

# J.T. van der Kemp and his Critique of the Settler Farmers on the South African Colonial Frontier (1799-1811)

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## Abstract

As first London Missionary Society (LMS) President of African Missions in South Africa, J.T. van der Kemp came into conflict with the settler farmers on the South African frontier (1799-1811). This revolves around the fact that the settler farmers saw themselves as settled in South Africa (and not as a temporary phenomenon as perceived by the D.E.I.C.), that they supported the patriot and revolutionary movements in the Netherlands/ Europe, and America, and were critical of both the British and the Dutch governments of their time. They in actual fact rebelled against these government, were slave holders, participated in the slave trade, and manifested ‘cruelty’ towards the Khoi and Xhosa on the frontier. This article unpacks these issues with specific reference to Van der Kemp’s South African texts as published by the LMS in their *Transactions of the London Missionary Society Volumes I – III*. Theoretically, I draw on some insights from works of Michel Foucault, especially with regard to eighteenth and early nineteenth century ‘representational thought’, where ‘idea’ and ‘object’ are directly related.

**Keywords:** J.T. van der Kemp, settler farmers, frontier, patriot, rebellion, slavery, baptism, cruelty, Black Circuit Court

## 1 Introduction

As first London Missionary Society (LMS) President of African Missions in South Africa (cf. Smit 2015), J.T. van der Kemp’s mission was in conflict with

the settler farmers on the South African frontier (1799-1811). Historically and ideologically, the settlers were influenced by the revolutionary movements in America and Europe. Yet, they were slave holders, exploited the Khoi, and were in constant conflict with the Xhosa on the South African frontier. Van der Kemp was very critical of them because of this situation at the time and submitted his views to the London Missionary Society for publication. This article traces and historicises his views of the settler farmers, and also how he, as well as the settler farmers related to the governments of the time.

## **2 Historical and Ideological Background**

When Van der Kemp arrived at the Cape in 1799, farmer ‘disaffection’ toward first the Dutch East India Company (D.E.I.C.) and then toward the British, already had a history. During the first period, it arose from the free citizen discontent which characterised the D.E.I.C.’s final years of decline (c. 1779-1795). During the second period (1795-1803), it continued despite its temporary and lenient nature - that England would not effect major changes in the Colony.

Historically, the ‘disaffection’ related not only to the criticism of corrupt Dutch Company officials but also the clash of the frontier farmer economy with Company regulations, the on-going competition with Xhosa for the grazing of cattle and sheep, and ‘plundering’ homeless and landless Khoi (cf. Wilson & Thompson 1969:240f). Archival - and more importantly - this ‘disaffection’ arose in conflict with the D.E.I.C.’s policies on property and wealth (cf. Ross 1989:245ff). Whereas the Company still just saw the farmers as providing produce for passing ships, the settler community had started to see itself - after more than three generations - as inhabitants and citizens of a country - South Africa. This perception was articulated with and found its rationale within eighteenth-century ideas of civil society and how it derived its ‘rights’ from the view that government not only existed for the ‘welfare of the people’ first and foremost, but, that it was also to represent civil society’s ‘rights’ as these were founded inalienably in both God and nature.

By May 1778, the text, *De Magt en de Vrijheden eener Burgerlijke Maatschappij verdedigt door de gevoelens der voornaamste Regtsgeleerden opgedragen aan het oordeel der Caapse Burgerij* (The Powers and Freedoms of a Civil Society defended by the Opinions of the most important Jurists brought to the attention of the Cape Citizenry), printed in the Netherlands, was

already in circulation at the Cape. Another was the anonymous text, ‘*Aan onse Broeders, Meedeburgers van dit Colonie van Cabo de Goede Hoop worden deese opgedragen, en in hunne bedenking aanbevoolen*’ (Text addressed and commended for their Consideration, to our Brethren, Common Citizens of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope). These texts derive from ideas and views advanced in the *Het Gedrag der Stadthoudersgezinden, verdedigt door Mr. A.V.K. Rechtsgeleerden* (1754) (The Behaviour of City-holders Supporters as Defended by MR A.V.K. Lawyer) - anonymously published and written by Mr. Elie Luzac, advocate of the Court of Holland. Many of the ideas of this text were to be integrated into the *Memorie gedaan aan Vergadering van Zeventien door Kaapsche Vryburgers* (1782) (‘Memoir submitted to the Council of Seventeen by Free Citizens of the Cape’) via the text, *De Magt en de Vrijheden ....* The ideas of these texts were primarily influenced by John Locke, David Hume, Adam Smith, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Priestley, and Richard Price from England; Voltaire, Montesquieu, the Encyclopaedists, Jean Jacques Rousseau and l’Abbé Raynal from France. To this may be added Pufendorf and Grotius (cf. Beyers 1929:169ff).

Archivally, the ideas in the texts mentioned above derive from both nature and God. The two principal ones - here called ‘Laws’ - are stated as follows:

There is nothing more true, nothing, that reason and the holy pages teach with more force than that Law which the Almighty imposed to each human being, irrespective of who he is, where he stays, as the foundational Law of all duties, namely, that he must advance his own welfare together with that of his fellow, and that especially with that of his fellow-citizen, to the best of his ability, and that according to his best knowledge and science.

From this general foundational duty, imposed on each human being by the Almighty Creator, flows a second Law. That each human being must contribute everything in his ability to the common good and especially the good of the civil society that he is a member of (cf. Beyers 1929:203; a.t.).

These two ‘Laws’ are then commented on and argued for, i.e. as to their ‘benefits’, not in a ‘Platonic state’, but ‘for humanity, as it were created

now'. From these two basic ideas - founded in nature and creation - some related 'ideas' developed at the Cape. In addition to the ideas of the advancement of the 'welfare of self and other'/ the 'common good' and the 'benefit of community', the most important were: 1) 'civil liberty and security'; 2) having 'people's representatives in governance structures'; 3) 'free elections' and 'democracy'; and 4) the 'voice of the people'. In a secondary way, these developed to also include: 1) the notion of the 'Republic' or a 'People's Republic'; 2) 'Volk' (People); 3) the People's State or 'Volkstaat'; 3) the 'Fatherland'; and obviously, the 4) Cape Patriots or 'Kaapse Patriote' (cf. also Conradie 1934:145ff).

Historically, there is evidence that these so-called Cape Patriots were not only influenced by, but were in contact with the Patriots in the Netherlands, especially Joan Derk van der Capellen - intellectual for the Dutch Patriots who opposed the royal House of Orange and eventually, under influence and support from Napoleonic France - established the Batavian Republic. Martin (n.d.:101) calls them 'Jacobins' and with 'latent Republican' commitments.

To some 'limited extent' the Cape Patriots were also influenced by the American Revolution and American Independence.

Given his commitment to the spreading of the Gospel, his allegiance to the ecumenicity of the LMS (cf. Lacour-Gayet 1970: 50; De Gruchy 1999:2), him casting in his lot with the Khoikhoi, but especially his own class position, Van der Kemp failed to comprehend these ideological and historical dynamics. Despite evidence that Van der Kemp was conscious of much of the philosophical thinking of his time and also of the thinking among the frontier farmers, from his South African texts, there is no evidence that he was conscious of the history of frontier farmer struggle against the D.E.I.C. or of comprehensively attempting to understand their views. Moreover, since it appears that the farmers/ rebels he opposed formed part of this discourse (cf. Davenport 1991:36f; Hodgson 1997:69), this says something not only about the limited scope of his investigations on the frontier, but also, maybe, that the accusations of his commitment to the English had some truth to them (cf. Theal 1876:154). This article looks at Van der Kemp's discourse from this perspective.

### **3 From British to Batavian Rule and Back Again**

The frontier farmers and the Xhosa frequently suspected the missionaries of

being English ‘spies’. The attitudes on the nexuses of take-over in the Van der Kemp texts - first by the Batavians and again by the British (Davenport 1991:37f) - at least reveal his own pro-English and the farmers’ pro-Batavian sympathies.

Of the eventual take-over of the Cape by the Batavian regime - which was formally agreed to at the Treaty of Amiens on 27 March 1802 - Van der Kemp already reports on December 22 1801 that: ‘We were this day informed of the Preliminaries of Peace between England and France’. Van der Kemp was unsure about what this would mean for the future of his mission among the Khoikhoi and he entered the following in his journal for three days later - December 25 1801:

We generally supposed that the restoration of the Cape to the Dutch would produce a considerable change in the Governor’s [Dundas’] design to encourage our efforts in forming the [Khoikhoi] into a Christian Society, but were agreeably surprised by a letter from his Excellency to Major Sherlock, in which he exhorted us in the strongest terms to go forward in the execution of this plan (LMS I TVDK 1801:501).

In an asterisked footnote to this entry, the LMS Directors added:

In consequence of the reversion of the Cape to the Dutch Government, the Directors applied to his Excellency J.W. Janssens, the newly appointed Governor, in behalf of the Mission; from whom they received an answer expressive of his warm approbation of the objects of the Mission, and declaring it to be agreeable to his own principles, *and the intention of his Government, to afford protection and encouragement to the Missionaries* (LMS I TVDK 1801:501; e.a.).

During 1802/ 1803, the missionaries were first settled at Bota’s Farm and later at Fort Frederick - the latter, after Dundas and the English troops at the fort left South Africa to return to England. At this point, some frontier farmers were in charge of the fort while they awaited the arrival of the Dutch troops which were to take possession of it and continue the control of the frontier. From Van der Kemp’s Annual Report for 1803, it is evident that a main point of contention between the missionaries and the farmers was what

they expected from the Dutch - that the Dutch would support the farmers against the missionaries and their criticisms of the farmers' labour practices. This comes to the fore in the report on a Kobus Linden who with a commando of twenty men arrived at the fort to hear 'whether the Dutch were arrived at the Cape, &c.' and 'were awaiting orders from government to fall upon the plundering [Khoikhoi] and [Xhosa]' (LMS II AR 1803:159). More to the point, Van der Kemp mentions that he has sent his 'Memoir' on the missionary institution to Janssens after the latter arrived at the Cape, and when the troops eventually arrived at Fort Frederick under Major Von Gitton and Captain Alberti, he reports that:

The tyranny of the Boors immediately ceased; and they soon began to perceive, that they had to do with a Government, that would as little connive at their horrid practices as the English (LMS II AR 1803:161).

