

Savage-Born but New-Created: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary in Britain, 1836-1838

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This article journeys into the new narrative history.¹ It is a precursor to a larger project, titled *Sable Son of Africa*, which seeks to recreate the complete life of Jan Tzatzoe - an African leader who lived and worked on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in the early to mid-nineteenth century - on the African, colonial, and metropolitan stage. I am wrestling in this piece, in particular, with what it means to give voice to an African historical figure from this period in history. By unearthing the extensive archival record that has recorded Tzatzoe's actions and words, I hope to let him be heard again. I quote extensively from accounts of his speeches, but more than this, I show how the words and speeches relate to each other, so that over the years of his life one can see an individual who gains a compelling voice, who speaks for himself, and does not merely parrot the words of others as his contemporary critics would have us believe.

In order to bring Tzatzoe to life, I have used a toolkit derived from efforts in microhistory and the 'new narrative history'. To be overly succinct, these include the use of the present tense; italicizing quoted text used instead of placing it between quotation marks so that it is more easily integrated into the narrative; the use of a creative historical imagination in crafting scenes (with these passages always indicated as speculative); the incorporation of cinematic or fictional techniques (close ups, fade-aways, unorthodox chronological structure); extensive quoting of contemporary sources, and narration that attempts to mirror these voices; use of metaphorical language; and creative use of verbs and adjectives. To my mind, the 'new narrative history' uses these tools to tell a compelling and meaningful story and to create empathy with historical figures. Its goals are to involve the reader in the action, to create narrative tension, to achieve dynamic characterization, to ask whether analysis can be transmitted through description or narrative, and finally, to ask questions of historical truth, voice, narration, and method. For me, this process begins by acknowledging that history is, first and foremost, a personal endeavour.

Tzatzoe's story seems to flow better when in the present tense, which is one reason I use it. The second is that I want the reader to feel that Tzatzoe's life is unfolding before her. I want her to gain a sense of a life that is under constant construction. Far too often, African historical characters are presented as constrained by their environment, be it physical, cultural, religious, or political, with little

1 I would like to thank Andrew Bank for his encouragement and critical eye with regard to this article. The research upon which this is based was funded by the USA Fulbright Commission, the Giles Whiting Foundation, the MacMillan and Lamar Centers at Yale University, the Yale Art Gallery, and Sewanee: The University of the South.

room to manoeuvre. Since the stories told about these characters are usually ones of decline, the past tense lends an air of solidity to the downward trajectory: 'Look', the stories relate, 'it was always headed in this direction.' I want the reader to get a sense of the exhilarating potential and attendant perils that accompany Jan Tzatzoe at each stage in his remarkable life. I want the reader to feel she is right next to him, alive to the multiple possibilities of the moment.

Tzatzoe flourished in both the European colonial world of the missionary, Reverend Read, who raised him, and the African world of his father, Kote Tzatzoe, to whose people he eventually returned. He made crucial contributions to both worlds as an evangelist, translator, intellectual, missionary, frontier diplomat, politician, international traveler, humanitarian fundraiser, and chief. He also witnessed, and participated in, the creation of a new South Africa, one in which the African and European worlds met to create a hybrid colonial reality. A case might easily be made that no other period or location in southern African history has enjoyed such extensive and repeated scrutiny from historians.² This maxim holds especially true for the last two decades or so, which have witnessed a profusion of academic work. Yet, despite Jan Tzatzoe's extensive, if widespread, presence in the vast colonial archives that document this period, historians and the general public know little about him and other African leaders whose lives he can illuminate.³ This omission deserves to be rectified.

Tzatzoe's courageous life deftly illustrates the complex and truly trans-cultural nature of the colonial exchange. Realities for both sides were reshaped by mutual interaction, and African agency made key contributions to the new colonial world.⁴ This new South African world was highly contingent, full of possibilities and perils, and wholly unlike the world that was to emerge by the mid-nineteenth century. While the early South African world would eventually be subsumed by racial ideology and practice, Tzatzoe's life speaks to the legacy, in the form of a Christian ideology and education and humanitarian thinking developed by both Africans and Europeans in the eastern Cape, that it bequeathed to the anti-segregation and anti-apartheid movements.

2 For a brief selection of the more recent work with particular relevance to the interaction of the Xhosa and the British, see C.Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-industrial South Africa, The making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002); E.Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); T.Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996); A.Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); N.Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992). The British imperial historian Richard Price has a forthcoming volume titled: *Empire and its Encounters: the British and the Xhosa peoples of southern Africa 1820-1860*.

3 Scholars are increasingly turning their attention to so-called intermediaries. Robert Ross is at the forefront of this line of investigation with his study of Hermanus Matroos, see R.Ross, 'Hermanus Matroos, aka Ngxukumeshe: a life on the border', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, vol. 30, Nov. 2004, 47-69; see also my piece on Jan Tzatzoe and the Introduction and additional chapters in B.Lawrance, E.Osborn, R.Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

4 Monica Wilson issued the first call for a study of cultural intermediaries on the frontier in a small pamphlet called 'The Interpreters'. She called for studies on those Africans who participated in the translation of language, but who also 'mediate[d] ideas, law, custom, symbolism ... [who] listen[ed] as much as [they taught]'. These were men who sought to 'reconcile men, to achieve mutual understanding'. In the end, Wilson concluded, they might be termed 'cultural brokers'. Monica Wilson, "The Interpreters," (Grahamstown: 1820 Settlers' National Monument Foundation, 1972), 17-20. I have turned to the vast literature on the American West for assistance, in particular see M.C.Szasz, ed., *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

On the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in the early to mid nineteenth century, when it was arguably the most missionised region in the world,⁵ Tzatzoe's story explores the world of a 'civilized' African who was actively engaged with mediating European colonialism and acquiring its best attributes; the world of a 'Christian' African who was the subject of evangelical mission Christianity and its attempts to colonize the consciousness of Africans, but who also took on Christian beliefs and practices and mingled them with his own African understandings;⁶ and the world of a 'Caffre Chief' who was busy negotiating the new political realities of the frontier and trying to establish himself in a secure place in their nexus. Throughout, Tzatzoe's life suggests that a cultural intermediary is bound to a life of marginality, caught in the nexus between assimilation and resistance to a new colonial reality in all its religious, cultural, intellectual, social, economic, and political dimensions. Historians have traditionally condemned those figures that live on the margins in colonial situations to historical obscurity. *Sable Son* argues, following a recent turn in imperial historiography, that it is on the margins that the most far-reaching and important inter-cultural conversations take place.⁷ Tragically, such figures, like Tzatzoe himself, seem to have brief historical moments of true possibility, before polarized circumstances shunt them aside. Tzatzoe's life is a study in the dilemmas of cultural marginality, in the perils and opportunities of moving between peoples and ideologies.

Born around 1790 on the eastern Cape frontier, Tzatzoe, the son of a minor Xhosa chief, Kote Tzatzoe and a Khoisan (or to use the contemporary terminology, Hottentot) mother, was educated by the missionaries Read and Van der Kemp at the Bethelsdorp mission station during the 1810s. The young chief assisted two white British missionaries, Williams and Brownlee, in Xhosaland between 1816 and 1836. In 1826, he and his family, along with Brownlee, settled on land near the Buffalo River given to them by Tzatzoe's father (this site would become the center of King William's Town, which at one point in history grew to be the fourth-largest city in South Africa). During these years, Tzatzoe worked as an evangelist, religious thinker, and intellectual innovator, mediating the arrival of Christianity and European culture among his countrymen. This work often brought Tzatzoe into direct conflict with both African leaders and colonial officials. Tzatzoe made some of the first attempts at the various missions to translate scriptural messages with language that burrowed into Xhosa understandings of the unfolding and investigation of misfortune, fate, and spiritual power. Tzatzoe's efforts at translation can be seen as intellectual innovation. He cast around in his African language for ways

5 R.Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 36.

6 The literature dealing with African Christianity is immense. Since the publication of John and Jean Comaroffs' two-volume *Of Revelation and Revolution*, the field has been rent by a debate over whether the western missionaries colonized the African's consciousness or provided them with among other benefits written vernaculars and the ideology with which to resist colonial rule. In my focus on Tzatzoe as an African Christian, I hope to allow the complexities of his life to reveal a way to heal the obvious dichotomy. See also R.Elphick and R.Davenport, eds., *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); R.Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

7 C.A.Bayly, 'Colonial Controversies: Astronomers and Physicians' and 'Colonial Controversies: Language and Land' in *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and M.Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

to express the novel, though useful, concepts brought to the frontier by European colonialism. Drawing on metaphoric language he advanced the capability of the Xhosa language to incorporate the new ideas. His efforts, hitherto unreported in the literature, are of great importance in advancing our understanding of African assimilation of Christian and European thinking. In addition, while with the missionaries, Tzatzoe engaged in complex diplomatic and political struggles with both the emerging colonial order in Xhosaland and the chiefs among whom the missionaries settled.

