CHAPTER THREE

COLONIZATION, IMPERIALISM AND DISPOSSESSION

1652 - 1870

It is ironic that, contrary to the rejection of the concept that Black history only commenced after 1652, the articulation of an own Black perception of South Africa history only really becomes apparent when reference is made to the periods after 1652. That this should be so is understandable, because it is from here on that an awareness develops that there are variations in the interpretations of the past, for whatever reason.

The reasons for grouping the three concepts of colonization, imperialism and dispossession together within the time-span indicated are various. Firstly there is a certain degree of synonymity and interchangeability between the terms. Secondly the span over nearly two and a quarter centuries may appear to be generous. It must, however, be remembered that all of the writers referred to during this dissertation are far more concerned with their immediate situation, and therefore devote relatively little attention to what preceded except to add substance to their contentions. They are not concerned with providing a detailed insight into the past, except in as much as it is relevant to their arguments.

To attempt further chronological divisions would be to disrupt the continuity of perceptions, without implying that they are identical. It is clear from the sources that, despite differences in stance, there are certain underlying concepts that are common to all the authors. These refer to the fundamental changes that were brought about in indigenous society as a result of White settlement and intervention in the local social structures. The difference lies in how the nature and consequences of this intervention are perceived.

It should be pointed out that the periodization employed should not be taken to mean that these themes were considered to be relevant only to

the era under discussion. Nor should it imply that these forces ceased to exist after the end of the period indicated. The processes initiated by Diaz and Van Riebeeck in the Cape would still be operative for at least three decades after 1870 particularly in the northern regions of the country . Thus the intention is not to truncate the continuity of these forces, but to place them in a somewhat different context. This is necessary because the mineral discoveries between the late 1860s and 1880s sufficiently changed the matrix of developments in South Africa to necessitate creating another chronological division.

Nevertheless there is an indication of a periodization in the two and a quarter centuries under discussion in this chapter. Some distinction is made between the period of Dutch, British and later Afrikaner colonization. There is no doubt that the first phase referred to is marked by a general lack of commitment on the part of the Dutch to actively colonize the Cape as the British were to do. Secondly it can be said that the Dutch occupation of the Cape involved the development of a frontier zone without any direct or irreversible impact in the internal affairs of the indigenous peoples, with the notable exception of the San and the Khoikhoi. Although this does not suggest that there was no interaction between the Dutch colonists and the Southern Nguni even at this early stage. The impact of the interaction was nowhere near as vehement as that which would be experienced during the second phase of colonialism under the British. It is felt that although the activities of the Dutch settlers were, to quote Magubane, "cruel and destructive", they did not penetrate below the surface of society.[1] The second phase of colonialism is essentially that period after the British determined to take permanent occupation of the Cape in 1814, and their decision to take active steps to regulate Black-White relations, to be more effective in the exploitation of the new colony's human and natural resources.

A further exception must be made in regard to the timespan indicated in

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1 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p.56

the title of this chapter. The initial date of 1652 will have to be preceded by some attention being given to the earlier involvement of the Portuguese at the Cape. As this was basically a passing interest, although not without significance to subsequent developments, less attention will be given to the Portuguese era. A view is that the Portuguese, in the person of Diaz, came to South Africa with the aim of trading, and had no interest in the people of the region.[2] Even this endeavour was subsequently abandoned when Khoisan resistance in November 1497 persuaded Vasco da Gama that trade at the "Bay of Cows" was futile.[3]

In the light of the distinction that has been made between the two phases of colonialism, it can be expected that the perceptions of colonialism will also differ according to which phase reference is being made.

The rather bland definition of colonialism as the process of creating a "subject territory occupied by a settlement from the ruling state,"[4] does not indicate what has become over the years "a word of abuse."[5] The definition does not allude to the causes, impact or consequences of this process on the colonized. The term does not show that colonialism refers "to social structures created within the colonized society by imperialist relationships."[6] Nor does it indicate the differing perceptions of colonizer and colonized.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch came here to establish a refreshment station and at no stage considered legislating to govern the indigenous people.[7] While there is in Molema's observations on this period a

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2 SVH Mdhluli, The Development of the African, pp. 11-12.

3 ANC, ANC of South Africa, p. 2.

4 P Hanks(ed), Collins Dictionary of the English Language, p.312.

5 M Perham, The Colonial Reckoning, p.9.

6 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p.3.

7 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p.238.

note of criticism of the failure to establish Dutch rule, he does not take the direction that is shown in Ncube's comment that the Dutch came to dispossess the indigenous people so that ultimately "two alien forms of oppression were entrenched: feudalism and slavery".[8] According to Molema the initial Dutch outpost had gradually evolved into a permanent settlement as the Dutch inhabitants realized the economic potential of the Cape and loosened their ties with Holland and the Dutch East India Company.[9] This view is contradicted by Pheko who sees the initial Dutch settlement of the Cape as profit orientated, and therefore tightened the bonds that linked the outpost and the mother country. This concurs with his standpoint that colonialism and monopoly capitalism are fellow travellers.[10]

At the beginning of this century Molema still believed that even if the British had come with altruistic motives, they eventually realized that the aborigines were not able to develop their lands independently, which happened to coincide with the realization that Britain was involved in a scramble for colonies.[11] He could not envisage of the arrival of a colonial power as Nzo does, namely as "the beginning of a most ruthless plunder of the land, and cattle" and "the most barbaric genocide" that "virtually exterminated" the Khoisan peoples.[12]

Early writers were not all that concerned with the motives for colonization. It appears that they were content to accept colonization as a fait accompli with which they would have to live. They create the impression that they conditionally welcomed the arrival of the colonizers

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8 DMJ Ncube, The Influence of Apartheid and Capitalism on the Development of Black Trade Unions in South Africa, p. 2.