During the Batavian period, the relations between the missionaries and Janssens were strained - not least because of the latter's view that the missionaries were not to teach 'writing' to the Khoi, that the Khoi from the missionary settlements were to go and work on the farms, and that Khoi from the farms were not to come to the missions. Ultimately, Janssens drove a wedge between the colonists and missionaries (cf. Ross 1986:43; cf. further below).

Even so, a letter from Bethelsdorp to the LMS Directors dated November 1 1804, shows the insecurity which gripped Van der Kemp with regard to the future of the mission establishments under the Batavian regime. He says:

In my last [letter] I communicated to you the wish of the present Governor that the direction of the mission should be committed to the Dutch society, upon such conditions as both the societies should think proper to stipulate. His Excellency's object by this step was to obviate the opposition made by the party in this country against a settlement of an English origin, and continuing to be directed by an English society. My dear Brother Read, and I, have not the least objection to receive our instructions through the intervention of the Dutch society, but *by no means wish, that the ties by which we are united to that of London, should be loosened, or even in the least relaxed* (LMS II EL2 1804:244; e.a.).

When the Batavian period came to an end, Van der Kemp and Read were at the Cape on order from Janssens and because of some deteriorating accusations and counter-accusations between Janssens and Van der Kemp (cf. Ross 1986:43). The issues in question concerned Khoi farm labour, that Khoi were not regarded as equally free, and their voluntary drafting into the standing Khoi regiment. Shortly before the argument on these issues started, Van der Kemp and Read still said in their Annual Report for 1804:

... we received a letter from the Governor, in which he signified, that our [Khoikhoi], who voluntarily had engaged themselves on military service by the armed corps of that nation ... were to be highly commended for their exemplary conduct, and excelled the rest of their countrymen ... (LMS II AR 1804:239).

Nevertheless, relations deteriorated. The order to come to the Cape came on April 14 1805 and Van der Kemp and Read were to remain in Cape Town until the British annexed it. In his letter, dated December 8 1805, and while still at the Cape, Van der Kemp wrote:

Our frequent applications to the Governor for permission to return to our congregation at Bethelsdorp, or to continue our missionary work in any other district of the colony, or to traverse it in order to undertake an exploratory excursion into the adjacent countries beyond its limits, have not met with any success, but are rejected on account of the outcries of the boors against us, looking upon us as Englishmen, and addicted to the English interests, and therefore of a dangerous influence upon the minds of the native heathens (LMS III EL2 1805:4f).

He then continues to not only equate the opposition the mission receives from Janssens to 'the obstacles Satan throw in the way', but also that of Janssens and the boors - 'Pilate [i.e. Government] and Herod [the local farming community], at variance before, now seem united for [the mission's] destruction' (LMS III EL2 1805:5). Apart from two suggestions he then made with regard to the future of missions as directed from the Netherlands, he then continues the equation, saying:

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Considering these machinations of the devil, and the apparent prosperous state of his kingdom, and the boldness and activity of his servants [both government and farming community] in this colony, we think that some vigorous steps are required ... (LMS III EL2 1805:5).

It was in the midst of such contentions that Sir David Baird landed and annexed the Cape. Van der Kemp's relief at this event is evident from the letters which followed. In his letter of January 13 1806, Van der Kemp writes:

Before you open the present [letter], I suppose you will be informed of the success with which Sir David Baird attacked the Dutch troops under General Janssen; after their being defeated, the capital soon capitulated and received the English garrison; but the Governor, Janssen, made his retreat to Hottentots Holland, where he has taken an advantageous position; we expect, however, daily to hear of his capitulation (LMS III EL2 1806:6).

The letter then continues referring to Baird asking Van der Kemp to take charge of the captured Khoi 'prisoners of war' - i.e. to decide whether 'they should be set at liberty' - after he had 'received' him 'with unexpected and uncommon benevolence'. His relief at these events then becomes evident:

We have little doubt but [Baird] will permit us to return to our dear Bethelsdorp, as soon as tranquillity shall be restored to that country. Thus has the Lord avenged us of all them that by the instigation of Satan rose up against us. Our hearts are full of joy - may they be full of thankfulness, and our lips of praise! our confidence not be turned from the Lord to trust in external appearances and the favours of men, but continue immovable in him, in prosperity as well as in adversity and trials of faith! (LMS III EL2 1806:7).

If this is not enough, in his letter of July 10 1806 from Bethelsdorp, Van der Kemp again says:

... I informed you of the wonderful interposition of Providence in our behalf by a sudden change of Government; just at the moment when we intended to leave the colony. 'Our destroyers and they that made



us waste are gone forth of us'. Immediately after this deliverance, the General, Sir David Baird, permitted us to return to Bethelsdorp, and gave me to this effect one of the wagons taken from General Janssens (LMS III EL2 1806:8).

But the fact that both the British - during the first and second occupation of the Cape - and the Dutch - prior to 1795 and during the Batavian period - followed virtually the same policies toward the Colonists, shows that, at archival level, not much changed during the time Van der Kemp was at the Cape (cf. Ross 1986:41). Despite De Mist's (1920) extensive proposals concerning the governance and administration of the Cape and also his and Janssens' proposals while at the Cape (cf. Theal 1911), the frontier farmer discontent which was sparked off in the late 1770s, continued unabated. And, it is to the discredit of Van der Kemp - whatever the 'good' he might have achieved during his twelve years at the Cape - that it was these dynamics which, it appears, he was unable to address constructively. He remained uninformed about their silent dynamics and how they would develop over the next two centuries.

But this raises the question of 'protection'.

#### **4 Protection**

In the context of the centralisation of power, first within the Dutch East India Company's governance structures at the Cape, and then successively, in the British, the Batavian and then again, the British governments, the initiatives by both the colonists (since 1779) as well as Van der Kemp - and the missions in general (since 1799) - proved to be a thorny issue for all concerned. Despite the legitimacy of such initiatives, the fact that power was centralised meant that the inhabitants of the colony (the Colonists and the Khoi) were subject to decisions and practices they did not have a handle on. In this context, and in order to have some legitimacy, it is understandable that the issue of 'protection' played such an important role in Van der Kemp's writings.

The centralisation of power manifested in the continuous developing of strategies that would ensure direct government control. The settlement of farmers and missionaries, the precise geographical descriptions of such settlements, the continuous reports requested by government on names of people, numbers of people at particular settlements and annual income, as well

as the control of movement, not only pointed to strategies of government control but also mutual suspicions between parties - not least, suspicions that someone would be a 'spy' or informer for this power. Such suspicions, however, would only be symptoms of this larger problem of power - its centralisation, yes, but especially the systems of subjection it employed and operationalised. Foucault (1979:26) argued that

... [a] system of subjection (in which need [e.g. protection] is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated, and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive and a subjected body. [Such subjection may be] obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain a physical order. That is to say, there may be a 'knowledge' of the body that is ... a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them.

For the centralised government of the time, such 'knowledge' was that of the settlement, movement, and productivity of bodies. In this, the 'protection' of the body signalled not only the invidious control of the body, but also - as in the case of Van der Kemp - that strict obedience to such control meant a co-operation and collaboration with its mechanisms, however unwillingly.

On his arrival at the Cape, Van der Kemp reported that Governor Dundas 'assured [us] of his protection and support', and of the actual meeting, that he

... received us with uncommon civility and *assured us of his protection*. His Excellency promised me yesterday to write letters to the subordinate Magistrates in the country, to assist us in our journey to the [Xhosa], to which nation we hope to make our way within a few weeks ... *notwithstanding the disturbances, which of late have broken out among the Colonists near [Xhosaland] in opposition to the government, who, however, we expect will soon be disposed to order and obedience* (LMS I VC 1799:366; e.a.).

In the context of ‘disturbances ... in opposition to the government’, the assurance of protection and also of bringing of such opposition back to ‘order and obedience’ indicates not only centralised power’s objective in the ordering of an obedient and submissive community, but also, that where it does not exist, ‘protection’ would be needed. The difficulties faced by Colonial powers in subjecting their Colonial subjects is evident especially from Marx (1976:779-782,785,792-802).

On the ‘obedience’ of Van der Kemp himself, his reports on his first arrival at Graaff Reinet are informative. After he had submitted the letters written by Dundas and Rynveldt to the officials there, and they ‘assured us of assistance’, he reports on the ‘Landdrosst, and the rest of the people here’ attempting to dissuade them from going beyond the Colony’s borders to the Xhosa in their missionary endeavours. He then says:

We replied, *we would do nothing against the positive order of Government*; but that as the Governor had granted us liberty of executing our plan, we hoped that he would not hinder us; that we would not enter into the country of the [Xhosa] without the leave of their King Gika, but that having obtained this, we should not count our lives dear, if we should lose them ... (LMS I JC 1799:379; e.a.).

On Prinslo’s proposals of peace to Ngqika - which paved the way for the missionaries to meet the king for the first time - Van der Kemp’s report was that

... Gika intended to keep peace with the colonists [including Van der Kemp and Edmond in their party], and *protect them*, offering them a piece of ground between the Kacha mountains and the Konap river; that he had sent out four deputies to proclaim that all hostilities committed by his subjects were against his will, and immediately to put a stop to them (LMS I FA 1799:388; e.a.).

And, of the day that Van der Kemp met Ngqika, he says that his

... object was to instruct him and his people in matters which could make them happy in his life and after death; that we only ask his leave to settle ourselves, or rather myself, (as this my brother probably would

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go to another country) in his land; expecting his friendship, *protection*, and liberty to return to my own country when I should judge it expedient .... Gika continued, that we were come at a very unfavourable period, that all the country was in confusion; though he intended nothing but peace and tranquillity, having no part in the hostilities which subsisted between the English and some of the [Xhosa]. He advised us, therefore, not to stay with him. Your people, said he, look upon me as a great man; but I am not able to entertain you as you ought to be entertained; *you look for safety and rest, but I can myself find no safety or resting-place, being in perpetual danger on account of my enemies, nor can I protect you as I cannot protect myself*. I said, that we were only private men, willing to provide for ourselves: that we did not suppose that he could remove the common calamities of war, but that we would bear them with patience; that *we asked for no other protection than he was able to give the meanest of his subjects*, and which Buys himself enjoyed. He repeated, that he did not advise us to stay in his country, as not calculated for our manner of living ... (LMS I SA 1800:395; e.a.).