In 1836, Tzatzoe accompanied a London Missionary Society (LMS)⁸ delegation on a journey from South Africa to London, testifying in front of a House of Commons Parliamentary Committee charged with investigating the treatment of “Aborigines” in the colonies and bearing witness to thousands in the streets, churches, and meeting halls of England and Scotland. He met the King’s grandchildren and served as a guest of honor in Parliament. Upon his return to South Africa in 1838, Tzatzoe assumed the role of chief for his people, a position that superseded his evangelical endeavors, and led to his rejection by the British. These developments culminated in an incident during the War of the Axe in 1846, when Tzatzoe mustered his people along with the entire Xhosa army for an attack on the British forces at Fort Peddie. Reverend Brownlee removed him from the church community for his actions, and he lived out his life, under constant suspicion of treason, as a leader of his people, a diplomatic conduit to Sandile and other leading chiefs, and a minor government functionary on land assigned to him by the government, still supportive of British rule and a self-proclaimed Christian until his death in 1868. Today, in the town square of King William’s Town, there is a plaque that canonizes Brownlee as town father with no mention whatsoever of Tzatzoe.

In telling Tzatzoe’s story as it was fully lived, I like to think of my entire project as a resurrection. Weaving together the widely scattered evidence from the many decades of Tzatzoe’s life – spanning as it does the advent and imposition of colonialism on the eastern frontier – into a coherent whole is a type of resurrection. So, too, I would argue is my sense that Tzatzoe was a much more active, intelligent, and influential historical figure than has previously been acknowledged, particularly in this work of translation, diplomacy, and cultural mediation. I wish to resurrect his reputation as a leader from its current position where he is thought of as a marginal figure who followed the whims of, first, the missionaries, and then, the more powerful Xhosa chiefs on the frontier. Most importantly, understanding and appreciating the development of the voice behind the words that Tzatzoe speaks, is the ultimate resurrection.

One last point I would like to make is that in having resurrected Tzatzoe’s life, I have done nothing special; in fact, I have only done (perhaps in a more direct

8 The London Missionary Society (LMS) was formed by Congregationalists in the late eighteenth century in London. Elbourne discusses the ideology behind the LMS in Elbourne, *Blood Ground*. See also R.Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (London: H. Frowde, 1899) and J.de Gruchy, ed., *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999). A recent ‘narrative’ or popular history dealing with the LMS and the trip of two of its directors around the globe in 1821-1823 is T.Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail: A Journey Through Polynesia, Asia, and Africa with the London Missionary Society* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000).

9 Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead*

and transparent manner), but still, have only done, what every writer, and especially every historian, has to do. That is, in the words of Margaret Atwood: ‘All writing of the narrative kind, and perhaps all writing, is motivated, deep down, by a fear of and a fascination with mortality – by a desire to make the risky trip to the Underworld, and to bring something or someone back from the dead.’⁹

Atwood calls her meditation on writing, *Negotiating with the Dead*, and goes on to talk about how, once upon this journey, having crossed the threshold, the author must offer the dead something, be it fruit, blood, or tears. That is why writing is so difficult, but also so valuable, because the dead offer a gift in return: riches, knowledge, the chance to battle an evil monster, the loved and the lost. Writing connects us with some of the core elements of the human journey, and enables us to perform some miracles, in the form of resurrections, on the side. And South Africa has more than its fair share of the dead, who await our knock at their door.

The Civilized Christian Caffre Chief

Within days of their arrival in London in June 1836, the African visitors are thrust before the second session of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton’s House of Commons Aborigines Committee. In 1835, acting, in part, on evidence from South Africa provided by his old friend Dr. John Philip, the head of the LMS missions in South Africa, and with the assistance of the Society, Buxton, the famed abolitionist, convened a Committee in Parliament to investigate claims of brutality and thievery in the treatment of the inhabitants of the dispersed colonies - Van Dieman’s Land, Upper Canada, the many corners of India - but South Africa had figured most prominently in his inquiry. The grandly appointed *Select Committee to Investigate the Treatment of the Aborigines in the Colonies* sought to gather evidence about the treatment of the Aborigines in the Colonies who appeared to be melting away before British colonization and to inquire into what *measures ought to be adopted to intervene between the native inhabitants and the British settlers of these lands, in order to secure to them their due observance of Justice and the protection of their Rights; to promote the spread of Civilization among them, and to lead them to the voluntary reception of the Christian Religion.*¹⁰ The Committee heard from colonial officials, diplomats, settlers, merchants and some of the leaders of the indigenous peoples of the lands under consideration.

On the news of yet another war on the eastern Cape frontier of South Africa, a second session was funded. Buxton called Philip to testify and Philip, on the advice of the Directors of the LMS, brought some companions. In particular, the Directors and their evangelical supporters throughout Great Britain clamored for the *Civilized Christian Caffre chief*,¹¹ Jan Tzatzoe. While the travelers have justi-

10 *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)*, Imperial Blue Book nr VII 538 (Reprint Cape Town: Struik, 1966), vol. I, (henceforth, AB), 1.

11 I am taking a slight liberty here. While I have no precise record that describes Tzatzoe in these terms, he was repeatedly described in humanitarian tracts as well as newspapers articles as Christian, civilized, and a Caffre chief. The LMS Director, Ellis, did write Philip to suggest he bring a ‘sensible intelligent Caffre should you come...it might be of the utmost benefit to his nation.’ School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS), Microfiche, LMS Home. Personal. Box 5. Folder 1. #7 Ellis to Philip, London, 26 September 1835.

fied their journey to England with the need for their testimony before the Aborigines Committee, they are at liberty to travel to long forgotten (for some) haunts, to engage in pressing projects, and most importantly, to proclaim their message of civilization and Christianity to the evangelical public and the merely curious. If funds are raised for books, clothes, agricultural implements, and printing presses for the South African missions, so much the better. If young men are moved to follow in their footsteps as missionaries to Tzatzoe's fellow chiefs, their work is doubly blessed. The party will soon undertake a series of meetings in London and the other great towns of England and across the countryside. *'Tis likely we shall excite a great interest for Africa*, James Read records upon his late arrival in London: *We are every day out to dine, drink tea, or sup. We have scarcely an hour's time.*¹²

The Wonder of witnessing Ethiopia stretch out her Hands

One dinner takes place at the home of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton.¹³ On this mid-July day in 1836, Hannah Buxton observes to herself, she will have to perform the main duties of host. Her husband is *sadly worn like a hackney coach horse*, and the visitors from South Africa are on their way. A little after 5 O'clock in the evening, the delegation from the Cape enters the Portland Place home. Among those awaiting the African party are Sarah Buxton and her sister Elizabeth, and Mrs. Upcher, an elderly American friend of the Buxtons. The assembled dinner guests pause from their conversations to examine their visitors, giving the African men in particular a critical assessment.

Fanciful English attire, Elizabeth Buxton notes to herself upon regarding Tzatzoe, who is wearing a military overcoat, navy-blue with gold trim and gold buttons.

Fine-looking and well-made, but with hair like a carpet.

Of average height, Tzatzoe has retained a slender build into his early forties, and he appears young for his age; he walks with an erect and upright manner.

Mrs. Upcher goes further, whispering in Sarah's ear:

What a fine head, and forehead and nose.

She pauses.

Of course I really shouldn't be fancying like this, but how his mouth caricatures a Negro's.

She sits back upright, blushes; in the company of one of the men's champions, she shouldn't even allow herself to think such a thought.

The women have nothing but praise for James junior, the young son of the English missionary James Read and his Khoi wife, Elizabeth. Yes, he looks more

12 Read to Kitchingman, 2 August 1836, from Hackney, near London, in B.Je Cordeur and C.Saunders, eds., *The Kitchingman Papers: Missionary Letters and Journals, 1817-1848 from the Brenthurst Collection, Johannesburg*. (Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1976), 163-164.

13 The dinner party took place on 16 July 1836. Information for this section when not identified separately is taken from letters describing the dinner. E.N Buxton to Northrepps, no date, in Charles Buxton, *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, baronet. with selections from his correspondence. Edited by His son, Charles Buxton*, Third Edition, (Philadelphia: H. Longstreth, 1849); 312-313; G. Upcher to Anna Gurney, 7/19/36, Volume 14, 71-74 and Hannah Buxton to Miss. G. and Miss. B. 7/7/36, 70, in *Thomas Fowell Buxton Collection*, Microfiche. (TFB).

like a *Caffer than an Englishmen*, but he is pleasing, agreeable, intelligent – he keeps the conversation going capitably. No awkward silences are allowed even in this foreign a social setting.

A *fat, fair, half ashamed, half amused English girl* takes the arm of the third African member of the party, a Khoi leader named Andries Stoffels, and leads the guests to the table. Stoffels is a longstanding member of Reverends Read's congregation and his contemporary in the passage of years. Stoffels and the Reads, along with their extended families, are dispossessed refugees from the recent fighting in the eastern Cape. At dinner, there is nothing but praise for the visitors' table manners; they laugh frequently and seem genuinely at ease. After the tablecloth is removed, but before tea is served, the African men are questioned by the other guests.