9 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 238.

10 M Pheko, Apartheid..., pp. 26-27.

11 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p.343.

12 A Nzo, "Our Anti-Imperialist Commitment". An article by Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General of the ANC in Sechaba, February 1970, quoted in ANC Speaks..., p.75.

for a variety of reasons. They ascribed the arrival of the colonizing power to altruistic reasons, even though its camp followers were not always inspired by the same lofty ideals that fired the initial act of occupation. Molema accepts that the aim of the colonizer was to bring Christianity to the colonized. He warns that civilization is not synonymous with Christianity even though he concedes that civilization is a concomitant of Christianity.[13] The distinction that Molema makes is important to the arguments and criticisms that he has developed and is to develop elsewhere in this work. He is unreserved in his acceptance of Christianity, provided that this religion is unequivocal in its acceptance of all Christians, irrespective of race and class. Molema is critical of the argument that it is difficult to reconcile Christianity and dispossession, and that therefore Christianity must be rejected. And if Britain had remained true to her principles then she would have withdrawn once she had fulfilled her role as instructor and educator.[14]

Molema believes that the colonizer came to satisfy the Christian urge to evangelize and is thankful for the introduction of a creed that promises eternal salvation. Despite this gratitude, he still allows some room for criticism of those Christians who do not conform to his criteria for the religion. The blatant contradiction between Christian ethic and those who followed in the wake of the missionary, the traders, has been a source of much confusion to Blacks. Blacks could not understand how a people of the same origin can demonstrate such totally divergent principles as the missionaries and the traders did.[15]

No matter how instrumental Britain had been in introducing the new creed to the African, the final evaluation of her role in South Africa would depend on the integrity and humanity of her policies.[16] The

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13 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 221-222.

14 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 343

15 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 313-314.

16 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 345.

question of dispossession spurs Molema to a far more forthright criticism. He is aware of the perversion of morality to justify the alienation of land, and condemns as specious the argument that unless one power colonized the country then another would usurp the land. This sophistry is symptomatic of a mercenary morality that adapts itself to meet the demands of the selfish side of colonialism.[17]

What makes this comment poignant is that Britain had initially followed a policy of nonintervention towards the Xhosa, as they were recognized to have settled in the region before the Europeans. In time however the treaty system and the subsequent intrusion into and dispossession of Xhosa land evolved. The treaty system, Molema suggests, was entered into by Britain to prevent further frontier wars and possibly in answer to the Great Trek.[18] There is an element of irony in his argument. At one stage he attributes a cause of the Great Trek to Glenelg's reversal of the land acquisitions after the Sixth Frontier War.[19] Thus, by implication, Molema is saying that Britain, in order to safeguard African interests, applied measures that defeated this objective.

Despite his often implied and occasionally direct criticism of colonialism Molema does not raise the fundamental question posed by later writers. It does not occur to him to ask why the colonist should have come to Africa to spread love and joy when he had not been invited to come in the first place.[20] In many respects this question has a far more damning impact than any aspersions cast on the motives of the colonial power. By asking this question Ngubane is rejecting the legitimation of colonization by discussing its merits and demerits. The question is, however, largely rhetorical and left unanswered. Instead he recognizes that colonization did occur and that it had an impact on the colonized. It should also be noted that Ngubane sees a more benign influence intro-

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17 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 350.

18 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 239.

19 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 103.

20 JK Ngubane, Ushaba: The Hurtle to Blood River, p. 81.

duced by colonization, particularly the liberal era ushered in by Dr John Philip. This is apparent in his fulsome praise of the liberal tradition in an earlier work, An African Explains Apartheid.

From the preceding pages it is clear that, according to Molema, the motives for colonization can be grouped under three major categories. These are civilization, evangelization and economic. There is no attempt to place the arrival of Diaz in the romantic image of the voyages of discovery. And, as will subsequently become apparent, the integration of the process of colonization in South Africa into a global context only really developed as the perception grew that colonialism and imperialism were the products of capitalism's drive for a global monopoly.

This broadening of the perspective is to be expected as the commentators developed their perceptions with the aid of a far wider range of sources than had previously existed. These sources were themselves based on a wider spectrum of ideological and philosophical foundations. They also had a greater range of research materials on which to base their conclusions, aided by more sophisticated tools of physical and mental analysis. The writers under discussion developed in this milieu, thus one should expect that their works would reflect a more complex character and a greater awareness of the impact of the intrusion of colonialism and its adjuncts. It is clear from what has preceded and is to follow that the primary concern was to formulate a perception of what the impact of colonization had been. This concern was not merely to reflect the past for its own sake, but to show that in the logic of colonialism its impact had to be total. If this could be demonstrated then the efficacy and legitimacy of countermeasures could be justified.

It is often assumed that colonization entails the establishment of foreign control over indigenous people. This is partially correct, but only reflects a facet of colonization. It does not reflect how total the control would become to include every dimension of human existence, from questions of subsistence to those of cosmology.