Further, it is said that one of the experiences which caused the ‘disaffection’ of government among the rebel boors, was that ‘they complained that government *protected* the [Khoi] and [Xhosa]’ (LMS I TVDK 1801:481) - and, by implication, not the Colonists (Ross cf. 1986:28). Also, in response to Van der Kemp’s ideas on the establishing of a Khoi mission he submitted to Dundas, the Governor replied:

I have only time, by the present opportunity, to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter, dated November 11, containing some heads of a plan for a [Khoi] establishment, *which I am desirous to encourage, seeing the necessity of endeavouring to ameliorate the spiritual and temporal condition of those unhappy people, whom, upon every principle of humanity and justice, Government is bound to protect* (LMS I TVDK 1801:499).

See too the asterisked footnote by the LMS Directors above, where they report that, before coming to South Africa, Governor Janssens undertook

to ‘afford *protection* and encouragement to the Missionaries’ (LMS I TVDK 1801:501; e.a.).

Finally, Van der Kemp reports on the fact that Khoi who would seek ‘freedom and protection’ by joining the mission institution would not be attacked by the boor commando’s (LMS II EJBP 1802:84).

The representational significance of these references to ‘protection’ - whether by centralised government power (the Governor or Ngqika) or an institution (where members receive freedom and protection) - indicates that this notion formed part of the same civilising discourse in Europe which attempted the education and training of wretches, vagabonds, and criminals. Even though much older and dating from the time that kings were bound to protect their subjects as their well-being was embodied in the king’s presence, here too, it had significance.

If protection and obedient adherence to the technologies of power employed by such ‘protection’ indicated the existence not only of a civilised but also a disciplined subject, it also meant that such a subject had to form part of that whole network of power which was to defend and protect society against maladjusted persons. Moreover, this also meant the individualising processes of the protective strategies operationalised not only through governance but also in the institution. Such individualising arose from the interaction between those who were supervised (or superintended) and those who were responsible for such supervision and superintendence. In the context of the prison as institution, Foucault (1979:125) quotes Turnbull:

On first entering the prison, the prisoner will be read the regulations; ‘at the same time, the inspectors seek to strengthen in him the moral obligations that he now has; they represent to him the offence that he has committed with regard to them, the evil that has consequently resulted, *for the society that protected him* and the need to make compensation by his example and his amendment. They then make him promise to do his duty gladly, to behave decently, promising him or allowing him to hope that before the expiration of the term of the sentence, he will be able to obtain his discharge if he behaves well .... From time to time, the inspectors make it their duty to converse with the criminals one after the other, concerning their duties as men and as members of society’.

At the Cape, the centralisation of power and the individual group interactions with government made ‘protection’ an issue not only for Van der Kemp but also the farmers. If this concept had its own place and strategic function within the civilising and disciplinary discourse and technologies of power of the time too, then, for Van der Kemp to continuously seek ‘protection’ - only on behalf of the mission, or later, for the Khoi alone - and to have received it, would come into conflict with the farmers not receiving it. From their perspective, government was giving ‘protection’ to the Khoi while they only experienced the Khoi as ‘plundering [Khoi]’. This, therefore, already indicated, that the mutual discontent between groups would escalate - as it did. But there were other dynamics to these problems.

## **5 Wedging**

Since power was centralised in the main, the different interest groups at the Cape had to interact with government on an individual basis. For the farmers, this meant first negotiation, and if this strategy did not succeed, rebellion and revolt (Schoeman 2005:68). For the Khoi, the missionaries saw themselves as mediators between them and government. Such interaction, however, also entailed that each group would interact with government on an individual and partisan basis - leaving out of sight the complexities of the whole.

Moreover, group discontent also entailed that different groups would stand in constant competition and conflict with one another. Neither the Governors, nor Van der Kemp, nor the Colonists succeeded in consciously and comprehensively addressing this problem, despite especially De Mist and Janssens’ vigorous plans for the colony. Van der Kemp’s initiatives on behalf of the Khoi and the farmers’ importation of ideas from the Patriot movement in the Netherlands and introduction of concepts and related strategies for their own survival, excluded, it appears, the concerns of the other. Within this triangle, all concerned became part of a vicious maelstrom where such divisioning led to a hardening of boundaries rather than a softening up. The wedging strategy regularised by Janssens, seems to have played a crucial role in these dynamics.

As far as separation of groups are concerned, it first appeared when the Khoi requested Van der Kemp to have religious meetings separate from their ‘Masters’ - which he conceded to (LMS I FA 1799:388). It further surfaced as

one of the complaints of the rebel farmers - that the missionaries were to 'give up the instruction of the Heathen in the church' (LMS I TVDK 1801:482f); that they 'kept meetings with [the Khoi] every evening in that place: that they intended to fall upon Graaff Reinet, and to force the Commissioner to put a stop to these proceedings' (LMS I TVDK 1801:481f); and on

... the admission of the [Khoi] into the church, requesting that the seats should be washed, the pavement broken up, the pulpit covered with black cloth, as a demonstration of mourning, on account of the absence of a regular clergyman, the church-yard fenced by a stone wall, &c. (LMS I TVDK 1801:483).

These events, together with the fact that Van der Kemp decided in 1801 to change the mission from the Xhosa to the Khoi and to throw in his lot with the Khoi, finally polarised the settler farmers and the missionaries, also impacting on the later history in South Africa, with regard to racial segregation (cf. Wilson & Thompson 1969:270f; cf. Ross 1986:41; Welsh 2000:112). Latent discontent then came out into the open, and would start to escalate. It was in the process of this escalation and its concomitant suspicions - the missionaries representing 'English interests' (cf. Chidester 1992:45) - that Janssens' divisioning or wedging strategy, would harden the group boundaries and fuel reciprocal discontent. In his 'Proclamation', he ruled for missionaries coming to the colony:

2. That [missionary labour] however, *be done at such a distance beyond the boundaries of this colony, established by government, that their schools have no communication with the inhabitants upon these boundaries, much less with those that live within them, either Christians or Heathen* (LMS II P 1805:234; e.a.).

3. That in the schools and meetings, to be formed by the Missionaries for the Natives, *nobody who has residence within the colony, and belonging to the common population, be permitted, unless he has obtained for it express leave from the Governor, which leave can never be obtained but in the event of absolute necessity* (LMS II P 1805:234; e.a.).

The same kind of ruling is captured in Janssens' article seven.

7. That the Missionaries, who proceed to the places of their destination or return from them as well regularly ordained ministers as others, *be prohibited to officiate within the colony, without having leave from the governor and Commander in Chief, or from the vestry of the district in which they intend to officiate* (LMS II P 1805:235; e.a.).

To this end, Janssens added a geographical description of the Colony's boundaries:

6. That the limits of the colony be provisionally established for this purpose thus: The utmost point of the colony shall be to the north, the west coast at the mouth of the Coussie river, about 29.30 south latitude. - The course of this river to its springs at the commencement of the Copper mountains shall be the northern limit, this limit shall go farther south eastwardly in a straight line following however the natural course of the mountains, and including the utmost habitations of the colonists to that part of the Zak-river; where it unites itself with the Reed River. The Zak-river from hence to its sources and the mountains of the New fields shall be the farther limit which shall continue the course of the mountains along the north part of the Great Karroo, due east and west to the foot of the snow mountains; the limit to the north shall include the great mountain called the Tafelberg, and continue to the Seacon river where the beacon of Plettenberg is placed, further proceeding along the west part of the Bamboos mountains, including the whole Tarka Hook.

Finally, the Tarka and Kaka mountains to the confluence of the Bareaans and Great Fish river, and this river continuing to the mouth, shall separate the colony from the country of the [Xhosa] (LMS II P 1805:234).

The same controlling measures are also evident from the rules laid down for the then three existing missionary establishments within the boundaries of the colony. For Kicherer:



8. That Mr. Kicherer one of missionaries having established a school for the natives on this side of the Zak-river, shall be permitted to continue in his institution upon the following terms:

A. *That the County Sherriff of Tulbach be directed to show him circumference in which the school must be confined.*

B. *That concerning circumference, the same arrangements must take place respecting the surrounding inhabitants of the colony as are established in the 2d and 3d ... article of this proclamation respecting those that are beyond the limits of the colony (LMS II P 1805:235).*

The Moravians, again, had ‘to take care not to *seduce any Native or Bastard from the service of their masters to their instruction*’ (LMS II P 1805:235), and for Van der Kemp:

A. *That neither the Missionary Van der Kemp nor any of his fellow Missionaries belonging to the institution at Bethelsdorp, shall be permitted to go without a special consent from the Governor and Commander in Chief, or from the County Sherriff of Witenhage, out of the limits of the colony.*

B. *That only wandering [Khoi] or others who from this institution have gone into the service of the inhabitants shall be permitted to receive instruction; But no [Khoi] who are actually serving the inhabitants; or have served them in the course of the preceding year, be permitted to be received in it.*

11. *No instruction in writing, as this is not absolutely necessary in the commencement of cultivation, shall be permitted in the schools already established, or that may be established hereafter; but this instruction shall be postponed till express licence from the Governor and Commander in Chief be obtained for it (LMS II P 1805:235).*

Apart from the ban on the teaching of writing, the most serious for Van der Kemp was that, whereas farmers could draft Khoi as labourers from the mission stations, the missions were not allowed to take in Khoi from the farms. (The mission stations started to function as labour reserves in anticipation of the later reserve system in South Africa – cf. Chidester 1992:47 who refers to

Freund 1973; 1989 in this regard.) It is in this context, and most probably in response to a verbal interaction - a difference on this issue when Janssens visited Van der Kemp in 1803 - that Van der Kemp complained about this ruling, one which, according to the 'Proclamation' of 1805, was not granted. Van der Kemp reports to London:

We thought it our duty to declare ... that *our consciences would not permit us any longer to observe that hard article of the settlement granted to our institution, by which we were recommended to encourage the voluntary engagement of the [Khoii] into the service of the Colonists, on account of the cruelty and injustice with which those who entered into their service were treated, without any justice being done to them by the Magistrates.* In answer to this the Governor ordered the Landdrosst of this district to take the necessary steps. This not being done, and the oppression of these inhuman wretches, who call themselves Christians, for the greatest part continuing unpunished, we find ourselves constrained to persist in our declaration, trusting that the Lord, to whose tribunal we have appealed, will do what is right, and consistent with the honour of his name, as he has already in some respects visibly shewn. These Christians we have mentioned, seem equally deprived of common sense and humanity. One of them, out of our neighbourhood, went lately to the Cape, where he, without any ceremony, applied to the Governor to destroy us, to which the Governor replied, by asking him: Whether he had not seen the gallows since he arrived at the Cape? (LMS II AR 1804:241; cf. also Martin n.d.: 109).