Jan Tzatzoe is the first to answer. As he will for most of his time in Britain, he speaks in Dutch, as James translates into English.¹⁴ Dutch is the language of the eastern frontier,¹⁵ the language of instruction on the mission stations, and of the translation and diplomatic work that Tzatzoe has been doing for twenty years. Tzatzoe will have a chance to show that he is not speaking Dutch because it enables him to camouflage his thoughts or allow his translators to usurp them. Events will demonstrate that he is making every effort to speak directly to his new audience.

Tzatzoe's eyes convey an intelligent yet serene gaze, and they highlight a well-proportioned face distinguished by a nattily groomed moustache.¹⁶ Tzatzoe has known James (now in the midst of his twenties and possessed of his father's dark, brooding, secluded eyes and chin that projects a defiant solidity) since James was an infant. In 1805, when he was a young boy, Tzatzoe's father, a minor Xhosa chief, left him alone at Read's coastal Bethelsdorp mission station, the first such institution established on South Africa's eastern frontier.

What has struck Tzatzoe most about England so far?

The peace, he replies, *everyone in the streets looks kind. No beggars, all look comfortable and happy, with their own business. No drunkards and fighting in the streets.*

Then a tougher question. What can Tzatzoe mention to the discredit of the British? He hesitates, but then proclaims boldly: *the British abuse their Sabbaths, carriages are about and people sell in the streets. The horses are admirable but what have the donkeys done to deserve such treatment? And as for the dogs, it is surely a wicked thing to make them work like Hottentots!*

14 Tzatzoe's speeches in Britain (with a couple of exceptions) were spoken in Dutch and translated into English by James Read or James Read Junior. But, as noted, by virtue of the fact that Tzatzoe learned English while in Britain and eventually addressed crowds in it, I can safely say he was trying to convey his own thoughts. As to the sincerity and accuracy of the translations, I have no way of checking the Dutch transcripts versus the English, but as there were supporters of the South African settlers (that is anti-humanitarians) in England at the time with a knowledge of Dutch who closely followed Tzatzoe's speeches (and reported back to the *Graham's Town Journal*) any fraud would have been rapidly unearthed.

15 Tzatzoe likely speaks the hybrid proto-Afrikaans that one colonial official refers to as 'Hottentot Dutch'. South African Library, Sir George Grey Collection, Records of the Province of Queen Adelaide, private and confidential correspondence between Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Colonel H.G. Smith, Lieutenant-Colonel H. Somerset and other high officials, (QAP) Smith to D'Urban, King William's Town, 19 January 1836.

16 Description of Tzatzoe is based on portrait painted by H. Groom, engraving courtesy of SOAS.

What would have happened to the 60,000 inhabitants of Xhosaland¹⁷ if the recent decision in 1835 by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, to annex seventy thousand square miles of Xhosa territory - including the land on the banks of the Buffalo River where Tzatzoe, since 1826, has been assisting John Brownlee, a LMS missionary, establish and run a station among Tzatzoe's father's people - been allowed to stand?

They would surely have been entirely exterminated, but thanks to Mr. Buxton's hard work and his Committee all is well.

Tea is served followed by hymns in Dutch sung by James, Tzatzoe, and Stoffels. Then James and Tzatzoe sing one in Xhosa followed by a war song by Stoffels. The summer night is still hot, and maids bring iced desserts to the travelers. The pucker-inducing embrace of the ice is another new experience for the African men and it shows in the surprise on their faces as they grimace and laugh. Finally, speeches.

Stoffels, a skilled and passionate orator who is capable of reducing audiences of hundreds to tears when he preaches, begins speaking in Khoi. He is in his late middle-age, round-faced, with a consistently amused expression. The exotic click consonants peppering his words - the explosive and resonant boom as the centre of his tongue rockets from the top of his mouth, the gentle tut as its tip caresses and eases away from his upper teeth - please everyone in the audience. It is his great and unexpected pleasure to see Buxton in person, and he wishes to *personally thank him* for his work in freeing the slaves and gaining approval of the 50th Ordinance - a law passed in 1828 that extended legal protection and a refuge from vagrancy legislation to all natives of the Cape.¹⁸ Tzatzoe follows with much the same sentiments, but is cut short by the exhausted Buxton himself, who stands up and expresses his joy at seeing the Cape contingent, and then with an increasingly belligerent and bellicose tone urges them to increase their and their peoples' knowledge of Christianity as the true path to peace, civilization, happiness and heaven.

Dr. Philip rises to close the dinner with the 103rd Psalm and a prayer. Philip is the LMS's chief in South Africa, the self-taught son of a Scottish weaver who almost twenty years before was charged with a brief examination of the Society's mission stations in the Cape Colony. He is a rotund man, possessed of prodigious energy and drive that is hardly flagging as he enters his sixth decade. The gravity and stress of accreting years have given his face, framed by dark bushy sideburns

17 Lester, *Imperial networks*, 80-81. Lester gives a figure of 90,000 Xhosa temporarily becoming colonial subjects. The sixty thousand figure is taken from the letters identified above. Lester explores the evangelical and imperial networks that were precisely the ones that resulted in Tzatzoe's trip to England.

18 Andrew Bank deals with the critical decades covered in this piece, the power of the humanitarian movement, and the Aborigines Committee as a 'humanitarian highpoint' in A.Bank, 'Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820-1850' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University 1995). On the Glenelg dispatch overturning D'Urban's land grab, the Aborigines Committee, and John Philip see R.Ross, 'Donald Moodie and the Origins of South African Historiography' in Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa*, (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1993).

and full head of black hair, a corpulent topography, rounding out its sharply defined and delicate features that in his youth might have seemed even a trifle feminine.¹⁹

So these are irreclaimable savages, Philip exclaims to murmurs of agreement from the guests who are well aware of the South African Governor D'Urban's characterization of the Xhosa as *treacherous and irreclaimable savages*.

Monkeys, Mrs. Upcher adds, referring scornfully to another caricature.²⁰ She is overcome by emotion.

How like some wonderful odd agreeable dream, she sighs to herself, *the wonder of witnessing Ethiopia stretch out her hands*.

The Spring that moves the World

On 2 August 1836, a Thursday evening, the African visitors attend a session of Parliament with seats under the gallery as Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's guests of honor. Tzatzoe and Stoffels *excite great interest* as they enter the hall. The most keenly anticipated debate involves the Irish Church Bill. Firstly a new member from Newcastle is sworn in, a return of British marines killed and wounded under Lord John Hay in the attack on Fontarabia in Spain is read, and a Committee is formed to inquire into the *state and management* of the British Museum. There is also a petition from members of a Wesleyan Methodist Society in favor of a *Bill for removing the Civil Disabilities of the Jews*, and a petition from the *well-known and scientific gentleman named Thomas Steele, praying that the House might have a monument of remembrance erected to Sir Isaac Newton*.²¹ On the Church Bill, Sir Robert Peel, Lord John Russell, Hume, and others speak. The *Reformers gain the day*. Leaving the debates, Tzatzoe is asked for his impressions. *I may forget the railroads, I may forget the Steam Engines, but I shall not forget what I have seen here tonight*, he replies. *I have seen a little company of men not taller than I am met here to touch the spring that moves the world*.

Attempting to provide a context for his answer, Tzatzoe and Dr. Philip explain to Buxton and the others in the party that the Xhosa chiefs *are without exception tall fine men*, probably because they are better fed than their subjects. While Buxton and the others note as most significant the fact that Tzatzoe sees the British leaders as his own size, there is far more to explain. Tzatzoe's comment cannot go unremarked upon, precisely because it is so remarkable. Tzatzoe reveals that he is soaking in the differences between the Cape and the thriving metropolis; in particular, he revels in London's modernity for which steam engines and railroads are leading symbols. He casts himself as an active and acute observer, and not as a stunned, bewildered, passive visitor.

19 Description drawn from portrait on the cover page of Andrew Ross, *John Philip (1775-1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985) and several engravings in le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*. Ross's biography is the only monograph on Philip. James Read has not had a monograph length study produced about his life yet. *The Kitchingman Papers* are an irreplaceable resource for historians studying the LMS in the early nineteenth century; they contain letters from Tzatzoe, the Reads and Philip among others. I checked the letters against the originals holdings in the Brenthurst Library and did not discover any significant additional data for my study.

20 Information from E.N. Buxton to Northrepps, no date in Buxton, *Memoirs*, third ed., 312-313.

21 On trip to parliament, Read to Kitchingman, 2 August 1836, from Hackney, near London, in le Cordeur and Saunders, *Kitchingman Papers*, 163-164, letter includes postscript dated August 5; TFB, Volume 14, 171-174, TFB, Buxton and L. Buxton to E.N.B., 1 January 1837; and *Morning Chronicle*, 3 August 1836.