The point has previously been made that Molema was fairly unequivocal

in his acceptance of colonization as beneficent. He also made it clear that enculturation was part and parcel of the changes that would evolve from European penetration. Enculturation would be an exercise in futility unless those absorbing the dominant culture integrated it into their entire being, instead of just imitating the external trappings of that culture.[21]

Molema demonstrates an awareness of the broad scope of the impact of colonization. Generally he is not all that condemnatory of this effect. His successors show an equal awareness of the magnitude of the effect of an alien intrusion into traditional society. Where Molema's heirs differ is in how they view these changes. Essentially Molema's attitude is that the changes were a necessary coincidence of Christian evangelization which he saw as the most significant product of colonization. Later writers invert the perception and tend to see that which Molema saw as the "by-products" of colonization as the means of subjugation and consequent dispossession. The thrust of later arguments is that without the "by-products" colonization and its attendant abuses would have failed.

Writers of the 1930s to the present have tended to be highly critical of the moral foundations of colonization. They could not accept that the colonist had come merely to spread the Christian gospel, and that they were innocent of any ulterior motive. The bearers of the Word, the missionaries, would be increasingly castigated for their role in paving the way for the dispossession of the Blacks. This group of writers initially chided the missionary for applying a double standard. In time, this somewhat gentle reprimand evolves into a strident condemnation. Missionaries and the faith they propagated were accused and found guilty of providing the "opiate of the masses" that would leave Blacks as passive bystanders in their own dispossession, subjugation and ultimate labour exploitation.

A recurrent theme is that Christianity is a source of division in a

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21 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 308

time when a united front was needed to resist penetration. Social schisms developed between those who opted to follow the new faith and those who remained true to tradition. So acrimonious was the internecine strife that forbears were not remembered as individuals, but as those who had severed their ties with their peers in pursuit of their beliefs. These dissident groups became known as the "school people".[22] The social disruption caused by the rejection of polygamy is also a source of comment.[23]

Political divisions had a far greater impact on society. Molema did not concur with the critical view that conversion to Christianity would lead to the emasculation of the people and decreased martial tendencies.[24] If anything he would welcome a development such as this, as evidence of an evolutionary step in the development of Black civilization. While he concedes that Christianity was a source of division he did not allow that it was the cause of civil war among the Bamangwato, as Bessie Head states.[25]

The later and contemporary writers indict Christianity on two charges which confirm the two facets discerned by Molema's generation. But where Molema took these aspects as points of praise, subsequent writers accused Christianity of both encouraging colonization and facilitating its consolidation. The contention that the colonists came to spread the Gospel is rejected. In the three hundred years of occupation there had been every opportunity for the colonizers to proselytize, but they had, as yet, not availed themselves of the opportunity.[26] Instead the bearers of the new dominant civilization with its Christian foundations had distinguished themselves by hypocrisy and gloating over the misfortune

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22 N Jabavu, The Ochre People, p. 10

23 N Mokgatle, The Autobiography of an Unknown South African, pp. 58-59

24 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 43 and pp. 340-341.

25 B Head, A Bewitched Crossroad. An African Saga, pp. 51-54.

26 A Luthuli, Let My People Go..., p. 119.

of others.[27]

The criticism aimed at Christianity is not so much directed at its role in promoting colonization as its part in facilitating the consolidation of colonial authority. This function was achieved in a variety of ways. Initially there is little suggestion that this was a deliberate ploy on the part of the Church. Today the expression of direct church involvement is far more explicit, if not a direct statement attributing the triumph of colonialism to the involvement of the Christian church.

The immediately obvious impact of Christianity on society has already been referred to, viz., the divisions in indigenous society between traditionalist and Christian. Not only was the convert obliged to renounce his fundamental beliefs, but also the society that had nurtured him. Just as there is linkage between Christian norms and social conduct so there is and was a reciprocal bond between traditional mores and society. Christianity was not, however, content to supplant one set of beliefs with another. It had to destroy the heroic symbols that provided security and also denigrate social institutions, language and culture. As a consequence, Leshoai alleges, Blacks became the enslaved imitators of a foreign culture.[28] Thus a people who felt insecure and sought assurance in their native past were denied this opportunity, which served to further undermine their confidence and increase their dependence on the new order.

Colonialism and Christianity launched a debilitating attack on tribal edifices. They did not supplant the old with a new creed of fraternal love and justice. Instead the new power taught that might was right. Ironically today, Themba claims, the ex-colonial masters are seen to be doing their utmost to deny this lesson that they had so convincingly

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27 HIE Dhlomo, "Cetshwayo", in N Visser and T Couzens (eds), H.I.E. Dhlomo. Collected Works, p. 127 and 128.

28 B Leshoai, "The Nature and Use of Oral Literature", in M Mutloatse (comp and ed), Reconstruction..., pp. 243-245.

taught, and hide it behind grandiloquent phrases.[29] Colonial history has taken Blacks "on an unpleasant journey through unmarked graveyards of our past".[30] The colonists nurtured the myth of the beneficence of empire-building that relentlessly proselytized the native in the arrogant belief that what was good for the colonizer was good for the colonized.[31]

It is difficult to determine which aspect of dispossession - cultural, material or spiritual - is considered to be the most significant. It appears to be an exercise in futility to establish an hierarchy or precedence in this regard. Therefore material dispossession will be dealt with first, because it is through man's interaction with his environment that the other aspects of his being evolve. The dispossession of the material bases of existence, and the cultural and spiritual spheres, will be discussed according to the following framework: Firstly the motives and agents of the particular form of dispossession will be discussed, and then the impact of these actions will be considered. At times these two categories of analysis show that little distinction can be made between the two. Therefore there will at times be a blurring of the distinctions between cause and effect. To attempt to separate the two would violate the intrinsic logic of the arguments underlying the perceptions, and therefore some overlapping will occur.