If the missions were to 'civilize' the Khoi, to 'discipline' them and to 'cultivate' them in 'industry' and usefulness to the common good of the colony, then the rulings of Janssens - and his view of the missions as nothing more than an available pool of labour for the farmers - only meant one thing. Within representational thought, institutional power was not merely aimed at the 'common good' of the citizenry. Within this discourse, there was a break created. The inequality of those who were supposed to be equally free opened up a crevice within representational power (and discourse), which would become a yawning chasm during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On

the one hand, this was instigated through the wedging regulations of centralised power. On the other hand, this development would similarly facilitate the formation of new technologies of power but also new discourses different from those of which Van der Kemp (and Read) formed part.

Van der Kemp's developing animosity with regard to the frontier farmers can also be amply illustrated from his journals and letters - especially concerning the concepts he employed to depict them.

## **6 Christians, Peasants and Wretches**

All Cape colonists from European descent were generally described as 'Christians' (cf. Elbourne 2002:111ff). This led to the equation of being 'Christian', being white, and economic and political domination (cf. (Elbourne & Ross 1997:35). Within this homogeneous conceptualisation - equating an eighteenth-century perception of religion (Christianity being the example of the most civilised and developed form), a Christian 'disposition' and a person of European descent - Van der Kemp was to drive in his own wedge. This he did by 'pointing out the difference' between 'a real christian and a nominal professor' (LMS I SA 1799:410). He reports on this distinction in a sermon preached from Acts 26:28, which mentions Agrippa saying to Paul: '... are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?'. One can only surmise what Van der Kemp said on this occasion. The context, however, was that of Van der Walt coming to 'persuade Buys to return to the colony with a free pardon'. Given his own dedication and 'obedience' to government, it may indicate that Van der Kemp used dissent from the Colony and a life under government to analogically mirror the life of an unconverted, religiously disobedient person and contrast it with one who was converted and obedient (cf. also LMS I TVDK 1801:474). This is in fact one of the main lines of Paul's argument in Acts 26 - against his opposition which claimed that he violated Roman law. This kind of reasoning is also borne out by Van der Kemp's analytic and comparative hermeneutics evident from his scientific and civilising activities.

Even so, within representational thought, this is in effect what Van der Kemp implied when he used terms like 'peasants' and 'inhuman wretches' and others for the frontier farmers. With regard to the Khoi, within representational thought, these conceptualisations pointed to people not yet taken up into 'civilised' society and who in effect lived a criminal existence (both in civil

society and in religious parlance) - of which the other ultimate extreme was that of a converted Christian aspiring to the highest goals of (rational) religion or pious communion with Christ.

On their journey to the eastern Cape, Van der Kemp mentions that he met with a '*peasant*, with his son and daughter, carrying corn to Mr. De Beer ... [who] received [the missionaries] with uncommon joy, and calling his family and slaves together ... uttered [a] prayer ....'; that Jacobus Krieger '*seemed at first prejudiced against us*'; that the '*peasants endeavoured to prejudice their [i.e. a Xhosa kraal's] minds against us [the missionaries] suggesting that we came to betray them*'; that, on their way to the eastern Cape, '*peasants wished to deter us from going to Caffraria*'; that he had heard that '*the peasants in Bruntjie Hoogte have shot one [Xhosa], but lost two of their own men, and a great many cattle*' (LMS I JC 1799:374; FA 1799:382f).

In line with discursive understandings of the peasantry in Europe, the fact that he used these concepts to denote the Colonists shows that he understood them - and, obviously experienced them as equally 'uncivilised' and 'barbarous'. In Europe, it was precisely this group of people - the 'vagabonds' together with the 'lazy' and those 'lying in the woods' who were no better than 'wolves' - who were to be included in the disciplinary society then developing (cf. Foucault 1978:88). It appears as if Van der Kemp developed a similar view of the frontier farmers.

Further, in reports on his meetings and interactions with Janssens, many of the dynamics outlined above are in play. In a letter dated April 23 1803, he writes about the frontier farmers as 'ill-natured people':

The Governor wished us to desist for the present from the instruction of the [Khoi] in reading and writing, chiefly the latter; but I could not, however, with all the regard due to his rank and character, consent to a proposal so contrary to the apparent interest of Christ's kingdom, and so unworthy of the rights of a free nation; merely to stop the clamour of a number of *ill-natured people* (LMS II EL2 1803:94).

Also, apart from his reference to the Colonists as 'nominal christians' in the following context, he calls them 'the unchristian inhabitants of this country' and 'barbarous inhabitants'.

Our labours, and present institution, have, from the first, been a stumbling block in the eyes of *the unchristian inhabitants of this country, and an object of their hatred*. After the restoration of government into the hands of the Batavian Republic, *the almost universal clamour was, that an institution, not only formed and administered by emissaries of the London Society, but even now continuing under the influence and direction of a company of Englishmen, was, by its nature, too dangerous for the public tranquillity to be suffered any longer, was an imperium in imperio, &c. &c.* It was an easy matter to convince the brave and philanthropic Governor Janssens of the futility of the objection .... *But it was not so easy to eradicate the inveterate prejudices against our work among the heathen, out of the stony hearts of more barbarous inhabitants; and it was evident, that our relation to English benefactors, was only a pretext to give vent to a deeper rooted enmity against God, his Christ, and the extension of his kingdom of love and grace among the heathen* (LMS II L 1804:150; e.a.).

‘*Christians* (if they may be so called)’ and ‘*these inhuman wretches, who call themselves christians*’ (LMS II AR 1804:241) are also mentioned elsewhere in the texts. See especially the following:

The hatred of *those Christians (if they may be so called)* arose from two causes. *1st That we not only discountenanced, but condemned in the highest degree, their horrid deeds of oppression, murder, &c. And, 2dly, Our instructing the [Khoi], whom they wished to keep in total ignorance of the Gospel, and to suffer them to believe nothing but what they chose to inculcate; which, among other things, is, that they are the offspring of Canaan, youngest son of Noah, and are cursed of God to a perpetual servitude to them.*

The boors, finding that what they said, or did, had little effect on our minds, directed their devices to our people. They endeavoured to seduce them into drunkenness, whoredom, and other vices; and in which, to our grief, with some they were successful. But they did not rest: *they sought to corrupt their minds to disbelieve the word of God, despise Christ, and inculcated that Hell, which the Paaps, (or Papes, alluding to us) represented as being intolerably hot, was only a*

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*comfortable place, well adapted for us (said they) who smoke. This, however, was so shocking to our people, that they only considered these Boors as enemies and deceivers (LMS II AR 1803:158f; e.a.).*

In representational context, the farmers' 'inculcation' of perceptions among the Khoi of 'perpetual servitude' to them, is also captured in the LMS narrator's narrativising of Van der Kemp's report on a walk near the Tarka river where he found Bruntjie 'in serious discourse' with some [Khoi] who happened to arrive at the place they camped. It says:

*One of them, whose name was Cupido, asked brother Vanderkemp, if it were not true that God had created them as well as the christians, and the beasts of the field: 'for you know, (said he) that the Dutch farmers teach us, that he never created us, nor taketh any notice of us'. Brother Vanderkemp then sat down, and explained to him man's equal misery ... (LMS I J C 1799:376; e.a.).*

In terms of Van der Kemp's distinction between 'a real christian and a nominal professor', 'man's equal misery' indicated the sin which had contaminated the human race since Adam - even during his deist phase, he did not relinquish this belief. In terms of the assumptions of representational thought, however - and also that of 'creation' and the 'created order' (and therefore 'nature') - this perception of 'equal misery' could have also indicated that humanity has to 'develop', be 'civilized' and 'disciplined' into a higher level of existence on the natural history chart (cf. Smit 2015).

If these conceptualisations had a certain effect in Europe - Britain - then they had their own power in South Africa too. But in this context of mutual discontent, we also have to turn to Van der Kemp's reportage on existing sentiments of the English government and the 'disaffections' of the inhabitants themselves.

## **7 Disaffection and Rebellion**

That the frontier Colonists already posed a problem to the Cape government when Van der Kemp arrived here in 1799, is evident from his journals. The narrator of his journey to the Cape and his first excursions into the rural areas

at the Cape recounts boor interventions for peace (cf. too, Prinslo's intervention - LMS I FA 1799:387f) but mainly talk of their rebellious nature. On peace negotiations, again, Van der Kemp says:

We see a missionary field opened before us, of which we cannot, even in imagination, discover the bounds. Even the most savage tribe of [Khoi], called Boschemen, have of late shewn their desire to be instructed in the way of serving the God of the Christians. A pious colonist anxious to put an end to an almost perpetual scene of murder and bloodshed, *has proposed to them a kind of treaty of peace between the colonists and these wild [Khoi]*: this being brought to conclusion he kneeled down with his men on a field, and engaged in prayer and singing of hymns. The Boschemen asked with surprise the meaning of this solemnity; and having received the answer that it was thanksgiving to God, *and a demonstration of joy on account of peace with the Boschemen*, they bewailed their ignorance of that God, and begged that instructors might be sent to them, to teach them the Christian religion ... (LMS I VC 1799:366; e.a.).

In this same text, Van der Kemp reports on the assistance by government and then adds that the troops at Fort Frederick were there on account of 'disturbances made by the farmers, and in which a large body of seduced [Xhosa] had been involved'. He said:

Gen. Dundas is to furnish us with a letter of recommendation to the Landdrost of Graaff Reinet, whose district is next to the country of the [Xhosa], and with an order to the General, who commands the English troops in that remote part of that colony. We shall take only the most necessary articles with us, the remainder will be sent with a ship by the government, which goes to the Zwartkop's river, for the reimbarcation of the English troops, *sent on account of some disturbances made by the farmers, and in which a large body of seduced [Xhosa] had been involved* (LMS I VC 1799:368; e.a.).

Here, the Xhosa are seen to have been seduced into 'disturbances' caused by the farmers, and on account of which the troops were sent to the Zwartkop's river.