Buxton chooses to record Tzatzoe's sentences in a letter for his wife and not for general publication, so their preservation is not a public relations exercise. Indeed, the first lines are used to set up the final punchline and are not intended to be edifying on their own. Yet they are, for the curiosity and the perceptive capabilities of Tzatzoe that they reveal. What does Tzatzoe mean by the phrase *touch the spring that moves the world*? Is he using the term to refer to a specific mechanical object, or metaphorically to refer to an animating force? He is using a Dutch word that is translated, but most likely he means an impelling agency given that this is the sense that the word commonly has at this time.²² What is crucial is that he conveys an understanding (perhaps because of the debates concerning Ireland) that the power of the leaders in Parliament has a global reach. While observing parliament at work, he realizes that his corner of Africa is therefore irrevocably and with great immediacy tied to the actions of the men in the room, and best of all, that these men are no taller than the leaders of his own society, and thus are not stronger, or better, or superior, or beyond understanding. Additionally, the gathering of older men in council to debate the issues of the day is familiar to Tzatzoe from similar gatherings among his own African people. If the British empire is being built on unequal relations with the peoples it is colonizing and subduing, if the British are in the process of forming stereotypes of these people that attribute to them an unequal and less-than-human status; Tzatzoe's case, at the very least, demonstrates that the subjected peoples have not developed a reciprocal sense of themselves as fundamentally inferior.

Exeter Hall

After their visit to Parliament, Tzatzoe and the others (with the exception of James Read who embarks with his *carpet-bag, great coat etc.* on a quick evangelizing tour)²³ prepare for a Special General Meeting of the LMS. The meeting is held on Wednesday 10 August 1836 in Exeter Hall for friends of the Society for the *purpose of receiving statements from the Rev. Dr. Philip, the Caffre Chief Tzatzoe, and Andries Stoffles, the Hottentot, in reference to the state and prospects of the Society's Missions in South Africa.*²⁴

Exeter Hall is the lodestone of the humanitarian and evangelical community of London and Great Britain. Only five years old in 1836, it is a cavernous space expressly designed for charitable meetings and religious services. The Africans must surely pause to take in the sight of a room designed to hold in excess of three thousand people. The raised ceiling, from which four large chandeliers hang, is necessary to display an immense organ. Seats for a five-hundred-member choir surround the instrument. At its base is a raised platform on which the speakers sit,

22 Oxford English Dictionary online, 'Spring', def. 1, number 23. 'That by which action is produced, inspired, or instigated; a moving, actuating, or impelling agency, cause, or force; a motive. Frequent from 1700.'

23 B.le Cordeur and C.Saunders, *Kitchingman Papers*, Read to Kitchingman, Hackney, 2 August 1836 with postscript 5 August, 167.

24 *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, September 1836, 54.

rising to address the crowd below them, while an iron railing steadies their hand.²⁵ It is from this magisterial setting that Tzatzoe and the others will address the thousands who have come to hear them speak.

The meeting is well attended. Many eminent missionaries and clergymen address the crowd, but the night belongs to Tzatzoe, Stoffels, and Read Junior *the long-benighted children of Ethiopia*, as described by the LMS's major periodical publication, *The Missionary Magazine*. Upon their guests the *Magazine* continues, *although differing from ourselves in colour, every eye was fixed with hallowed and intense delight*. The Chairman of the Society, Reverend Ellis extends his welcome and reads a short narrative of the lives of Tzatzoe and Stoffels. The narrative characterizes Tzatzoe as a *chief of the Caffre nation, and head of the Teenda tribe, who became a decided Christian at age twenty-four, and who has become an able assistant missionary and faithful co-worker in the gospel*, working with Reverend Brownlee among his own people. Jan Tzatzoe then steps forward *to loud expressions of grateful joy* and addresses the assembly in Dutch, with Read Junior interpreting.²⁶

Tzatzoe's address in the Great Hall is foundational. It is an occasion when we can be fairly certain that his thoughts and words are faithfully recorded, and he will repeat this text numerous times in England (it is his stump speech so to speak), although its emphasis will change. Its words will be widely reported in the humanitarian and settler press, subjected to examination, in good measure vilified as well as hallowed. As such, it is worth examining in full, with the addition of the crowd's interjections, as noted by its transcriber. Here is the first half:

I am surprised to see so many people assembled in the house of God. I am happy to have the opportunity of seeing those Christian friends who sent out Dr. Vanderkemp, Dr. Philip, Mr. Read, and all the other missionaries. I thank God that you sent out these devoted men, who came to South Africa, when we were shot with bullets, and when there was nothing but blood-shed in that ill-fated country. There was nothing to be seen but the bullet and assagai, the bow and the arrow; but the word of God has continued to this day. You must not be wearied in well-doing; the work is still great, and the work must be spread in the world. God might convert the world by his own power, but he employs instruments to bring men to himself. (Cheers.)

You must send us school-masters and missionaries, elevate us and do us good, and raise subscriptions for the Missionary Society. We cannot allow you to be at rest till this great work is finished. When we shall have received the word of God, and shall be in a condition to send out that word, we will form Missionary Societies, and we will send forth the word of God to others. (Applause.)

25 Description of Exeter Hall is based upon M. Alpert, London 1849: *A Victorian Murder Story*, (London: Pearson Longman, 2004), 126-127 and www.victorianlondon.org/buildings/exterhall. I am hypothesizing that the meeting took place in the Great Hall and not in the smaller meeting room on the first floor.

26 Introduction to meeting from *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, September 1836.

God is great, who has promised it, and he will extend his word in the world. God is about to do away with blood-shed and war, and every thing that is sinful. War is bad, and other things have been bad, but good is come out of evil. Who knows, if these things had not taken place, whether missionaries would ever have gone out to that country? If we wish to serve God we must expect persecution; we must expect the wicked to oppose us: but God will surely finish his own work. When the word of God came among us we were like wild beasts - we knew nothing: we were so wild that there was nothing but war and blood-shed. Every one was against his neighbour; there was no confidence between man and man; and each man tried to destroy his brother. The word of God has turned us; the word of God has brought peace, has reconciled one man to another, and in us is fulfilled that text of Scripture, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb.' (Cheers.)

I thank the English nation for what we have received at their hands. You are our friends; we are your children. I am like one of your children. I have been brought up under the laws of England, and I have enjoyed all the privileges of your missions. When we signed the treaty with the British Government at the Buffalo River, a paper was read which told us that we then became the children of the King of England, and that we were now British subjects. If we are the children of England, and if one with yourselves, let us enjoy the privileges of Britons. (Loud cheers.) Many Englishmen in the colonies are bad, (Hear, hear,) but I will hardly believe that those Englishmen belong to you. (Laughter and applause.) You are a different race of men – they are South Africans, they are not Englishmen. (Cheers.)²⁷

Tzatzoe's speech articulates three key thoughts that will underlie his public speeches in England. First, he praises the British for sending missionaries to South Africa and asks for more evangelists and consistent support of the extant missions. Second, he remarks that Christianity has the potential to end fighting between Africans and, generally, to render the South African frontier a peaceful place. Keeping in mind that fact that in Xhosa belief success attends rulers who can marshal spiritual forces to their side to deal with issues of evil (Tzatzoe calls these sin in his speech), Tzatzoe extends this logic to issues of political stability and security, an absence of misfortune, especially warfare. This state can be attained if a chief can provide his people with effective witchfinders who remove evildoers. Tzatzoe presents an Africanized understanding of the British missionary rhetoric. He feels that the Christian God, as a new spiritual force on the frontier, can cleanse the land of evil, of sin, and as a result the land will be healed. The warfare and disruption that arise because of evil in the land will be vanquished.

27 Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, Mss. British Empire S.44, Vol 41, *The Patriot*, London, 17 August, 1836. *Patriot* transcript is verbatim with the *Missionary Magazine*, except for the addition of the crowd's interjections.

Lastly, Tzatzoe makes a blatantly political and not in the least evangelical point. Dealing with the recent annexation of African land on the eastern frontier by Colonel Harry Smith and Governor D'Urban, he says that the Xhosa are quite willing to become subjects of the British, but only if the British grant them their full rights as subjects. Within Xhosa political tradition, people have a large degree of latitude in assigning their loyalty to whichever chief they feel will best serve their material and political interests. Becoming subjects of a higher political authority is nothing new. But in Xhosaland, the people can easily and rapidly revoke their consent to be governed by a specific chief if he, or she, does not fulfil their obligations to the people. Tzatzoe is saying to the British: we will give you our allegiance if you deserve it. He is only too aware, though, that the British colonial government faces another constituency in South Africa that wishes to abrogate any rights granted to the newly minted fellow citizens.

The Englishmen to whom Tzatzoe refers are known as the settler party in South Africa, and their mouthpiece is *The Graham's Town Journal*, which is edited by a shrewd and articulate settler named Robert Godlonton. The editor of the *Journal* devotes special mocking attention to the LMS's delegation to London – *Dr. Philip and his 'Christian Trophies'*²⁸ – and assesses Jan Tzatzoe and his character as follows:

It is proper that our friends at home should understand who and what John T'Zatzoe is. Hence we sum up his character in a few words: He is the son of a petty Kafir chief, poor and of little or no influence. Jan was taken when a boy under the care of Dr. Van der Kemp, with whom he resided for some time at Bethelsdorp where he received what is called an education i.e. to scrawl his name and to read. He is considered by those who know him best to be a weak-minded, inoffensive man, who would have lived peaceably enough had he been permitted; but unfortunately he resided near the Kat River Settlement; hence poor Jan was made a convenient tool by our colonial agitators; calumnious letters were written and published respecting the colonists, which John was made to father, though we know he never wrote them, and of the exact tenor or which we believe him to be at this day entirely ignorant.²⁹

Tzatzoe will have to face these characterizations, which have attached themselves to him during his life on the South African frontier, throughout his stay in Britain and for the rest of his life. They form a large part of the public persona against which he must act and comment, and the scurrilous aspersions will haunt his daily interactions with those who claim to have his best interests at heart. But

28 *The Graham's Town Journal*, 3 November 1836.