Each of the sources consulted sees land as the central theme. Where they differ is in the role that they assign to land and its dispossession and the aims and consequences of the loss. On the one hand Molema would argue that the colonists were justified in taking over aboriginal land, because the natives were incapable of fully exploiting the poten-

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29 C Themba, from "The House of Truth", "The Bottom of the Bottle", in E Patel (ed), The World of Can Themba..., p. 234.

30 Dikobe wa Mogale, "We Rose at Dawn", in D wa Mogale, Baptism of Fire, pp. 64-65.

31 L Nkosi, "Robinson Crusoe: Call Me Master", in L Nkosi (ed), Home and Exile and Other Selections, p. 154.

tial of the land.[32] Given Molema's generally negative and critical attitude towards the lack of "evolution" in his people's culture, it appears that he considers it right that the "fittest" should assume control of the land to properly utilize it. Molema did not, however, allow this contention to sanction the subsequent dispossession of Black lands to the point where they are enveloped in White-owned land.[33] Even the moderate Molema forever in search of objects of praise in colonization, saw that the loss of land was ultimately the foundation of a 'native policy' that destroyed every facet of Black life culminating in a condition akin to slavery.[34] However he never reached the tone of accusation and condemnation that is apparent in the title and content of Tsotsi's work, From Chattel to Wage Slavery. A New Approach to South African History.

Once again Molema has indicated areas of concern without exploring the avenues further. Perhaps the grounds for this can be found in the following reasons: Molema was a child of his times, and owed a particular debt to his missionary mentors. He would renege on this obligation by directly or indirectly abusing those who had opened so many doors for him. An alternate answer could perhaps be sought in the limitations on perspective that have previously been discussed. It is also possible that some of the condemnation is evidence of Molema's inclination to Garveyism that Rich referred to previously.

Later writers do not display the same hesitancy in condemning the means and the motives of material and cultural alienation. Their interpretation of the agents of the loss operates at two levels: The first is that of force. The second is that of breaking the will of the people to resist in a variety of ways, other than by force of arms. Similarly the ascription of motives also varies.

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32 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p.343.

33 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 350.

34 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 240.

As the refreshment station at the Cape developed into a permanent settlement with an increased settler population, so the need for land, livestock, grain and slave labour increased. This need was, according to Dube, satisfied by means of extending the colonial frontiers through wars of aggression that disinherited the indigenous people.[35] Magubane feels that prior to the permanent British occupation of the Cape in 1814 the extension of the Cape frontier was basically aimed at obtaining extra pasturage.[36] From this viewpoint it can be concluded that this phase of expansion did not have the impact that subsequent events under British rule would have. It also implies that although the Trekboers intruded into alien land, an accommodation was reached that did not excessively impinge on the way of life of the interacting societies. It could be said that until the intervention of external government agencies, inter-group relations were in a state of flux, but without any really damaging or irreversible changes in the societies concerned. There is the suggestion that had it not been for British intervention then the early settlers and their descendants would have succumbed to pressure by the Blacks and been absorbed into the indigenous community.[37] This evolution was stopped by the growth of more stable colonial administrations that were more determined to establish and consolidate their authority. What the motives for this were, are seen differently by writers of different eras.

Molema's views on this question have already been outlined and need not be introduced again. His successors are far more concerned to divine vested interests, ideologies and even conflicting religious persuasions behind the move towards absolute control of the colonized. From Molema onwards the frontier wars would be seen as an integral part of the process of colonization and dispossession. It is interesting to note the

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35 D Dube, The Rise of Azania..., p. 35.

36 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 43.

37 A Nzo, "Our Anti-Imperialist Commitment". An article by Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General of the ANC in Sechaba, February 1970", quoted in ANC, ANC Speaks..., p. 76.

shift in nomenclature that Molema applies to the Wars of Dispossession. He refers to the first three as the Dutch-Xhosa Wars and those after 1795 as the Euro-Xhosa Wars. The reason for adopting the second name is that the wars were still conducted by the Dutch, but under British rule.[38] Once again Molema is showing his sensitivity towards offending Britain, which he saw as the epitome of what should be striven after, and as his and his people's ultimate protector.

Molema sees all wars originating in conflicting "international ethics and interests" that in the end can only be resolved by the assertion of superiority through the use of force. In the South African context the inevitability of conflict was exacerbated and made more frequent by the diametrically opposed world-views represented here.[39] In the light of his views on Western civilization and the benefits that he believes were concomitant to it, it can be assumed that he was actually condoning the wars. Should the colonists, as the bearers of this civilization, gain victory, then they could proceed to propagate their ideas to the benefit of Blacks. He was, after all, a strong proponent for adopting pristine Western civilization and Christianity and if war was a means to this end, then it was a `necessary evil'. Molema was prepared to turn a blind eye to the corrosive effects of colonization on traditional society because he could see little of benefit in that civilization which had earned Africa the epithet of the "Dark Continent".

Unlike Molema, Dhlomo takes a far less benign stance and condemns the creation of a people under yoke. They are not only burdened in the physical sense but also spiritually and intellectually.[40] To Dhlomo colonization and dispossession not only affected the material world, but in his view, most importantly, the cultural world. By adding this dimension a whole new vista of perceptions has been created that were to be

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38 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 90.

39 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 96.