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Apart from these two references to peace negotiations, this is a statement which contains an evaluative assessment already prevalent at the Cape - that the Xhosa were drawn into war by the 'farmers'. However, more was to follow. Van der Kemp reports on the peasants' distrust of the missionaries and that they 'prejudiced some people against them'- also that 'rebellious Colonists' did not want to accept the 'pardon' extended to them for their dissent from the colony or for their rebellion (LMS I FA 1799:382,384). An example of one such altercation is that with Prinslo. For July 30 1799, Van der Kemp says:

We observed six fires on the tops of the mountains, at the foot of which we were encamped, lighted by the Modankians, which put the Colonists into the greatest consternation, and they prepared for a hasty flight; but the day passed quietly and we placed out cattle in the Glen of the Bavian river. *Towards evening, Prinslo entered our tent in a rage, and desired to speak to me privately. All persons being removed but Mr. Edmond, he charged me with having stirred up the [Xhosa] to kill and plunder the Colonists, and that I had said to the [Khoi], pointing to their cattle, 'this you have a right to, take it freely, it is yours'.* I called in our people and repeated the acquisition, and requested Prinslo to produce the man who made the assertion. Soon after Prinslo returned with four of his company armed with firelocks, *and a [Khoi], who declared, that one of the [Xhosa] had told him, he heard me say to his countrymen, that in taking the cattle of the Colonists, they should observe the proprietor's mark, and restore them to their friends, keeping only those of their enemies.* I insisted this [Xhosa] should be brought before me the next morning (LMS I FA 1799:385; e.a.).

And for July 31 1799:

The Colonists now decamped and we followed them in the road to the Tarka. We had not been long on our march, when the Modankian [Xhosa] appeared in a great body on the left hand mountain, and rushed down upon us with a terrible cry, attacking the front and left of our line. *We served out our muskets and ammunition to our [Khoi],*



*ordering them only to attack the [Xhosa] in case of personal danger; we ourselves chose to be unarmed.* The battle lasted about an hour, during which nothing surprised me more than the coolness and courage of the women and children. A few of the [Xhosa] being killed, they gave way and retreated, and we pursued our journey, the [Xhossa] following on the mountain side and harassing the line of march, so that the Colonists found themselves obliged to leave their cattle a prey to their enemies. Our road lead through a defile in the mountain, which was occupied by the [Xhosa], but they did not wait and attack, but shouted, whilst some Colonists fired a few shots after them. *Many of the [Khoi] that day deserted to the [Khoi] and among the rest, the [Khoi] of P. Prinslo who had dared to make the acquisition against me.* We lost also our [Xhosa] Oukoutzo, and feared he was cut off (LMS I FA 1799:386;e.a.)

Turning, however, now to the complaints of rebellious colonists - and also their interactions with Van der Kemp during the uprising of 1801 at Graaff Reinet (cf. below) - these provide some insight into how Van der Kemp attempted to intervene, apparently without understanding the complexities of the situation: of the developing ideology amongst the frontier farmers and the same families which would eventually initiate the so-called Great Trek of 1836 and later (cf. Wilson & Davenport 1969:245).

In his first statement on the rebellion at Graaff Reinet - June 9 1801 - Van der Kemp reports that:

A number of colonists, with about three hundred wagons, left their houses, and assembled in Zwagershoek, *murmuring against the instruction of the Heathen.* We were informed that they *intended to come, and to burn Graaff Reinet,* and even the nearest inhabitants in its neighbourhood fled from their farms. Mr. Jacobs was sent to them to inquire into the reasons of their proceedings. He returned this day and reported, that *they alleged that the [Xhosa] had molested some of the farmers at Bruintjieshoogte, and robbed them of their cattle; that they also were dissatisfied on account of the privileges which were granted to the [Khoi], and their admission into the church* (LMS I TVDK 1801:480f; e.a.).

This is followed on the June 30 1801:

Graaff Reinet was alarmed by the intelligence that the inhabitants of the Colony who had recently left their farms, armed, had united in a body behind the snow mountains, under pretext of being driven away by the [Xhosa]. This pretext soon proved to be false. They complained that *government protected the [Khoi] and [Xosa], and encouraged them to rob and murder the Colonists; that they were instructed by us in reading, writing and religion, and thereby put upon an equal footing with the Christians; especially that they were admitted in the Church of Graaff Reinet, and that we kept meetings with them every evening in that place: that they intended to fall upon Graaff Reinet, and to force the Commissioner to put a stop to these proceedings* (LMS I TVDK 1801:481f; e.a.).

Van der Kemp's continuous reference to the requirement that the Khoi and the settler colonists be put on an equal footing with one another, can rightfully be seen as the beginnings of the humanitarian 'Cape liberal tradition' in South Africa (cf. Macmillan 1927:255-257; 1929; Saunders 1988:66ff; 1999:9; Lazerson 1994:6f; Keegan 1996:4,12; Elphick 1987:66). Furthermore, At this point, Van der Kemp still referred to the boors as 'colonists' or 'the inhabitants of the Colony'. This now switches to 'rebels'. On July 6 1801, he writes:

Four inhabitants, went last week to the rebels, returned, reporting that they had found them at five hours distance from this place, that they intended to march without delay to Graaff Reinet in arms; that they insisted that *we should give up the instruction of the Heathen in the church, and that those of the [Khoi], who had murdered their relations, should be delivered into their hands to be punished*. Several of *the inhabitants now shewed openly their disaffection towards government*. Bruntjie also discovered to brother Read that *the rebels had resolved to kill us*. The commissioner was resolved to *avoid as much as possible all hostilities, but if the rebels offered any violence, to resist them with all his power*. The rebels were headed by the field commander Rensburg, and to my utmost surprise, my friend John

Vanderwalt. The Commissioner Maynier had only one officer and twenty-one light dragoons, eighty armed [Khoi], nineteen Pandours, four pieces of ordnance, and a few inhabitants to work them (LMS I TVDK 1801:482f; e.a.).

The entry in Van der Kemp's journal for July 9 1801 reads:

The *rebels* approached on horseback, and halted at a gunshot distance from this village, and sent a message to the Commissioner whose troops were also in arms. *He desired them to lay down their arms, and to settle matters with him in a peaceable manner.* They refused the first unless he also disarmed his people, which was rejected. as to the second, they complained of *the admission of the [Khoi] into the church, requesting that the seats should be washed, the pavement broken up, the pulpit covered with black cloth, as a demonstration of mourning, on account of the absence of a regular clergyman, the church-yard fenced by a stone wall, &c.* We signified to the Commissioner, our wish that no blood should be shed on our account, *that we were ready to retire with our Heathen out of the church, and to meet in another house;* I assured him at the same time, that *those Colonists, who should like to join the [Khoi] in Divine worship, should always be welcome in our meetings, which should be open to everyone without distinction, but that I never would preach in a church, from which our Heathen congregation should be excluded.* They also demanded, that *those [Khoi], who had murdered their relations, should be given up in their hands* (LMS I TVDK 1801:483; cf. also Martin n.d.: 104).

As for their leverage within centralised power, the farmers opted for revolt. As far as the reasons for their discontent are concerned, these were that: 1) some Khoi murdered farmers and stole some cattle from the farmers; 2) that government protected the Khoi and Xhosa; 3) that the Khoi received privileges from government; 4) that they were instructed in reading and writing; 5) that they worshipped in the church; 6) and that they were 'put upon an equal footing with the Christians'. Of all these complaints - as already pointed out - the last was not granted. Maynier and Van der Kemp consented to the others, but, in the context of legal proceedings, indicating centralised - if not 'civilised' –

power. For July 9 1801, Van der Kemp further reports:

*The Commissioner then consented, that the Heathen should be kept out of the church, and the use of it left entirely to the Christians; and that those [Khoi], whom they should accuse of having committed murder, should be arrested, and tried according to the laws of the country, but not delivered into the hands of their accusers, without any proof of their crimes.* We committed our case to God in prayer, and towards evening, Mr. Lyndon, commander of the troops, desired the body of the rebels to withdraw to a certain distance from the village; and to send in their resolution next morning; to this they consented

In the evening the bell rung for the meeting of the Heathen, but I assembled them at the request of Mr. Maynier, not in the church, but in our own house (LMS I TVDK 1801:483).

The next day, July 10 1801, it appears that the ‘rebels’ were not satisfied. Van der Kemp reports:

In the morning, the rebels occupied their former ground, and sent word, that they were by no means satisfied with the answer of Mr. Maynier, but would procure themselves satisfaction by those means which were in their power. Mr. Lyndon agreed to allow them till one o’clock to settle matters with Mr. Maynier in a friendly manner, declaring, that this time being elapsed, he would attack them without delay. Almost all the inhabitants of Graaff Reinet then laid down their arms, refusing to fight against their countrymen. We resolved at first to stay at home, and unite in prayer, but seeing the [Khoi] marching out, we followed them, though unarmed. The line was drawn up in the form of a crescent; the right, consisting of the [Khoi], leaned against the village; the left, formed of the Pandours, against the church; the English dragoons were in the centre; the four field pieces placed before the front on the left. A guard was lodged in the church, loop holes being made in the wall to fire through. The rebels detached a party on horseback, which turned round our left, endeavouring to get behind our line; but made their retreat when Mr. Lyndon marched towards them with the dragoons; the rebels then advanced in a body (except the inhabitants of the Snow mountains, who separated from them) but

halted within gun-shot, where they continued till half past twelve, when they sent a messenger to request three days to deliberate; but Mr. Lyndon declared, that he would attack them at the stipulated time, upon which they drew their forces back, saying, that they intended to return on Monday morning, to see if Mr. Maynier had fulfilled his promises

....

... The dragoons and [Khoi] had been restrained with much difficulty from falling upon the rebels, and the resolution, with which Mr. Maynier, and Mr. Lyndon had acted this day, was truly admirable (LMS I TVDK 1801:484).