29 *The Graham's Town Journal*, 10 March 1836. Actually, Tzatzoe gets off lightly in comparison to the vitriol directed at his friend, Andries Stoffels. 'The most peculiar characteristic of Andries is loquacity, mingled with a large share of low cunning. When he has not a part to act he is a perfect buffoon, vociferously noisy, vulgar, and overbearing, and as full of mischief as an ape. But when on his guard he can be as demure as possible, and display a most perfect Spaniel-like subserviency to the wants and wishes of his acknowledged patrons.' And Read, jun.: He 'possesses a good deal of activity and some natural shrewdness. An opinion may be formed of him by his publicly declaring himself proud of his Hottentot origin, whereas it is apparent to every one who knows him, that he is vain to a degree of those shades which his European parentage have given to his complexion.'

in Britain he is among ‘friends’ who are doing and will continue to do their utmost to maintain his character as unimpeachable.

On Tzatzoe’s speech to Exeter Hall, the *Journal* is almost complimentary: ‘If there be any meaning in language, here is a plain unequivocal acknowledgement of the benefits which the Kafirs have derived from intercourse with Europeans.’

In particular, the paper credits the *immense good* revealed in Jan’s statement that the Africans have been raised from the *condition of wild beasts to the state of intelligent creatures*. But the rest of his speech is discredited: ‘This poor simple man has doubtless been well tutored. Witness his mistaking Exeter Hall for the “house of God” and the rest of the unconnected rambling jargon which constitutes his “speech”’.³⁰

Does Jan’s testimony in fact reveal coaching? And what is one to make of his error? While some of his testimony is without a doubt scripted (especially in its initial section describing the impact of the LMS missionaries in pacifying African soil – *we were shot with bullets; there was nothing but bloodshed in that ill-fated country*), Tzatzoe uses enough African idiom, imagery, and sentence structure to suggest that his speech is largely his own. Some of his statements are, in fact, quite powerful and revelatory. His statement that after having *received the word of God*, his fellow Africans will be ready, prepared, and eager to form their own Missionary Societies and *send forth the word of God to others* reveals his own impulse as an assistant missionary and reflects the LMS’s policy of encouraging its missions’ inhabitants to contribute to evangelical societies. It exceeds such tutelage by its apparent insistence on African agency and Africans’ ability to convey the message on their own, without European supervision, the supervision that is an unstated expectation of the European missionaries of the time. Even the “error” itself might be read as a statement by Tzatzoe that Christianity does not need to be housed in formal churches. Like most African Christians, he has a much more fluid sense of a house of God from most Europeans. His outlook is no doubt partly due to the fact that living on the frontier, he has held, and seen Read and Philip hold service in locations from a grass hut to single tree on an open plain.

It is with his rhetorical use of the trope of childhood, however, that Tzatzoe shows he is fully in control of his testimony.³¹ *You are our friends; we are your children*, he says, intending to convey a sign of respect and tribute to the Englishmen he is addressing. In language that his fellow Xhosa chiefs would understand, Tzatzoe places himself and his African companions beneath English sovereignty, but in a way intended to make clear that the deference implies a sense of reciprocal obligations from those to whom the deference is granted. Referring to the treaty that ended the Frontier war of 1834-1835, recently signed between the chiefs and British authorities near his home on the Buffalo River, Tzatzoe states: ‘A paper was read, which told us that we were now British subjects. If we are the children of England, and if one with yourselves, let us enjoy the privileges of Britons.’

30 *The Graham’s Town Journal*, 8 December 1836.

31 Elbourne employs similar narrative analysis of Khoisan expressions of Christian feeling and of Stoffels’ speeches in *Blood Ground*.

Tzatzoe, thus, makes a poignant call, bold in its presumption and anachronism, that prefigures over one hundred and fifty years of struggle between native peoples and their colonizers in South Africa. It is an explicitly political statement, reaching way beyond the comforting rhetoric of spiritual upliftment usually parroted in such meetings and reveals that Africans such as Tzatzoe are quite willing to submit to British authority if the terms of this submission are upheld.

Tzatzoe reprises the trope of Africans as children as his speech to Exeter Hall continues:

I have now seen the English nation. I have travelled (sic) a little in this country. I have met with a friendly reception wherever I have gone; and I can say you are now my friends. I know my friends. (Applause.) Do not forgot us. Our eyes are upon you. You are our parents. You sent us the word of God. I hope that you will still continue to send out that word. I would thank you for ever having sent out Dr. Philip to our country. (Applause.) This gentleman never sleeps in Africa. (Laughter.)

He is always doing good, he is always protecting us. He is our witness; he is a witness of the state of the colonies, and he is a witness of what God has done amongst us, He knows what we have suffered: he suffered with us. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Very few people in the world love truth; they love darkness. Truth brings every thing to light; it reveals what is hidden. But there are very few people who will allow that they do not love the truth. They wish to take injustice and justice in one hand. Every man knows what is truth, but he wishes to mix the truth with falsehood. Some people are afraid to stand out for the truth; other people won't stand out for the truth; and others are ashamed of the truth. Take the truth. The truth is the most important thing in this world. It is honest. Where there is no truth, there is no true honour. (Applause.) We must all adore the truth – every man. The word of God is truth. The word of God tells us to do good; and the word of God tells us to stand on the truth. We ought to adhere to the truth, and to stand by the truth. I will not say more. (Loud applause.)³²

The truth that underlies Tzatzoe's call for Africans to *enjoy the full privileges of Britons* evolves from an internal characteristic of Tzatzoe's personality. Throughout his life on the eastern Cape frontier of South Africa, he has demonstrated a concern for the truth in his diplomatic interactions with colonial officials and the ruling Xhosa chiefs. Applying this personal conviction to the message he received from the missionaries, Tzatzoe seems to be saying that simply adhering to the truths of the word of God will result in a better world. Yet, is he not also questioning the truth of the colonial administrators who have penned treaties similar to the one to which he has already referred? His repeated exhortations to hold fast to

32 Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, Mss. British Empire S.44, Vol 41, *The Patriot*, London, 17 August, 1836. *Patriot* transcript here is verbatim with the *Missionary Magazine*, except for the addition of the crowd's interjections.

the truth and reciprocal obligations suggest that Tzatzoe is a man who is only too aware of the futility of his call.

How does the audience react to Tzatzoe's speech? There are no exit polls or reporters standing at the ready for crowd reaction, but one speaker seems to capture the mood in the hall. The Reverend J. Young, of Albion Chapel delivers an impassioned discourse – he is *deeply overcome by witnessing the spectacle that is before him* - on the African converts and their significance for the evangelical movement. Even in snippets of his speech, his sentiment towards the *beloved friends, natives of a distant land*, is overwhelming:

We love these strangers for the sake of Christ, whom they and we love, and who, we trust, loves them and us. We welcome them as ransomed by the same precious blood, with which we trust we have been sprinkled; renewed by the same Holy Ghost which we trust has been shed upon us.

Young continues in a vein that echoes the statements of Buxton's dinner guests and surely strikes a chord with the thousands in the hall; his rhetoric is richly redolent even by the florid standards of the time:

We have here only the earnest and the pledge of that glorious inheritance which forms the burden of all promises, of the predictions of Scripture: 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God!' The partition wall of China shall soon be broken down! The vast continent of Hindostan shall soon be overrun by the armies of the living God! The temples of idolatry shall soon tumble into ruins! The delusions of the false prophet shall melt away before the effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness; anti-christ shall be destroyed by the breath of his nostrils and by the brightness of his coming!

Then in a remarkable paragraph, Young comments on the status of Jan Tzatzoe, Stoffels, and Read, Jr. as members of the community of Africans, a concept that has been developing for decades in British popular and intellectual discourse.³³ His is an accurate summation of the thinking that will dominate Anglo-American attitudes towards Africa and Africans for many decades to come - it is the milieu in which Jan Tzatzoe must function, the ocean in which he must swim, the backdrop before which he performs. It is with this understanding that the British will try to understand his thoughts; it is to this understanding that Tzatzoe must speak:

33 Tzatzoe's rhetoric and ideology expand on the sense that Catherine Hall gives of British attempts to incorporate the respectable black elite of Jamaica into its own elite during and after emancipation in 1838. She argues that the British, at this point, committed to the project of empire, wanted to protect British interests while recognizing the brotherhood and sisterhood of black people as part of a reformed and revitalized Britain. The Black elite would be the 'fathers and patriarchs of the new Jerusalem'. William Knibb and others called for full rights as black citizenship as 'Black Britons'. Jan Tzatzoe's rhetoric is remarkably similar and indicates that perhaps he was in conversation with other black intellectuals. This is never mentioned in the archive, however. C.Hall, 'William Knibb and the constitution of the new Black Subject' in M.Daunton and R.Halpern, eds., in *Empire and Others*. *Sable Son* suggests that the moment of idealism and optimism that Hall identifies was more widespread chronologically and geographically than the unique moment of emancipation.