40 HIE Dhlomo, "Malaria", in N Visser and T Couzens (eds), H.I.E. Dhlomo. Collected Works, p. 280.

expanded on by later and contemporary authors, commentators and critics. This latter development became increasingly prominent as the question arose as to why colonization succeeded and Black resistance failed. In many respects Dhlomo presaged diversification in interpretations through combining the concepts of the material and cultural worlds. Thus he argued that it was not surprising that Blacks were paid a high price for their cattle because man's soul does not come cheaply.[41] (This comment refers to a later era, but its sentiments are equally applicable to the earlier era.)

Dhlomo's primary concern was with acculturation and more specifically the degeneration of Black culture. Despite this concern he is more involved with the consequences of deculturation than in defining motives. The latter aspect featured prominently in the works of writers who emerged in the 1940s and later under the influence of the Africanists and their intellectual heirs, the advocates of Black Consciousness.

Tsotsi has no doubts about what brought the colonist to South Africa. The settler had come to confiscate the land and entrench White supremacy.[42] He does not widen his vision to include those aspects foreshadowed by Dhlomo. That both Ngubane and Noni Jabavu should refer to the era of the Wars of Dispossession as the "Hundred Years War", [43] has interesting connotations. Firstly it means that the wars were viewed as a continuum. Secondly it must be accepted that the population in its entirety is not going to emerge unscathed in all its dimensions. Thirdly the choice of name also appears to indicate that the wars were also fought over divergent beliefs, as they were in Europe. Fourthly it is perhaps indicative of an understanding of the past in terms of an analogy. Finally it also shows an appreciation of South African history in a wider context, albeit not that favoured by those who apply a

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41 HIE Dhlomo, "Drought", in N Visser and T Couzens (eds), H.I.E. Dhlomo. Collected Works, p. 432.

42 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 112.

43 N Jabavu, The Ochre People, p.37 and JK Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, p. 176.

materialist interpretation.

The Black perceptions of the motives underlying the wars of dispossession are various: These range from ideological and ethical conflicts to struggle for pasturage and residential land, as well as to lay the foundations for labour coercion.[44] The last four wars up to 1879 were conducted in a particularly savage manner, and through their scorched-earth policy, Magubane alleges, the Whites avoided genocide but finally robbed the Xhosa of all independent means of existence,[45] "as a necessary prelude to the exploitation of their labour."[46] Even where the condemnation is not as explicit the intention behind the wars is clear. After each war the colonial frontier was extended to include both the vanquished and their land. The aim was to increase their dependence on the economy of the Whites.[47] In a similar vein Kekana asks why, if the wars were punitive or pre-emptive, as they were claimed to be, White settlers persisted in encroaching on the frontier. If the colonists felt so threatened then it would be logical to expect them to keep as much distance as possible between themselves and their belligerent neighbours. In the light of this apparent illogicality Kekana concludes that the causes of the frontier wars must be sought in the avarice of the colonists rather than any need for defence.[48]

The trauma of dispossession was exacerbated by a new concept of land ownership. The traditional communal basis of land ownership had given way to a new method of land alienation. Title to land could be obtained

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44 DJM Ncube, The Impact of Capitalism and Apartheid on the Development of Black Trade Unions in South Africa, p. 14.

45 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 38.

46 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 61.

47 A Ngubo, "The Development of African Political Protest in South Africa, 1882-1910: An Analytical Approach", p. 36 and p. 56.

48 NS Kekana, "A History of the Black People in South Africa to 1795...", p. 109.

through a cash transaction.[49] Thus those who had survived the initial onslaught and had the means to rehabilitate themselves in an alien environment, found that they had to operate under exotic norms of land tenure.

Ultimately the whole aim of colonization and dispossession was to obtain Black land and cattle and eradicate their freedom so that Black bondage should subsidize White opulence.[50] Even if it was an historical accident that Whites appeared as the invaders and victors, very few Whites concede this, and take great pride in the civilization that gave them victory. Similarly few Blacks are prepared to concede that it was merely incidental that their oppressors were White.[51] Nkosi makes a very germane observation when he states:-

> We, the Black people, have come to understand the necessary connection between our historical background as enslaved colonial peoples and the lack of an aggressive technological thrust to give an edge to our humanistic cultures. It seems now only realistic to admit that our gods have failed us deeply in the only area where our survival as people was crucial.[52]

Even if he does continue to say that Blacks would be better employed in building their future, he does reflect a deep concern with how things went wrong. The answers lie chiefly in the cultural sphere, rather than in the material or political areas. Thus a confidence in the values of the past to build the future has to be restored. Thishas been an important facet of the Black Consciousness movement. Many of the writers referred to in this dissertation allude to this problem, even though

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49 J Sikakane, A Window on Soweto, p. 11.

50 N Mkele, "Trojan Horses of Apartheid", in M Mutloatse (comp and ed), Reconstruction..., pp. 269-270.

51 L Nkosi, "Black Power or Souls of Black Writers", in, L Nkosi (ed), Home and Exile and Other Selections, pp. 108-109.

52 L Nkosi, "Black Power or Souls of Black Writers", in L Nkosi (ed), Home and Exile and Other Selections, pp. 108-109.

Black Consciousness as an ideology or philosophy had not yet been conceptualized. Alternately they were the children of the Africanist age, but rejected the philosophy on either moral or ideological grounds. Despite this they were aware of the problem of the lack of a will to resist and sought the answer in the cultural arena, even if their analyses did not lead them to the same conclusion as those of the advocates of Black Consciousness. It should also be remembered that Garveyism, which presaged Africanism, had already made its presence felt in South Africa by the 1920s, and not exclusively amongst the educated elite.[53]

Whether dispossession was attained militarily or by more subtle means, such as the subversion of traditional values, Blacks no longer saw Whites as the benefactors that Molema perceived them to be. Whites might try to present themselves as the paragons of virtue, but Ngubane reckons they will be known for their rape, murder and pillage in the name of Christianity. The spoor of evil that they had left behind in Europe led into Africa, the Americas and Asia.[54] How had it come about that a Black writer, Ntantata, commenting on the Wars of Dispossession should see them as war between the forces of heathendom and Christianity, where Black defenders of their heritage were portrayed as the enemy and obstacle in the spreading of the Christian gospel?[55] In providing answers to the preceding questions the writers concerned wittingly and unwittingly, directly and indirectly adduced the blame to Christianity and its various agents such as the missionaries, education and colonial institutions.