For July 13 1801, Van der Kemp's entry reads:

In the morning we got information that the *rebels* were in full march against the village, and the disposition of our troops was the same as on Friday last, except, that, Mr. Lyndon laid half of the [Khoi] in ambuscade among the bushes, on the hill which the rebels had occupied before. The carrier of my letter did not return, and *Mr. Maynier proposed to me to meet them, and to try what God might do*, giving me one of his men for a guide. When we came to a post of Mr. Lyndon, he would not allow my guide to accompany me, but ordered him back, so I rode on alone, directed by the information which Mr. Lyndon gave me. I found the *rebels* at half an hour's distance, placed behind a hill, on whose summit they had an advanced post of about forty horse. Their number was not near so considerable as had been represented, and I think, amounted at the utmost to three hundred horsemen. *They received me in a friendly manner, and their commanders told me, that they were not assembled to commit any violence, but only to deliberate on their present circumstances.* They said, that *they would contend themselves with the proposals of Mr. Maynier, and signify this to him personally, if they could depend upon his promises, that their former steps should be forgiven. This I asserted in the strongest terms,* and went back to Graaff Reinet, taking one of them, whose name was Carel Gerotz, with me, after I had promised, at their request, to return to them.

I returned to conduct their commanders to the Commissioner.

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I found some difficulty to dispose the *rebels* to let their heads go to Graaff Reinet, as *they feared that they would be murdered on their arrival by order of Mr. Maynier, and insisted to accompany them in arms to protect them.* To prevent this, and to obviate their fears, *I offered to stay as hostage in their place; this they declined, saying, 'Although our commanders were killed we should not like to kill you.'* So I brought their two chiefs, Henry Rensburg, John Vanderwalt, and four subordinate officers with me to Graaff Reinet, where *they settled their affairs with Mr. Maynier and departed* (LMS I TVDK 1801:485; e.a.).

Following this settling of affairs - which also indicates the dynamics of having the farmers subject themselves to legal authority and not take matters into their own hands - there was, however one matter outstanding: the conflict with the Xhosa. It is in this context that one must understand Van der Kemp's attempt to bring Ngqika and Maynier together - which starts with the text, 'Journey into Caffraland' (August 12 - 26 1801). On his return - after having met with Ngqika but not being able to bring him and Maynier together - there was another round of revolt and skirmishes. This time, it was on account of the farmers suspecting Van der Kemp not of having gone to negotiate peace, but to stir up war (September 24 1801). He says:

A paper was circulated by the rebels, in which they addressed the inhabitants of the Snow mountains, and represented us as having been in Caffraland to stir up Gika against them, but that we had failed in this attempt; they therefore summoned their countrymen to join them in their march against Graaff Reinet (LMS I TVDK 1801:492).

About one month later on October 23 1801, Van der Kemp reports again:

At half past five in the morning I went to the water to wash some linen and saw a multitude of [Khoi] women and children from neighbouring kraals running towards the barracks; and whilst I was enquiring the reason of their flight, I saw that the *rebels had completely surrounded the village and advanced from every quarter and at the same moment, the great guns of the barracks and redoubt were fired upon them; this, they answered from every side briskly.* The fire continued from six till

half past nine without interruption, and with some intervals, till sunset. Part of the *rebels* came through our garden and placed themselves in a narrow passage between our house and that of our neighbour Smit. They made however no attempt to break into our house, but proceeded to the house of Mr. Smit and afterwards to the next, which belonged to Mr. Wiese, who both had left their houses. They took possession of the last mentioned house, and having made loop holes in the walls, fired from it upon the redoubt of Lieutenant Stuart, which enfiled the street. *This officer, having cleared the street of them, set fire to the house of Mr. Wiese, and placed some [Khoi] at the side of it to kill the rebels when they should come out with intent to escape the flames.* But this detachment mistaking a signal made by Mr. Stuart, left their post, and gave opportunity for the *rebels* to make the escape out of the house which was burnt to the ground.

In the afternoon Mr. Stuart informed us by a letter, that he had received orders from Mr. Blenny to level the houses of Mr. Mare, and Fioen, being both absent; but that on our account, of Mr. Marais' house being next too ours, he would only burn the house of Fioen. I then went first to the redoubt to converse with Mr. Stuart on the subject, and from him, to Mr. Blenny. *The rebels suffered me to approach pretty near without molestation, and then fired ten or twelve shots at me, but all their balls passed without touching me. Having represented the state of things to Mr. Maynier, and Mr. Blenny, the order of Mr. Stuart was countermanded.* The prison and several other houses, were already a prey to the flames. Mr. Blenny, Mr. Lyndon, and the Commissioner, entreated me to stay at the barracks as my returning home would expose me again to the cruelty of the rebels; but I could not consent to be separated from my dear brother Read. *In my way home the rebels shot at me as before, but the Lord protected me.* When it grew dark, we were agreeably surprised by some [Khoi] women and children coming from the barracks to our house to join us in our usual evening worship. The firing then ceased but the *rebels* kept their ground as was discovered by the coals of the pipes they smoked. We thanked God with the Heathen for this deliverance (LMS I TVDK 1801:493f; e.a.).

This brought this round of skirmishes to an end. But it was also at this point, that Van der Kemp decided that 'the [Khoi] should be perfectly free,

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upon an equal footing in every respect with the Colonists, and by no sort of compulsion brought under a necessity to enter into their service ....' - a resolution, Janssens, again, would oppose.

For the period November 20 - December 20 1801, Van der Kemp reports that Dundas urged him to 'make haste in forming the [Khoi] establishment', and that Maynier was called to the Cape, that Major Sherlock arrived and gave 'free pardon' to the colonists,

... on condition that they should immediately submit to the orders of government, and warned them that in case of any refusal they would be attacked by his troops without a moment's delay: the consequence was that they submitted and disbanded their army (LMS I TVDK 1801:500).

On the one hand, Van der Kemp still had some credibility with the farmers. However, with his decision to switch his mission to the Khoi, he would become their direct opponents - also that of Janssens just more than three years later. Henceforth, the battle lines were drawn - Van der Kemp, victim of his own civilising and disciplining mission, and the colonists, of their developing 'ideology' derived from the Patriot movements in both the Netherlands and at the Cape. But this raises two questions - that of slavery and the 'cruelty' of the frontier farming community. On both counts, the reciprocal animosity between farmers and missionaries would escalate.

## **8 Slavery and Baptism**

Van der Kemp's interest in the plight of slaves is evident throughout his texts. From the information in his texts, mainly four issues related to slavery can be identified.

The first concerns the law against the baptism of slaves which he became aware of in his interaction with slaves; the second, his attempts to have this law abolished; the third, his aversion to this institution; and the fourth, the news on the abolition of the slave trade.

Apart from founding the South African Mission Society (April 22 1799) (cf. also Elbourne & Ross 1997:40f), on his arrival at the Cape, Van der Kemp also



... opened two religious meetings, for the instruction of slaves; in which they meet on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, and we have appointed two hours in the week for private conversation with them. There is an ardent desire among them to hear the word of God, which shews in a remarkable degree its power to salvation in the hearts of many heathen who are evidently baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire ... (LMS I VC 1799:370).

One of these two meetings was a ‘slave meeting’ he opened at the house of a Mrs. Heysse. In a letter he received on December 28 1800 at Quakoubi, she said that she now ‘directed’ it herself.

The significance of the quote above is that Van der Kemp immediately adds: ‘... though the customs and rules of this country do not allow [the slaves] to be baptized with water’ (LMS I VC 1799:370). This would become one of his main problems with government and indicates that he became aware of this legal obstacle to his mission shortly after arriving at the Cape - *the law against the baptism of slaves*.

As Van der Kemp made no distinction as to those for whom his ministry was meant - i.e. apart from first intending to establish the mission for the Xhosa and later deciding to rather turn to the Khoi - we encounter some references to slaves in his meetings with people and his diagnoses as medical doctor (cf. LMS I JC 1799:374f). From these chance meetings and his attempt to have the law which prohibits the selling of baptised slaves reversed, we get some idea of *his attempts to have this law abolished*.

The first time, however, that this law became an issue was with his decision to baptise the slave, Susanna, at Graaff Reinet. After Van der Kemp asked her to first get permission from her ‘master’, she returned, saying: ‘that her master refused to permit her to be baptized, on account of a law, which prohibits baptized slaves to be sold to unbaptized masters’. If baptised, this would obviously mean a limiting of the possible numbers of buyers or the ‘market’ (LMS I TVDK 1801:491). For the next two days, Van der Kemp’s journal entries read:

*Sept. 15. - I spoke to Susanna’s master, who was a Deacon, and reputed one of the best-intentioned members of the reformed church; but he persisted in refusing to have his slave baptized. He said, that it was not so much the loss of his right to sell her that determined him to object*

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*against it, but his apprehension lest her pride should grow insupportable by her admission among the Christians.* He also gave her a bad character, and accused her of having stolen some sugar, according to the report of a fellow slave. [(See the 26th instant) - this last reference must have been added by the editors of the journals in London, because it is here reported that the fellow slave ‘... confessed to have accused unjustly ...’.]

*Sept. 16.* - Susanna told me, that her master had declared, that I might baptize her, and have her free, if we would pay him the price for which he bought her; this we judged not advisable, as it would induce others to follow the example (LMS I TVDK 1801:491).

After a reference to a converted Cupido - ‘a slave of Piet van Heerden’ - whom Van der Kemp would have obviously liked to baptise too, he mentions that he and Read

... applied to Mr. Maynier [the Commissioner of the Graaff Reinet district] to have the law which forbids to sell slaves after they have received Christian baptism, repealed, being detrimental to the spread of the gospel (LMS I TVDK 1801:493).

This request took place on October 7 1801, and is followed up with a further request to Fiscal Ryneveld - the ‘head of the civil administration at the Cape’:

I wrote to the Governor respecting the intended Missionary establishment for the [Khoi] nation, and also to the Fiscal Ryneveld on the subject of repealing the law which prohibits the sale of baptized slaves to unbaptized masters, and on the means of abolishing slavery in this country (LMS I TVDK 1801:495).

In addition to these two references to his requests to government agents to have this *law against the baptism of slaves abolished* (as well as slavery as such), there is one more in a letter written to the LMS. Also significant is that we find here the first reference to his wish to have slavery abolished as such, and that, in this context, he appears to have made suggestions - or in Van der Kemp’s representational parlance - ‘on the means of abolishing slavery in this country’.