There is but one thing more to which I shall advert, and that only for a moment or two. We cannot forget that these beloved brethren are natives from Africa. What a history is involved in that word! Time was, as we heard this morning, when Africa produced warriors, and legislators, and philosophers. Time was when Africa was the cradle of the arts, of literature, and of science. Africa was the scene of the labours of the apostles, and some of the earliest and most magnificent triumphs of Christianity. But her sun has long since gone down, and a long night of darkness and oppression has well-nigh obliterated all traces of her past history. Africa seems the compendium of all the sorrows and all the depravity of this world. It seems as if it were the chosen spot on earth on which the very worst passions of the human heart, in all their virulence, have been suffered to be poured forth; and where it has been tried what the rapacity and what the cruelty of the human bosom could achieve. A sentence of outlawry seems to have been pronounced upon the fated sons of Africa, by common and universal consent, and they appear to have been doomed to perpetual and hopeless slavery. But that day has passed, and a brighter day has dawned: one that shall be enduring not only as the continuance of this world, but of eternity itself. Africa shall be free! She is beginning to be free! She is entering upon a course which shall know no change, no termination, until every one of her sable sons, holding up his outstretched arms to heaven, shall cry, 'Behold! I am as free as you!'³⁴

Lastly, Edward Baines, Member of Parliament, gives his remarks to the Missionary Meeting on the recently completed proceedings of the Aborigines Committee. He praises Dr. Philip as a man *who can speak to the hearts of Africans, and to the hearts of Englishmen*. Philip tells us that there are *men in Africa capable of being made the glory and the boast of England, instead of its reproach and shame*, Baines tells the audience, and that the *only way to civilize* a people is to *Christianize* them. Baines asks the meeting to reflect on the time when he observed Tzatzoe and Stoffels *sitting a whole night in the House of Commons*. Having already seen what Tzatzoe had to say about the experience, it is interesting to note that Baines confirms the African man's interest and curiosity in the proceedings. But he also speaks to the cultural gulf between them. Baines' speech continues:

He was inquisitive to know what passed in their minds. He read in their expressive countenances the working of their hearts. A new world was floating before them – they were evidently contemplating the scene with profound attention, and with mingled sensations of wonder and admiration; reflecting that the interests and happiness of their own country were often involved in the deliberations of the assembly now before them.

34 Rev. Young's speech taken from Rhodes Library, Mss. British Empire S.44, Vol 41, *The Patriot*, London, 17 August, 1836.

A new world certainly is floating before Tzatzoe and Stoffels, a world that will continue to enlarge as they depart from London for an evangelizing and fund-raising tour of Britain. This is a new world of economic and cultural trade, of political decisions being taken thousands of miles from the arena of their impact (but by people no taller than the African chiefs.) Most of all, it is a new world marked by dramatic and constant change, by expanding vistas and possibilities. Tzatzoe and the others are delayed from leaving the Missionary Meeting with Baines' closing charge – *The Meeting might depend upon it, that this visit of Dr. Philip and his African converts would form a new era in our colonial history* – resounding in their ears, because *scarcely one seemed willing to depart without first stretching forth the hand of welcome, and exchanging the look of Christian benevolence with those savage-born, but new-created men.*³⁵

Newly created men suit a new world. As Tzatzoe suggests in his comments on the House of Commons and in his speech to Exeter Hall on this night, the new era in colonial history will be marked not only by African amazement at European technological aptitude, but in African demands for fully equal rights as citizens of this new world that is floating before all.

A Yorkshire Breakfast Meeting

On the eleventh anniversary of the Central Yorkshire Auxiliary to the LMS, the *friends of the mission* are admitted at nine o'clock on the morning of Monday the 22 August 1836 for 1s 6d a piece to a public breakfast in the school-room of Lendal Chapel.³⁶ Over two hundred *ladies and gentlemen* hear from Reverend Ely, of Leeds, who comments on the *peculiar character* of the breakfast meal, in contrast to the *simpering tea-party or the uproarious dinner-party*. He appreciates this *domestic meeting*, which is *divested of the formality* that will attend the evening session, and he takes up the cause of the *evangelization of the British possessions in India*. Then, turning to Philip and the others with him, he broadens his rhetoric to include a blessing for all the laborers for Christ around the world. It is a *cheering reflection*, he intones that the *Sabbath just passed had been solemnized all round the world, that the sun, on passing every meridian, had witnessed groups of Christians assembled for the purposes of devotion*.

Next, the meeting hears from Jan Tzatzoe who is introduced by Philip as the *Caffre chief*, a *chief by birth*. Philip relates that Tzatzoe has been a *humble and sincere Christian* for *fifteen years* who has *devoted his life to the cause of doing good*. Tzatzoe's speech to the Lendal Chapel congregation is *received with the most marked attention*. As with his Exeter Hall speech, in York, Tzatzoe begins with a Xhosa idiom: 'I will be very brief this morning. I have nothing to tell you this morning, but I would tell you - Rejoice, rejoice at what the gospel has done.'

Tzatzoe continues by praising the gospel for bringing the *children of Adam and Noah* together to the *feast*. In his mind, the *Bible has done all for you; its gen-*

35 Handshakes from *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, September 1836, 54; on Baines, 67.

36 Account of York meetings taken from *The Yorkshire Gazette*, June-August 1836 and *The Yorkshireman*, 27 August 1836.

eral diffusion throughout this country has given you all the knowledge and wealth that you possess, and he praises the British for sending the word of God to the heathen. He stands before them this day as a monument of God's mercy.

Read Junior speaks next, in English. He begs the audience to pay attention to matters in Xhosaland and to be ready to petition in favor of the Africans. Read continues by calling on the English to take possession of Caffre land, not by depriving the natives of their birthright, but by imbuing them with Christianity. Noting that it has been ten years since missionaries had been sent to South Africa (instead going to the South Seas, the East Indies and all quarters of the Globe) he asks for the Society's surplus. Several members of the audience echo the South African visitors' sentiments. A Mr. Ford from the Society of Friends comments how the speeches have provided additional evidence that the colonial history of Great Britain is one written in blood.

The Reverend James Read enters the building soon after his son finishes speaking. Read is introduced to the crowd and pronounced as the father of young Mr. Read, who had just done speaking. The audience breaks into applause, with great cheers, stamping of the feet.³⁷ Read is overcome by emotion. Whether it is a father's pride in the growth of his son, or the recognition of his own thirty-six years of hard labor in the missionary field, Read cannot continue. He soaks in the moment, words temporarily choked back. When he does speak, he refers to his imminent return to South Africa, with his zeal renewed, his faith quickened. He will work towards the implementation of native agency (the use of Africans as missionaries), towards the thorough evangelization of that interesting colony.

His Sable Companion and Friend

On to Sheffield where, on a Monday evening, the Queen-Street Chapel is the location for the Annual Social Meeting of the Teachers and Friends of the Queen-Street Sunday Schools.³⁸ Read introduces Tzatzoe, his sable companion and friend, as a newspaper calls him, after a lengthy discussion of the history of Missionary Labours in Southern Africa. Adverting to his arrival at Bethelsdorp as a young boy in 1804, Read relates that Tzatzoe's avowed wish was to acquire some knowledge of the language of white men, and of the arts of civilized life. Ten years later, he became a sincere and decided Christian and had continued so at the present time. But Tzatzoe is not only a gifted preacher among his people, Read continues, he holds the situation of magistrate among certain tribes of his countrymen, who have the highest opinion of his judgement and disinterestedness. Read adds several examples of cases where Tzatzoe's tact and success in the judicial capacity were evident.

Tzatzoe addresses the audience in a peculiarly earnest manner. The general drift of his speech is to ask for books and teachers to satisfy that craving for gener-

37 These two sentences dealing with Read's appearance are from le Cordeur and Saunders, *Kitchingman Papers*, Read, Senior to Kitchingman, Hackney, 4 September 1836, 167-169.

al knowledge which exists among the various races beyond the Cape. At a meeting the following day in the Nether Chapel, Tzatzoe is asked a direct question about his *personal religion* and whether he is *afraid to die*: 'He hoped to live a little time, if it pleased God for the Sake of his people and country; but if he had had the disposal of himself, he would have been in Heaven years ago.'³⁹

Is Tzatzoe trying to reassure his audience that he understands the Christian doctrine concerning the netherworld? Or is he expressing displeasure with the course his life has taken? The words must speak for themselves.