The function of Christianity as the direct and indirect initiator of

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53 PB Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience..., p. 20;,Editor's note in M Swanson (ed), The Views of Mahlathi..., p. 185 and W Beinart, "The Amafeladawonye [the Die-Hards], in W Beinart and C Bundy, Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa..., p. 253.

54 JK Ngubane, Ushaba: The Hurtle to Blood River, p. 31

55 AC Jordan, "Towards an African Literature XI: The Harp of the Nation", in Africa South, Vol 4, # 2, January-March 1960, p. 111.

colonization has already been discussed. Therefore attention must be given to the impact of missionary intervention on aboriginal societies and the part that this played in facilitating colonization. The ambivalence of Black perceptions on the role of Christianity in colonization is a reflection of one of the most bitter dilemmas facing the African. For a long time Christianity expected an unequivocal orthodoxy that did not allow Blacks to accept Christianity conditionally. Acceptance of Christianity was only allowed on the terms of its propagators, even if it was known that while the convert closed his eyes in prayer the White man was plundering Black land and women.[56]

Christianity was not only condemned for this perfidy, but also for a more pernicious influence that divided households and tribes against each other; while all the time preaching a doctrine that further weakened the will to resist. To some commentators this consequence was an unfortunate adjunct of the advent of the new religion. To other critics it was a deliberate ploy by the evangelists to weaken their potential converts to the point where they sacrificed their existing beliefs to finally get physical and spiritual peace. A third group of writers chose to see the missionary as the handmaiden of colonialism and thus capitalism.[57]

The colonizer had found the moral basis for his presence on and usurpation of foreign soil by saying that he followed the missionary to give him protection in his work. Now it was time for the proselytizer to prove his credentials under the aegis of the secular colonial government. The missionary, with much of the threat of physical violence removed, was able to extend his field of activity into the subject peoples, rather than just act on the periphery of the colonial settlement. At the same time the missionaries became the formulators, executors and

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56 A Luthuli, Let My People Go..., p. 118.

57 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 31 and BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 59.

agents of government policy.[58] In fact they were aware that not all their actions were aimed at spreading their message.[59]

By gaining converts from traditional society Blacks were made to see that the Word was "about God and whiteness, the devil and blackness." This image was so successfully imprinted that "the tyranny of the symbolic, which introduced psycho-social dominance of the blacks by the whites" led to Black "culture developing negatively."[60] In other words Blacks were made to see themselves in terms of what they were not, which served to undermine their confidence in their own abilities, particularly to resist White penetration and domination. Colonization is "a history of violation that goes far beyond the juridical" but also "into that which is economic and social as well."[61]

Missionary teaching disrupted the natural order of things, starting with authority relationships within the family. By accepting the equality of the Holy Trinity the son, Jesus, became the equal of the father, God, which when transposed into the temporal sphere offended the Zulu sense of a proper relationship between father and son.[62] It is in the conflict between the Christian ideal and the temporal reality that Blacks found much disillusionment that added to their criticism of the impact of the early missionaries. They came to be seen as coming to set the "snare intended to rivet upon" Blacks "those chains" which have made them a "chattel placed in South Africa for the convenience of the colonist."[63] The paternalistic attitude of the missionary required him

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58 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 122.

59 S Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity", in A Stubbs (ed), Steve Biko..., p. 94.

60 NC Manganyi, "Culture and Identity: The Tyranny of the Symbolic", in NC Manganyi (ed) , Looking Through the Keyhole..., p. 67 and B Modisane, Blame Me on History, p. 185.

61 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. xii.

62 A Vilakazi, Shembe..., pp. 74-76.

63 B Modisane, Blame Me on History, p. 181.

to annihilate the antithesis of Christian culture, to vindicate Western civilization.[64]

Christianity did not have to resort to violence to attain its ends and those of the colonizer. It achieved its aims through deceit and subterfuge and denigrating those who opposed it.[65] The assumed superiority that underlay the denigration was a necessary part of evangelization, even if traditional religions contained elements that corresponded with Christian dogma.[66] Missionaries not only set out to destroy the self-definition of Blacks. They also set themselves up as arbiters in the evolution of Black culture.[67] In this way Blacks were denied the confidence to reconstruct themselves culturally after the onslaught of colonialism, and their dependence on the Whites intensified. The tighter the bondage of dependence the less inclined Blacks were to repossess what had been theirs. Bound by the intransigent assumption of superiority of the missionary, Blacks succumbed to what has been termed "cultural imperialism."[68] So the missionary is seen as an integral factor in the whole process of colonization, but there is some debate as to whether the role is incidental or deliberate. There are also divisions in the perception of whether the missionary's function was benevolent or malevolent.