In a letter to the LMS Directors, dated February 1 1802, Van der Kemp elaborated on the issue of the slave trade. The 'Extract' published reads as follows:

I take the liberty to represent the state of the slaves (who being converted to Christ, we cannot deny to be our brethren and sisters in him) to you, as an object claiming the serious consideration of the Society, and indeed of every true christian. Could not, by subscription in Europe, a fund be raised, and put under the administration of a few Directors, out of which slaves, after they shall have given evidences of regeneration, and be recommended as such by the Missionaries to the Directors, be bought free? The sufferings of three individuals of this description (two of whom gives us unequivocal proofs of the conversion of their heart) make me bold to suggest this idea to you. They might be usefully employed in a Missionary settlement, and the money not considered altogether lost, if a charity of this kind could ever be considered as a loss at all; they are called Susanna and Cupido, mentioned in my journal the 27th December, as having received the Sacrament; the third is called Perez, a native of Angola, but his conversion is not so evident to us as that of the two former. Though such a fund may, perhaps, come to effect in London, I do not think that it will be favoured by many subscribers in Africa, but I hope the event will show that I was deceived. As to me, I would gladly contribute to it five guineas, and so many as Providence shall allow me to bestow (LMS EL1 1802:501f).

One of the incidents which provides some insight into Van der Kemp's *aversion to the institution of slavery as such*, comes from his interaction with Mrs. Mathilda Smith on this score.

On their return from Cape Town after the colony's annexation by Baird (cf. Schoeman 2005:117f; 129), Van der Kemp writes that they were astonished at what Mrs. Smith had accomplished in their absence.

... [W]e admired the success with which that exemplary Christian, Sister Smith, had opened a school in which [Khoi] children are instructed to knit stockings, night-caps, &c. She is universally beloved by all people; besides private conversation with females who seem to

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be concerned about their salvation, she keeps, weekly, a meeting with our baptized sisters, in which she instructs them, by way of catechising, in the truths of the Gospel. Her labours in general are crowned with unequivocal marks of divine approbation; and she is, by the unanimous consent of the members of our congregation, appointed a Deaconess of the Church (LMS III EL3 1806:8).

Shortly afterwards, Van der Kemp's dissatisfaction with Mrs. Mathilda Smit came to the fore though. Despite her excellent work at Bethelsdorp, the fact that she still kept a slave whom she brought from the Cape with her, lead to her breaking up with Van der Kemp, leaving the mission, and returning to the Cape (Schoeman 2005:64f). Before Van der Kemp died at the Cape on 15 December in 1811, they would be reconciled again.

Of the news on *the abolition of the slave trade* - and also indications of his appreciation of Britain and promotion of European culture (cf. Wilson & Thompson 1969:267; Warren 1965:42f; Chidester 1992:37) - Van der Kemp writes: 'Oh happy Britain! to be the means of the total destruction of such evil!' (LMS III 1808). (Such sentiments obviously lead to further conflict with the settler colonists, cf. Schoeman 2005:64,69,129; Welsh 2000:113.) Martin (n.d. 111f) pits this position against the settlers' 'Republicanism'.

Against the background of this information, Van der Kemp's reference to slavery could only have been appreciative of the Xhosa for not keeping slaves (LMS I R 1800:436). Seeing his strong opposition to slavery as institution, his organising of a celebration at Bethelsdorp in 1807 when the English Parliament abolished the slave trade, is also indicative of his opposition to slavery.

Given the fact that the farmers were granted the opportunity to become involved in the slave trade during 1795 to 1803 - which was one of the numerous institutions they were barred from under Dutch East Indian Company governance - the abolition of the slave trade must have dealt a severe blow to the colonist economy. As the farmers' participation in the slave trade was one of the British concessions to the Colonists - as part of their allowing greater access to direct trade and apart from selling through government officials and channels (cf. Muller 1981:87f,96103f114; Van Zyl 1981:117f,121f) - that the colonists lost this economic institution detrimentally impacted on their economic situation and aggravated sentiments. With the

Governor Sir John Cradock finally abolishing the law which prohibited the selling of baptised slaves, these sentiments escalated even further. His proclamation reads as follows (cf. Eybers 1918:18):

**SALE OF CHRISTIAN SLAVES**

**No. 15.** Proclamation. - By His Excellency Lieutenant-General  
Sir John Francis Cradock, etc. [9 Oct. 1812]

Whereas by a Resolution taken by the Governor in Council at Batavia, dated the 10th of April 1770, it is enacted and prescribed, that slaves who have been catechised and confirmed in the Christian Religion, shall not be sold: and whereas by experience it has appeared, that a Law intended for the promotion of Christianity and true Religion, has not been attended with the desired, but rather contrary, effect:

His Excellency hereby enacts and ordains, that the said Clause of the Batavian Law of 1770 be repealed and of no effect; and is hereby repealed and annulled, from the date of this Proclamation.

And that no person may plead ignorance hereof, this shall be published and affixed as usual.

## **9 Hatred, Prejudice, Cruelty and Punishment**

As part of the age of representation, the complaints of the missionaries against the farmers did not focus on the exploitation of Khoi labour - the episteme of which 'production' and its discourse would form part of, has not arisen as yet. They complained of the fact that the Khoi were not seen as 'free citizens', 'on an equal footing with the Colonists'. Since they countered this by not only teaching reading and writing but also by establishing the mission for the Khoi, by attempting to have the law which prevented baptized slaves to be sold to unbaptized masters abolished, and, by attempting to prevent Khoi from going to the farms to work, their activities caused 'hatred' towards the missionaries among the colonists. The missionaries further report that the farmers also 'prejudiced' people - especially Governors - against the missions. Apart from these facts, the missionaries' main opposition to the farmers as regards the Khoi, was their 'cruelty' (cf. Wilson & Thompson 1969:245; Ross 1986:42).

There are a number of references to 'cruelty'. Van der Kemp already reported in 1800 that:

A [Xhosa] came from the Colony, reporting that his sister and four other [Xhosa] were shot by the Colonists whilst they were roasting part of a cow, which they found on the road, killed by the Boschemen. As they were innocent they apprehended no danger, and shewed the Boschemens' arrows sticking in the cow, to convince them that they were not guilty of the fact, but in vain! the cruel murderers killed them all without mercy (LMS I TVDK 1800:424).

Compare too:

C. Faber met with two Boschemen, driving away twenty-six [Xhosa] beasts, which in all probability they had stolen from that people; he fell upon them, and took twenty from them, the remaining six were killed by the Boschemen, before he could come up; I spoke warmly against such conduct, but without effect (LMS I TVDK 1801:472).

In the wake of Van der Kemp's decision to establish a mission for the Khoi and his dissension from Janssens' views that Khoi from the mission must go and work on the farms, the missionaries started to refer to the farmers' hatred and prejudices toward them.

References to 'hatred' and 'prejudice' appear often. An example is the extended references to the 'hatred' of the boors with regard to the missionaries' English connections; that they 'not only discountenanced, but condemned in the highest degree, their horrid deeds of oppression, murder, &c.'; and that they opposed the missionaries' 'instructing the [Khoi], whom, they wished to keep in total ignorance of the Gospel, and to suffer them to believe nothing but what they choose to inculcate' (LMS II L 1804:150; II AR 1803:158f). As far as the cruelties of the farmers are concerned, these were held to be in general - that farmers, especially out on commando would kill people indiscriminately or at the least provocation - and in particular, on the farms. The latter is often referred to but not described in the texts under consideration.

As far as the farmers' 'prejudices' are concerned, these are stated to have been in general, against the missionaries' 'work among the heathen' (LMS II L 1804:150) - obviously including the instruction in reading and writing, indigenous people becoming Christian too, being baptised, and that they should be 'on an equal footing in every respect, with the christians'. It were similar prejudices which the farmers instilled in Janssens.

Concerning ‘punishment’, the texts refer once to farmers having been ‘banished’ and once to those who perpetrated crimes of cruelty going ‘unpunished’. In the ‘Annual Report’ of 1803, it says:

It had been well if they had stopped here [to corrupt the ‘minds’ of the Khoi, to disbelieve the word of God, despise Christ, ...]; but no! nothing short of rinsing their hands in the blood of this poor people could satisfy them. A [Khoi] and Bastard, belonging to us, were murdered in a most horrid manner, besides many others not belonging to our Institution.

Some of the persons, guilty of these crimes, are banished from this part of the country, but we have not yet heard that any other punishment is inflicted upon them (LMS II AR 1803:159).

The second reference comes from the ‘Annual Report’ of 1804.

In answer to [the cruelty and injustice with which those who entered into their service were treated, without any justice being done to them by the Magistrates] the *Governor ordered the Landdrost of this district to take the necessary steps. This not being done, and the oppression of these inhuman wretches, who call themselves Christians, for the greatest part continuing unpunished, we find ourselves constrained to persist in our declaration, trusting that the Lord, to whose tribunal we have appealed, will do what is right, and consistent with the honour of his name, as he has already in some respects visibly shewn.* These Christians we have mentioned, seem equally deprived of common sense and humanity ... (LMS II AR 1804:241).

Further, as control sample - and to get some sense of the missionaries’ sense of punishment, we may compare these views with the narrating of an incident of ‘punishment’ among the Khoi.

In the month of September, some of the [Xhosa] stole a cow, belonging to the wife of Brother Read, from among our cattle at the little Zwartkop’s river. They were traced by the their footsteps leading to a horde of [Xhosa], whose Captain Kamma was a subject of Zlambi, to whom Brother Read sent some [Khoi] to reclaim the cow, or to demand

another in its place. The cow was slaughtered and eaten, but the horde was condemned to pay as many head of cattle as would satisfy Brother Read. Upon this, the [Khoi] contented themselves by taking five beasts, and were assured, that the thieves, if taken, *should be exemplary punished*. Kamma likewise sent his staff to Brother van der Kemp, and let us know, that he was sorry that he could not write to express the feelings of his heart towards us. We then used all our influence to obtain *remission of punishment for the robbers*, which in such a case is terrible, and beyond the *limits of equity*, not only the *criminal with his family, but also every one who has tasted of the prey, with their wives and children, being put to death* (LMS II AR 1804:242).

The following may serve as control case for ‘cruelty’:

Brother Read happened to be of late in the Kraal of Zjaatzoe. He discovered a woman exhausted by disease, and apparently near death, being thrown out of the kraal, and left to die in the wood. He represented to them *the cruelty of their customs to throw a helpless creature alive to the wolves*. Zjaatzoe declared this not to be their intention, that the woman was only transported into the woods, *because it was not permitted to die in the kraal, that it might not be defiled*. That she was to have fire, and other necessary articles, and a person to protect her against the wild beasts. Brother Read then called the kraal together, and spoke to them about the resurrection, the judgement, the word of God and its contents ... (LMS II AR 1804:243).