I am the Colour of those of whom you made Slaves

The Forty-third Annual Public Meeting of the LMS is held in the familiar confines of Exeter Hall on 11th May 1837. *I suppose I must call myself a slave for I am the colour of those of whom you made slaves.*⁴⁰ With this reference to a theme of central importance to his audience who pride themselves as the liberators of the slaves, Jan Tzatzoe begins his speech to the Meeting. It is a dramatic statement, recognizing as it does the hierarchy based on race that is present even in such an enlightened setting. Moreover, it is a statement that reveals Tzatzoe's immersion in a dialogue of African-ness that is only now, in the mid-1830s moving from a conception of Africa as a geographical entity to a collection of peoples marked by their common descent from the continent and, according to some, the morphological features they share in common. Tzatzoe quickly ameliorates his remark but in so doing reinforces its rhetorical positioning: *But now Englishmen have made the slaves free, and have wiped the mark from my forehead.* In equating the abolition of slavery with improved treatment for all Africans, the African chief shows that he has absorbed the ideology of his humanitarian hosts at this, the highpoint of their influence and optimism. *And I take this opportunity of thanking the present Government of England, and thanking you who support it, which has given us our rights, and returned our country.* Flush with their victory over slavery, the audience members may well imagine that they can improve the lot of Africans throughout the Empire and free them from oppression and land alienation.

Of course not everyone in the empire feels as those in Exeter Hall do. When Jan comments that *it seems to me that you have great power in England, for you have the House of Commons, and the House of Lords in your hands*, the *Graham's Town Journal* is quick to add to their transcript of the speech: (*Deafening cheers; and well there might be, for Jan, by accident, spoke here much more truth than is generally elicited from him.*) The political winds will shift, the *Journal* seems to warn.

Tzatzoe continues by marking the highlights of his trip to England. His *very interesting* visit to the two Houses of Parliament: *I find that whenever any thing happens to us in Africa, we can come to England and get justice.* His reception

38 Information on Sheffield meeting: *The Sheffield Mercury and Hallamshire Advertiser*, 31 December 1836; *The Nottingham Review*, 23 December 1836; *The Sheffield Independent*, 24 December 1836.

39 *The Sheffield Independent*, 24 December 1836.

40 *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, June 1837.

by the public: *I shall tell the people in Africa, that the people of England took as much care of me as though I were an hen's egg.* From where does Tzatzoe produce this metaphor, talks with the missionaries, his own experiences? His evangelical trips: *I have attended so many missionary meetings in England, that they appear like so many hillocks of stones placed upon the roadsides to mend them.* Is Tzatzoe referring metaphorically to piles of stone placed alongside mid-nineteenth century British roads as supplies for their maintenance? Or is he actually talking about the pyramids of pebbles placed along trails and roads in Xhosaland, where travelers add to the pile as they pass to ensure good fortune? With this phrase, the issue of Read translating Tzatzoe's Dutch obscures the potentially correct explanation. And finally, his trip to Windsor Castle to see the King: *It will be the greatest news that I shall have to tell them in Africa, that I found even from the King's Palace they are anxious to carry on God's work in Africa.*⁴¹

The Windsor Castle visit occurred the previous September while Stoffels and James Read, Junior, were still with the party. Philip took the Africans to visit the palace as tourists, and while there made an *application for permission to enter the Royal presence*. The King respectfully declined the application, *on account of severe indisposition*. But as his regrets were being delivered, the *Royal grandchildren* came down and presented the *contents of a missionary box* to Philip before shaking hands with Jan Tzatzoe. The King's granddaughters added a box of clothes and money. The encounter deeply impressed the African man, who was well aware of the esteem with which the British regarded the royal family and who had seen enough of the King's dominion to be truly awed by it. Addressing a missionary meeting he referred to the encounter in glowing terms:

I cannot resist speaking of a great wonder - that in the palace the King's grandchildren should take me by the hand - me, who am a black man; and they not only shook hands, but gave me money, and said, 'That is for your infant schools.' I am very much surprised that those children of royal blood should be concerned for my nation. That will be a great thing to tell the poor Africans. I will make a box with a drawer for the money of the King's grandchildren, with a hole at the top, and I will say to the chiefs, 'Now you must put some money over this.'⁴²

The incident at the palace stays with Tzatzoe and with good reason. For if the King and his family behave in so supportive a manner towards the LMS and its fellow organizations with which he allies himself in South Africa, then he feels justified in judging the might of the British empire to be behind the side he (and his father in giving him to the missionaries in 1804) have chosen. Surely if the King's own progeny evince such a commitment, the British public is either committed to justice and the missionary cause or soon will follow.

41 *Graham's Town Journal*, 31 August 1837, for Annual meeting of LMS.

42 On Windsor: *Graham's Town Journal*, 9 February 1837.

Tzatzoe recounts his visit to Windsor Castle to his listeners at the Annual Meeting in order to show that even the inhabitants of the palace are *anxious to carry on God's work in Africa*. But more than this, he tells the meeting, the incident reveals to him that everyone from the *King's Palace to the lowest of his subjects*, does not believe that there *is nothing to be done with the Kafirs and the Hottentots*, as the Dutch settlers of South Africa told the British missionaries when they first arrived at the Cape. Indeed, he concludes, *the Kafirs, the Hottentots, the Bushmen, the Griquas, owe their being to the English nation*:

You have not only sought the welfare of their bodies, but likewise the salvation of their souls. I hope you will pray for them. Your prayers have broken off the shackles of the slaves. Therefore, I hope you will pray for them earnestly, for the prayer of a righteous man availeth much with God. I was a slave to sin before the missionaries came, but now, through the gospel I have been made free. I thank you for what you have done for me.⁴³

The Man of Macedonia

During the early summer months of 1837, Tzatzoe and Read travel throughout Scotland, raising over £2,000 for the missionary cause. Read reports back to Reverend Ellis that he feels the figure is fairly good for Scotland; he *hopes* that the *impression* they have made is *not small*.⁴⁴ Tzatzoe, though, is at times *downcast at there being no prospect of missionaries to take with him back to the Xhosa*, and Read sympathizes, adding that the *chief ought to have one and the caffres will expect back two or three missionaries*.⁴⁵ Perhaps this reciprocal arrangement is the one Jan Tzatzoe had in mind when he convinced himself that he could best serve the interests of his people and his fellow chiefs by traveling to England. The Scottish scenery with its *wild and rough* mountains and *fine trees* captivates Tzatzoe. The chief is *enraptured with this view and back to Caffreland, to his native mountains and valleys*. Scotland seems like a long way for Tzatzoe to go, in order to feel at home again.⁴⁶

Of all the meetings in Scotland, the account of Tzatzoe's speech, on a Monday evening in early August 1837, to a large public meeting in the Secession Church in Kelso, is particularly interesting.⁴⁷ Of Tzatzoe and Read's visit, the *Kelso Chronicle* editorializes that *we have never witnessed a meeting in Kelso where during so long a period the interest was so profound and unbroken, or the audience was so numerous*. The audience, *composed of all denominations*, hears Jan Tzatzoe's standard speech expanded upon in two critical ways. First, Tzatzoe displays a Biblical

43 *Graham's Town Journal*, 31 August 1837.

44 On Read, LMS, Box 7, Folder 1, Read to Ellis, 25 July 1837, on Philip, University of Witwatersrand, (WITS), Philip Papers Cc (3) Durant Philip to Eliza Philip, Glasgow, 28 June 1837.

45 LMS, Box 7, Folder 1, Read to Ellis, 25 July 1837.

46 WITS Philip Papers Cc (3) Durant Philip to Eliza Philip, Glasgow, 28 June 1837.

47 *Kelso Chronicle*, 4 August 1837.

understanding as well as an understanding of the abolitionist and humanitarian tradition in England by expounding upon the story of the man of Macedonia:

He stood before them as the man of Macedonia stood before Paul, saying ‘Come over and help us, lest we perish.’ When the man of Macedonia appeared to Paul he appeared only in a vision, but (the Chief) stood before them a living man from Africa, crying unto them, ‘Come over and help us.’ When the man of Macedonian (sic) appeared to Paul he spoke only to himself. But what numbers were there here; and he now addressed each individual to come over and help them. When the man of Macedonia spoke to Paul, he did not say come over and help me – no, he wanted Paul to come over and help his people; and so it was with him, he wanted them to send missionaries to Africa to teach his people the way of salvation through a crucified redeemer.

In this passage, Tzatzoe demonstrates a talent for Biblical exegesis, in taking biblical verse and adapting it for the consumption of his audience in order to support a wider message, in this case, send missionaries to Africa. He appears to willingly embrace the role of the man of Macedonia, benighted by his lack of Christianity, but here he specifies that Africans, and specifically his countrymen, are most worthy of aid. Tzatzoe also takes on the role of spokesman or ambassador for his people and nation. Finally, he employs religious language that surely allays any humanitarian or missionary concern that he might have left his Christian convictions behind on the frontier in favor of a decidedly political agenda. Here he does not speak generally about Christianity or Christ, but specifically of *salvation* through a *crucified redeemer*.