It is to be expected that, irrespective of the perception of the missionary, the concern with his role is not restricted to that immediately surrounding the colonist. Writers are also concerned with the role of the missionary once the colonial presence had been established in

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64 E Mphahlele, The African Image, p. 136.

65 HIE Dhlomo, "Cetshwayo", in N Visser and T Couzens (eds), H.I.E. Dhlomo. Collected Works, p. 127.

66 A Vilakazi, Shembe..., pp. 36-37.

67 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 69.

68 A Vilakazi, Shembe..., pp. 36-37.

South Africa. The changes that were wrought in traditional society by the erosion of pre-colonial values have already been discussed. What still has to be discussed is how these changes were consolidated and entrenched, and what the aims and consequences of this were. All of the commentators ascribe an important function to formal academic education in this regard, even though they do not agree on what the results of this education were.

Once again the observations of Molema are taken as the benchmark, as he was undoubtedly the first to produce a work of the scope and depth that would serve as a routemarker for his successors. The consistency of Molema's views is also evident in his perceptions of the function and beneficence of education. Just as there is a consistency in his views, there is also a slight barb to his acceptance of the benefits of education. He argues for the furtherance of education according to Western norms in order to accelerate the process of "national emancipation."[69] Thus he also sees the whole process of colonization as one that led to subjugation. He is not, however, overly critical of this development because he tends to subscribe to the belief in a predestined evolution. This growth will lead his people away from a social system that is based in "utilitarianism" and the attainment of the common good rather than the advancement of the individual.[70] While he will not directly admit it, Molema also shows that the disillusionment among educated Blacks arising from the failure to be treated as the equals of Whites has led to an anger, that in turn has led to the growth of "generals, on the one side of South African political warfare."[71]

The "generals" had to play a dual role. On the one hand they would have to act as the inspiration to their not so educated brothers to obtain

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69 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 313.

70 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 113-133 and pp. 177 - 237.

71 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 320 and p. 317.

a higher education. On the other hand they had to act as the spokespersons for their people with the ruling classes.[72] It is on the question of the evolution of an educated elite, which arrogated to itself or fell heir to a leadership, role that the most argument amongst Black commentators exists, though there is today consensus that formal education is a necessity. In regard to the latter there is still a great deal of debate as to what the form and content of this education should be.

For early commentators there is little doubt as to what the function of the educated elite should be, and therefore they found little to fault in the development of this class, nor in the motives that underlay its origins. H Selby Msimang felt it intolerable that the intellectual should be subjected to the electoral whims of uneducated chiefs and councillors.[73] If this was the view of the educated elite, were they able to wear the mantle of leadership that they had assumed for themselves successfully? Aside from the reservations mentioned by Molema there is no doubt that they believed they could. But, then, one could hardly expect otherwise, because the evaluation was basically a public self-evaluation and the analysts could not see the position into which they and their forbears had been manoeuvred.

The mission schools were chiefly responsible for education amongst the colonized. From the minority that attended these schools evolved a leadership that played a significant role in the development of the colonial relationship. The nascent leadership was taught, outside of the three elementary disciplines, another equally important one. They had the rationale of colonialism inculcated into them which emphasized "the value judgements attached to the antonyms black and white."[74] From

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72 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 317.

73 "Proceedings and Resolutions of the Governor-General's Native Conference", 1923, [Extracts], (Published in Native Affairs Commission [Union] Report for 1923), quoted in T Karis and GM Carter (eds), From Protest to Challenge. Vol 1, p. 165.

74 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 67.

Magubane's comment it is clear that he is criticizing an educational system that created and confirmed divisions, rather than seeking to establish a synonymity based on a common humanity. By implication, because of the cardinal position held by mission schools, the missionaries and the creed that they brought are also criticized. Previously Noni Jabavu and Naboth Mokgatle indicated that the conversion to Christianity had a divisive impact on traditional society. But they were not as explicit in stating the dilemma of those who took their conversion further and embarked on the path of formal education. They failed to see that education sent innocents abroad who were unable to cope with the "tough and crude" demands of the real world.[75]

These comments were directed more at the content of education than its intention. The latter is an aspect on which the modern critics are particularly eloquent. However there is a particular dilemma in this eloquence because they are using a medium and format of expression that emanates from the system that they are castigating. But they do not feel the horns of the dilemma as acutely as their predecessors, who were condemned for allowing themselves to be finessed into the position where they could not criticize those who had contributed to, if not created, their leadership positions.

The whole colonial educational system was seen by Nagubane as an "ideological subversion".[76] Prior to this view JT Jabavu believed it fit and proper that an elite should develop out of the educational system. A further irony arose from his statement in that this elite adopted English as the means of communication.[77] It is ironic in that the leadership would be distinguished by educational differences that alienated

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75 HIE Dhlomo, "Sweet Mango Tree", in N Visser and T Couzens (eds), H.I.E. Dhlomo. Collected Works, p. 345.

76 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 67.

77 JT Jabavu, "Native Races in South Africa", in G Spiller (ed), Papers on Inter-Racial Problems. Communicated to the First Universal Races Congress Held at the University of London, July 26-29, 1911, p. 340.

it from the masses it was supposed to represent. Secondly by using English they had to communicate with their imagined constituencies in the language of their colonial masters. It is on these grounds that the modern critics asked whether their leadership role was to represent the views of their people to the colonial administration or to add a semblance of credibility to colonial edicts by acting as the conduit for the orders of the colonizer. To perform this function adequately a proper comprehension of English was a prerequisite.