As far as the two references to the ‘punishment’ of farmers are concerned, the control case shows that, whereas punishment transcends the crime by far, within the civil legislature on the frontier, punishment by civil authorities remained dubious. In the first case, it is said that although such farmers had been ‘banished’, the missionaries had ‘not yet heard that any other punishment is inflicted upon them’ - indicating that they expected something more severe. As for the second case, they bluntly stated that ‘these inhuman wretches, who call themselves Christians, for the greatest part continuing unpunished ...’. Within the context of the rising civil legislature on the frontier, these ‘wretches’ are not only to be seen on par with the wretches and



vagabonds in Europe - devoid of 'civilisation' and in equal need for incorporation into disciplined society - but also that they are still inhuman and in need of 'humanisation' which was seen as an element of the processes of 'civilization'. In the context of this interpretation, this also means that their 'continuing unpunished', showed a serious neglect by the civil legislature in this regard - its function of disciplinary and civilisational 'inculcation' and the introduction of such 'wretches' into human, and therefore civil, society.

As for the control case, it merely represented - in Xhosa custom - an analogically similar vicious attitude to that which was still found in some of Europe's royal dominions as residues of the age of resemblance. The reference to 'exemplary punishment' comes from the same representational episteme. On this score - and indicative of the missionaries' own attitude to punishment - is that they saw such punishment to have been 'beyond the limits of equity'. As Foucault (1979) indicated, punishment which matches the crime in severity was part and parcel of how crimes and punishments were perceived during the age of representation. He says:

The publicity of the crime and sentence ... impacted on the body of the criminal in an open, direct, and representational manner. In this, however, it was not the criminal as such, but the crime which was the object of public display. Added to the theatricality of the *amende honorable*, was the fact that the place of execution by torture as well as the methods of torture, were often the same as to where and how the crime was committed. This representational act simultaneously re-enacted the crime in public - thereby 'publishing it in its truth' - and, with the death of the criminal, 'annulling [the crime] in the death of the guilty man' (Foucault 1979:45).

Compared to Van der Kemp and Read's perception of punishment - though not of the same intensity - in general they held the view too, that punishment had to be public and that such punishment was not to seek out individuals, but punish the crime.

As far as 'cruelty' is concerned, Read's experience is typical of views in the travel literature of the time. Even so, his intervention, here, shows that the missionaries did not have any qualms whatsoever about intervening in custom. Similar to their attitudes to 'discipline and civilize', they also sought to transform indigenous culture and bring it on par with their perceptions of

civilised society. When this is compared to the ‘customs’ of the frontier farmers, it appears that there operated some implicit assumptions about the boors amongst the missionaries - assumptions which, even though true, were insensitive to the complexities of both the farmers themselves and the general socio-political complexities they found themselves in on the frontier.

## **10 The Black Circuit Court of 1812**

The accusations of farmer ‘cruelty’ by the missionaries continued throughout the period 1805 to 1810. Such accusations led to reports back to London, but also to submissions to both the local ‘Landdrosst’ at Graaff Reinet and the Governor at the Cape. This led to Van der Kemp and Read being recalled to the Cape by the then Governor, the Earl of Caledon. Before anything could however be done on this score, the Governor left and was replaced by Sir John Cradock. During this period of waiting, however, Read decided to return to Bethelsdorp and while Van der Kemp waited for the proceedings at the Cape, he died. Despite this event, however, of the fifty civil and criminal charges Read brought against the frontier Colonists, when the so-called Black Circuit Court (cf. Davenport 1991:38,42; Ross 1986:28,44ff) sat at Uitenhage in 1812, most of the farmers were acquitted (cf. Welsh 2000:115; Macmillan1963:8f).

It appears that Read himself would not have been surprised about the outcome of this event. In a letter to the Earl of Caledon, dated October 19 1810, Read not only mentions ‘cruelty and murder’, ‘acts of barbarity’, ‘inhuman and cruel deeds’, but also that some farmers - who were at this stage presumably still participating in the slave trade (?) - would take the survivors and orphans of such murders and ‘force them into endless bondage, and the orphans make worse than the slaves’. [Some years previously, Van der Kemp already referred to this practice, and it was for this reason that he proposed the setting up of an orphanage.] However, the fact that he already foresaw what the outcome of the trial of the farmers would be - as the Black Circuit Court proved him right - was subject to one important variable. In his letter to Caledon, he says:

Another idea I have to submit to your Lordship, and which I conceive to be of utmost importance is, the well known rooted dread that reigns in the breast of almost every [Khoi], at least in these distant districts, to give information against any boor upon any subject. He considers himself endangering his life, and sacrificing himself to resentment of

all the connexions of those, against whom he is called to bear witness. It is therefore my opinion, that the truth of the crimes already committed, will never be brought properly to light, till gradual and effectual means are taken to protect and encourage those who are able to give information of them (LMS III EL3 1810:399).

Apart from the reference to the ‘truth of the crimes’ - again indicating representational thought - the call for the protection of witnesses is significant. For the fiscal J.A. Truter, the reason for both the ‘crimes’ and the outcome was a ‘want of civilization, as well on the part of the [Khoi], as on the part of the farmers’ (cf. Enklaar 1988:188).

Finally - and returning to the beginning - the question may be asked as to the difference of opinion between the missionaries and the frontier farmers concerning the Khoi. If they all formed part of the representational episteme, was it only a difference of opinion, or that the farmers needed labour on their farms - in a context of severe shortage of labour despite the fact that the Colony’s slave population outnumbered their Colonist masters - or that they felt they were in a greater need of ministers and teachers than the Khoi or, even, that they were extremely unhappy about the continuous plundering of the Khoi?

I think there are at least three answers to these questions.

On the one hand, it appears that all governments of the period - even dating from the time of the Dutch East India Company - sought to ‘civilize’ the Khoi, and with the arrival of the LMS missionaries, the Xhosa. At this stage, there was a growing consciousness among ‘enlightened’ government officials that the Khoi were in dire straits, due to the dynamics of colonisation. For this reason, they all welcomed Van der Kemp’s interventionist initiatives on behalf of the Khoi. As already pointed out, the mission not only had to drive a wedge in between Khoi and Xhosa; it also had to provide the Khoi with ‘home’ and ‘spot’. In addition, this intervention was needed not only to have the Khoi stop their plundering, but also to introduce them into ‘civilised’ and ‘disciplined’ society.

On the other hand, since such a strategy also entailed the ‘humanisation’ of the Khoi, within representational thought, there was one variable which was already operative within the developing frontier colonist discourse. No one concerned could have perceived the extent to which this variable would develop within the kind of Christian hegemony which held

sway in the farming community for centuries. Van der Kemp refers to this variable in his journal entry which an LMS narrator described as follows:

One of [the Khoi], whose name was Cupido, asked brother Vanderkemp, if it were not true that God had created them as well as the christians, and the beasts of the field: ‘for you know, (said he) that the Dutch farmers teach us, that he never created us, nor taketh any notice of us’. Brother Vanderkemp then sat down, and explained to him man’s equal misery ... (LMS I JC 1799:376; e.a.).

This ‘teaching’ has its analogy in Van der Kemp and Read’s ‘Annual Report’ of 1803. As explanation of what the frontier farmers ‘chose to inculcate’ in the Khoi - in opposition to the missionary discourse - they reported that the farmers

... suffer [the Khoi] to believe nothing but what they choose to inculcate; which, among other things, is, that they are the offspring of Canaan, youngest son of Noah, and are cursed by God to perpetual servitude to them (LMS II AR 1803:158).

## **11 Conclusion**

Summarised in terms of representational thought, we may conceptualise this latter ‘teaching’ as that of ‘servitude of the Khoi given by God and nature’, and that of the ‘character’ of the Khoi as ‘non-human’ or even ‘animal’. Within eighteenth-century thought, this was a variable which not only broke with the notion of ‘progress’ within natural history, but also with that of power as it manifested within civilising and disciplinary ‘technologies’ and discourse. On the first: whereas even animals were seen - at least by some - to be capable of developing within the natural table’s ‘progress’, not even this was granted the Khoi by the settler farmers. On the second: having witnessed Van der Kemp’s ‘successes’ with the Khoi and also experienced the ‘protection’ of the Khoi by governance structures, within the context of power, this led to some equality in discourse - or even hierarchy, i.e. where the Khoi were seen as of greater importance to the missionaries than the frontier farmers - which could only end up in conflict. This opens up the possibility for a further explanation.

Thirdly, in Van der Kemp’s ‘individualising’ discourse (Smit forth-

coming; cf. also Martin n.d.:111f as a position vis-à-vis that of Rousseau – on whose influence on Van der Kemp was certainly wrong cf. Du Plessis 1965:127f) he had a particular understanding of ‘enlightenment’: that of the individual’s own, self-thought relationship with God. The enlightenment Christianity represented was that concerned with the individual soul, sin and its relationship with God but also how this determined relationships to government and other social institutions. This not only meant the individual’s personal obedience to social mores, but also his or her own creative critique and contribution to such systems and their codes. Of this, Van der Kemp himself was a prime example. The frontier farmers, however, as they had to contend with a centralised and mostly alienating government, experienced continued alienation from this civilising and disciplinary society. Their only resort was to fashion an ideology which could suit their circumstances - i.e. from fragments of representational and civil thought and fashioned in the complexities of frontier experience. In a context where they experienced themselves as nothing but ‘slaves to government’, the variable mentioned above would come to serve farmer ‘cruelty’ as part of a rationalisation on the level of the idea. Appropriated from Scripture and within this discourse, this idea, in time, acquired the status of a belief.

Ultimately, given the point of departure of the first two laws of the developing discourse or better, ideology, of the Colonists, since they chose to appropriate it only unto themselves, one cannot but judge with Van der Kemp - and that despite their hardships - that their ideology - even in revolt - showed a lack of ‘common sense’ and ‘humanity’. Together with James Read, and later John Philip, Van der Kemp stands out as at least one of the first representatives of what became known as Cape liberalism and humanism, and someone who actively engaged in political action on behalf the marginalised, poor and oppressed. In this, his critique of the frontier settler farmers served as major impetus for those nineteenth century missions that propagated equality of all and social justice.

## **References**

*Aan onse Broeders, Meedeburgers van dit Colonie van Cabo de Goede Hoop worden deese opgedragen, en in hunne bedenking aanbevoolen* (Text addressed and commended for their Consideration, to our Brethren,

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