Having spoken so confidently about the religious underpinnings of his belief, Tzatzoe immediately confounds. Whereas as the man from Macedonia, he asks for specifically religious and immaterial knowledge (in the sense that salvation appears through the redeemer appears to apply in the next world, not this one), Tzatzoe’s remarks, immediately following those on eternal salvation, point to a far more material knowledge, that of civilization and material improvement. It’s almost as though he is saying, it’s all well and good to speak of spiritual gain and improvement, but we need real progress. The missionaries that he asks for, Tzatzoe well knows, bring far more than the Bible; they bring wagons and ploughs, money and paper.

Those to whom he now solicited them to send the gospel were in a perishing condition, and they had this evening heard how destitute they were, and what need there was for missionaries, Tzatzoe continues in his address in Kelso, using language that might equally refer to material discomfort or spiritual poverty:

He was of opinion that the old people who first sent abroad the gospel wished that the Africans should be civilized as well as evangelized; and this opinion [was] confirmed [by the] frequency with which he was asked in England - ‘Were the ladies in his country beginning to wear bonnets?’ He believed that they desired that the Africans should

enjoy the comfort and improvement of civilized life; but before they can obtain these they must have the means to procure them. They wanted in Africa men to give them that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. They begin to feel that knowledge was power, and they were desirous of fighting in Africa with pen and ink, as the inhabitants of England and Scotland did, and to throw away the weapons of war.

In this passage, Tzatzoe expands his understanding of salvation. In addition to eternal salvation, he is concerned about material progress, the *comfort and improvement of civilized life*, as he calls it. He feels that Africans can gain this elevated material status if given the *means to procure* it, and interestingly, he calls these means *knowledge*, and specifically, knowledge that *maketh wise unto salvation*. What is this knowledge and what type of salvation is he talking about? It appears that this is a secular salvation, one that addresses the *perishing condition* of the people. It is knowledge, he adds, that can bring peace and stability to his home. Is he conflating Biblical knowledge and secular knowledge, or the knowledge of civilized life? Or is he making two separate claims, implying that while Biblical knowledge is all well and good, what will really count is knowledge that enables his people to live civilized lives of prosperity and peace?

Nations will only fight with the Book and the Newspaper

There is time for one more missionary meeting before Tzatzoe and Read return to the frontier and to their homes. They are now a polished team. Read is first to address the meeting held in Cape Town on 12 February 1838. He speaks about the history of missions in the Cape Colony, noting how after decades of progress the *little Hottentot children* in his Kat River Infant Schools who were once thought to be *a sort of monkeys* when he and Dr. Van der Kemp began their labors asked him not for *sugar-candy* or *clothing* when he told them he was traveling to England but *for more maps to learn more geography* (indeed, traveling around England he realized they knew the towns and rivers of the region better than he did). Then, Read returns to the subject of the voyage from which he has recently returned. He left the colony unexpectedly, ill and growing sicker on the voyage. But as soon as he began to recover in England he went to work holding Missionary Meetings and now that he is back in Africa he can *truly say the Society has fairly worked him to life*.

The visit was a great success. His fears of not finding any of his old friends or family alive were unfounded. He reunited with his only sister and five first cousins, all in their mid-seventies to mid-eighties. He wept at discovering that all the leaders of the LMS who inspired him and sent him off to his missionary endeavors were dead, but their *children had risen up to carry on the great work among the heathen*. Read tells the Meeting about the *young, most pious and zealous curate of the Church of England* who hosted the Chief and himself for a *most crowded* meeting in a little chapel in Read's hometown of Sherborn, Essex.

After he and Tzatzoe spoke to the Meeting in Essex, Read relates, the Reverend Mr. Sherwood had presented the Chief with a *very handsome compass*. *The*

compass, Sherwood told Tzatzoe, *you will observe always points one way, it points to the north. The Bible also points one way, it points to Jesus Christ as the way to heaven.* Tzatzoe in reply seized on the metaphor with perfect comprehension. The Chief thanked the congregation for the gift, adding that *he had come from Africa to England by the aid of the compass, without which he would have been lost on the great ocean; and had not the Bible and the Missionaries been sent to him he should never have found his way to heaven, nor would he be seen where then was. But,* Tzatzoe continued, *my nation are, for the greater part, still without the Bible; they are bewildered and must be lost, unless England sends them that heavenly compass, and Missionaries explain it to them.*

With this demonstration of the English reverence for the African missions and their success as personified in the form of Jan Tzatzoe, Read turns the Missionary Meeting over to his friend and colleague, Dr. Philip who has a startling surprise for the audience. He introduces Jan Tzatzoe, the *Caffer Chief*, who wishes to address the meeting in English, a *language with which a short time since he was totally unacquainted.* Tzatzoe speaks in English, which *though broken is perfectly intelligible.* His attempt demonstrates, the newspaper article covering the meeting says, that he was *no inattentive listener to what had passed around him while in England.* Tzatzoe had also addressed some meetings in Scotland in English, but the Cape Town account is his only recorded English dialogue. Clearly, he has made every effort while in Britain to speak for himself, to let his own voice be heard.

The speech in Cape Town is a remarkable effort by a man whose opponents and detractors have characterized as barely literate and of inconsequential intellect:

He said he knew but little English, yet he wished as far as he was able, to tell the Meeting something of what he had heard and seen in England. Many of the people he had seen there were busied with Missionary Meetings, and he was glad to see so many assembled together tonight at a Missionary Meeting. That he then stood there, was owing to the Missionaries. But for them, he would be among the hundreds who had not heard the gospel, and who know of no other object in life but to hunt game, and bring home honey, and go after cattle. As soon as the gospel takes hold of the heart, then the people take the spade and work the ground, they take the axe and cut down the tree, - they begin to build the house. Before that they have not clothes, they rob and they kill. When he was in England, he told the people he was very much glad to see them so busy to send gospel to every part of the world; but he saw the large castles falling down, and he asked why the people were not busy to build them up again? They said the people of England are no longer at war, they only fight with the pen and the ink.

Tzatzoe encapsulates the standard missionary and humanitarian rhetoric in his speech, the notion that Christianity and western civilization in encountering native people bring with them new and better ways of working, of dressing, of building, of living. But nowhere in Tzatzoe's speech are the negative consequences of

the encounter: the loss of land, of material independence without wage labor, of political freedom, and of annihilated wildlife and woods. In listing the benefits of the colonial encounter to an African such as himself, Tzatzoe is not merely issuing the fatuous pleasantries such an audience expects to hear from him. He seizes on the best of the culture with which he has been in contact and to which he wishes to introduce his countrymen. More productive agricultural methods, sturdier homesteads, and most of all, peace. For a man born, raised, and living on a festering frontier, the child of a Khoisan mother whose people have faced hundreds of years of persecution from African and European colonizers and a Xhosa father whose life was spent hopping from one insecure foothold to another, the most astounding aspect of his visit to England was the sense of peace on the island.

Tzatzoe spent eighteen months touring Britain, and nowhere did he encounter the insecurity resounding through his homeland. More than the railroads, bursting halls and churches, this peace is worthy of mention. The British appear to offer a cornucopia of material and spiritual riches to which level an individual such as himself can be raised, why not all of his people? The Chief paid attention and asked questions. He knows that this British peace is recent and hard-won. He knows from his own culture that political stability ensures material prosperity, that good chiefs bring the rain. He hopes to import the best of what he has seen. Fighting with the pen and the ink, not the assagai and the commando – this is Jan Tzatzoe's vision. Teach us your ways he pleads. Give us this peace, and we will disperse it in return.

Tzatzoe's descendants will have to wait almost two centuries for his words to be fulfilled:

He told the English that men should come and teach the Caffres, and make for them Colleges, and teach them Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, and English, and then the Caffres would have a House of Commons, and a House of Lords, and then they would only fight like the English with a newspaper...He wished very much that he could speak good English, as he wanted to tell the Meeting what he saw and heard in the King's palace when the King's Grandchildren gave into his hands a box and money for schools for the Caffer children. Then he was very much astonished. He saw that the Grand-children of the King loved knowledge, and that they wished the Caffer children to be taught. He said he would tell the Caffers to make a Missionary-box and put the money in it, and get more money and fill it to the brim. All the people in England are busy. The gentlemen, and the ladies and the little children are all busy. The work goes on day and night, and the people go, go, go, this way, that way, every way. And they go around and get money for old bones and every thing. They are very busy with Missionary Meetings; if this Meeting were in England there would be hardly place to stand, and people would be looking in at the windows, and trying to get to the door to put in their money. He was glad to see so many now met; they were engaged in a great work, and he hoped God would bless them...If we want to get knowledge we must go and give people knowledge.

The Apostles were told to go into all the world and preach the gospel, but the Apostles are dead, and who shall go now? Many people are going, English, and French, and Germans are going out to teach all the nations, and we must not stand still and look at them; we must all help. Then will come the time when the assagai will be put down, and nations will only fight with the book and newspaper. He could not say more; he hoped God would bless them.⁴⁸

48 Account of Cape Town Missionary Meeting, *The South African Commercial Advertiser*, 21 February 1838.