DESTINY, WAS THE ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE FOR AN ALL-EMBRACING AFRICAN NATIONALISM.



THE BIRTH OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM
The combined effect of the pass and other laws was to speed up the political unification of the Africans.

EPILOGUE

SO a new and exciting period in African history was ushered in, a period that led to the growth of independent African political groups and organisations. The first African newspapers were launched and we learn of the great names in the struggle to break the chains that were continually being forged to shackle the black man in the land of his birth.—Rubusana, Jabavu, Abdurahman, Letanka, Mvabaza and later Johannes Nkosi and many more.

This story is told in part in Lionel Forman's first published collection of historical episodes "Chapters in the History of the March to Freedom," which like this one, is also a New Age publication. Lionel was working on a comprehensive People's History of South Africa, with particular emphasis on the growth of African Political Organisations, and we hope in the future to be able to publish more of the material he has written.



OUR FUTURE GENERATION
Their history is still to be written. Perhaps a future Prime Minister in their midst . . .

LIONEL FORMAN

A Biographical Sketch

ONE day in 1936, an African delivered a bag of coal to a white customer who happened to be drunk at the time. The white man accused the African of taking the coal to the wrong door and, in a drunken rage, attacked the African, causing him serious head injuries.

Such incidents are all too commonplace in South Africa and pass virtually unnoticed by anyone except the participants. But there was one young white boy who reacted strongly. He was Lionel Forman, a 9-year-old schoolboy who was bitterly wounded by the injustice of the affair, for the man who had been attacked was an employee of his father and, furthermore, one of Lionel's good friends, a man with whom he used to discuss the problems of justice and morality that worried his young mind.

At the time there was nothing Lionel could do to avenge the assault. He was only a young boy, and at a special disadvantage too, since an attack of rheumatic fever had weakened his heart and forced him to spend months on end in bed. But as the years went by, he realised that through his tongue and his pen there was much he could do to eradicate the system of oppression and exploitation that caused that particular incident and the thousands more that stung his spirit.

Won Essay Competition

A few years later at school, for example, he entered a national essay competition on "How to promote the Welfare of the African in South

Africa" and so compelling were the facts with which he attacked the poverty and miserable living conditions of the African workers, that he carried off the first prize.

He was always restless at school, and only when he entered University at Cape Town in 1945 was he able to give expression to his burning feelings. Although his quick mind carried him easily through all his examinations, he far preferred books on philosophy, religion, history and politics, to the dull discipline of formal school education.

Before entering University, he involved himself in a left-wing Jewish youth movement, which was active at the time in the struggle of the Jews in Palestine against their British overlords. But, after a while, he felt his place was in the struggles against oppression in this country, and his socialist convictions which he had developed led him from a nationalist outlook to an internationalist one.

Colour-Bar Function

At U.C.T. where he gained a Master of Social Science degree in four years, he soon became a prominent figure in campus affairs. One incident during this period made the students sit up. The then mayor of Cape Town, Mr. Abe Bloomberg (now "Coloured Representative" in Parliament) arranged a mayoral reception for the annual Congress of the National Union of South African Students, to which non-White students were not invited. Infuriated at this slight towards his fellow-delegates, Lionel plastered U.C.T. with posters calling for a boycott of the reception and organised a non-racial party as a counter-attraction.

The reception was a flop, the party a great success, and in an

attempt to punish Lionel, NUSAS expelled him from the organisation. The press, which splashed the whole affair, was later able to publish the news that NUSAS had acted unconstitutionally and had been forced to apologise to Lionel.

Lionel continued to be a stormy petrel in NUSAS politics. Though his constant championing of the rights of the non-white students and his efforts to get NUSAS to end its isolation from the general democratic struggle in South Africa brought him into occasional conflict with the NUSAS leadership, his obvious sincerity, hard work and brilliant debating and literary abilities commanded the respect of all who knew him.

Student Editor

In 1949 he went to the Witwatersrand University where he spent two years studying law, and in 1950 was elected to the NUSAS executive despite the fierce opposition of those who feared his left-wing views. At the same time he was editor of the 'Wits Student' whose sales skyrocketed as a result of his lively editorship.

During his University years Lionel won the respect of many students who subsequently became prominent in the non-white liberation struggle—people such as Duma Nokwe, Ntsu Mokhehle, Peter Tsele, Joe Matthews, Simon Zukas, J. N. Singh, N. T. Naicker, Joe Slovo and Harold Wolpe.

In 1951 Lionel again hit newspaper headlines when he was the first student to be refused a passport by the South African Government to travel overseas. His health had deteriorated to such an extent, however, that he was later allowed to go to London for medical treatment.

The doctors there told him that there was nothing they could do for him, Lionel was determined not to waste a moment of his life.

As a NUSAS delegate to a Congress of the International Union of Students he went to Warsaw where

he was elected to the executive of the IUS with its headquarters in Prague, Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia the doctors helped him considerably, and for the next two years he worked in the Press Department of the IUS. During this period he met students from all over the world, many of whom were engaged in bitter struggles for students' rights and against colonialism, and many of whom are now in leading positions in the governments of their since freed countries.

He returned to South Africa early in 1954 to edit the independent democratic weekly, the "Advance" which had appeared in Cape Town after the "Guardian" had been banned. A few months later he went to Wits University again to complete his law course, and at the end of the year returned once more to Cape Town to set up practice as an advocate and resume his work on "Advance." When "Advance" was banned soon afterwards, he became editor of the "New Age" which was published immediately after the ban.

His talents as an advocate and the respect which particularly his non-white clients developed for the fearless manner in which he fought for them in Court, could have won for him a highly successful and lucrative practice. But Lionel refused to take money from clients who had suffered from injustice, and in any event, his heart was in writing rather than law.

African Nationalism

At this time Lionel began his enquiries into a field which for long had deeply interested him, namely, the roots and nature of African nationalism. He was involved in frequent debates on the subject, and his researches and stimulating presentation of his ideas did much to raise the subject in the liberation movement to a new and higher level.

In December 1956 Lionel was one of the 156 arrested for treason. The Cape Town accused were flown in a military plane to Johannesburg.

Although his health was extremely bad, he refused to accept any special treatment. The stirring companionship of his co-accused gave him the strength to carry on.

As the trial dragged on, Lionel made history by writing, together with Solly Sachs, a book on the very trial in which he was involved. "The South African Treason Trial" has since been translated into many languages, and has done much to gain widespread overseas support for the Congress Movement in South Africa.

March to Freedom

When finally the indictment against a number of the accused, including Lionel, was quashed, he set to work seriously in getting a book written about the history of the freedom struggles in South Africa. On the basis of preliminary research, he published a pamphlet entitled "Chapters in the History of the March to Freedom." The keen interest shown in the

pamphlet inspired him to further efforts of research and writing. But the years of devoted activity in the very struggle he wished to write about, had worn away his heart. Determination alone could not keep him alive.

There was one last chance, and he took it. On 19th October, 1959, he underwent an open-heart operation. He knew there was a great risk involved in the operation, but his manner was always so cheerful and bright that even his closest friends did not know of his doubts.

On the morning of the day he died he wrote a letter to his wife in which he told her that he wanted their 3 children to "love their fellow men. They must exorcise all racial prejudice and understand why it is abominable, and they must try to understand why it is that justice can only be won for all men and the full free personality be allowed to flower under a common society."

To these ideas and to the cause of the liberation of all mankind Lionel Forman gave his life.



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