Early educated elites did not see that they were part of an educational system that gave birth to the "outmoded ideas about race and our conservationist approach to culture and identity".[78] In any event the claimed respect for indigenous cultures is according to Franz Fanon, as has been previously stated, "tantamount to the most utter contempt, and to the most elaborate sadism."[79] The "contempt" and "sadism" was most vividly demonstrated in the status of the educated elite who emerged under the patronage of the colonial administration. They felt the pain of discrimination through exclusion from White social structures most acutely. They had attained the social norms which, theoretically, should have gained them access to colonial society. This access was denied them. When this situation became intolerable they found that their lines of retreat had been cut off. They could no longer identify with the heritage which their education had persuaded them to reject. Should they overcome this philosophical, moral and social problem they found that the system that they had abandoned had changed as a result of colonization. They were unable to function according to their understanding of traditional society and politics.[80] Thus the leadership of the time was denied access to what they considered the rewards of

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78 NC Manganyi, "Culture and identity: The Tyranny of the Symbolic", in NC Manganyi, Looking Through the Keyhole..., p. 71

79 F Fanon, Toward the African Revolution, p. 34 that is incorrectly cited in BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 69.

80 A Ngubo, "The Development of African Political Protest in South Africa, 1882-1910: An Analytical Approach", p. 29 and pp. 51 - 52.

their endeavours. At the same time they were precluded from returning to their true constituencies. Consequently they found themselves in a social and political limbo. The final humiliation lay in their continued manipulation by the colonial administration which persisted in giving them a superficial leadership status and function. They were not allowed to escape the trap that they had been inveigled into.

While early writers may not have appreciated their precarious position a modern writer such as Mphahlele had no doubt about the intention of the mission based education. The education sponsored by the colonial administration sought to supplant and eradicate the continuity of Black life by implanting a continuity designed by the colonist,[81] to ensure continued White domination. What had to be avoided was that the African should revert to his traditional humanism,[82] with its communality which would have led to a solidarity immune to the pressures of the colonizer. An additional argument is proffered by Mathabane who claims to be reporting the words of a Black evangelist in Alexandra. According to this account the proselytizer chastised a woman for not accepting the word of God. She had to realize that the arrival of Whites and Christianity was part of the divine plan to alleviate the suffering of the children of Ham. In effect, by rejecting, Whites the woman is rejecting Christian redemption. Subsequent comment by Mathabane confirms this perception that Christianity was a means to persuading Blacks to accept their subjugation.[83]

Missionary education not only divided the leadership from its constituencies but also divided families internally. The Black child was brought up to believe that all that did not tally with Western norms was contemptible. Thus children turned against their parents as the em-

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81 E Mphahlele, Afrika My Music..., p. 178.

82 E Mphahlele in an interview with NC Manganyi, published under the title "Looking in: In Search of Ezekiel Mphahlele", in NC Manganyi, Looking Through the Keyhole..., pp. 9-10.

83 M Mathabane, Kaffir Boy..., pp. 58-62.

bodiment of rejected values.[84]

Thus the colonizer and his agents achieved their aim of subjugation through various means and not only through physical coercion. Blacks had their confidence in their social relationships, and the culture that reflected them, undermined. To add to this trauma the agents of this erosion further divided this society against itself so that no community of purpose could evolve. Gradually an image emerges of a society that has had its social, economic, cosmological and cultural fabric frayed by the persistent abrasion of external forces. At the same time the warp and the woof of the entire social fabric was being unravelled by elements introduced into the society by the same forces that were responsible for the external corrosion.

Much of this comment is aimed at developments in the Cape, and do not comment on a second wave of colonization initiated by what became known as the Great Trek. Nor does it reflect a contemporaneous event in the prelude to the emigration of the Voortrekkers, namely the Mfecane/Difaqane/Lifaqane.

As the Great Trek grew out of the experiences and needs of the colonist on the eastern frontier region of the Cape colony, it is essentially an extension of the processes that had been initiated there. Therefore it has been decided to include aspects of it in this chapter. The question of the Mfecane is a bit more problematic. There is no doubt that there is both a causal relationship between the "times of upheaval" and the Great Trek. The Mfecane also contributed to the success of the emigration of the frontier farmers from the eastern Cape.

It is in dealing with the Great Trek that a definite linkage between current conditions and the past is established. It must be remembered that for many Blacks of the interior, that is those parts of South Africa penetrated by the Voortrekkers, their meeting with the Boers was

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84 S Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity", in A Stubbs (ed), Steve Biko..., p. 94.

the first significant contact that they had with Whites. Not only was it the first but it also laid the foundations for future Black-White relations.

When looking to the causes of the Great Trek the relative significance attached to the causes is a reflection of the ideology to which the particular writer subscribes. Thus Molema finds the reasons for the Great Trek in Glenelg's reversal of the annexation of the Queen Adelaide Province. More importantly there was the refusal to recognize the liberty of others, which resulted in the vehement reaction to the abolition of slavery in 1834.[85] These views are entirely consistent with Molema's world- and life-view. The significant point is that the emigrants had to be shown to be fleeing from a government that threatened to give citizenship an equal status on either side of the colour line.[86] Even those writers who identify with and apply a more materialist ideology tend to ascribe to the idea that Boers fled the pending equality in the Cape.[87] What was important to all the writers was to demonstrate that the political lineage of the present-day Afrikaner was one that originated in the denial of rights of others.

Where the writers differ is in what the aims and consequences of this denial were. Some argued that the discriminatory policies of the Voortrekker states were symptomatic of this attitude, and that these became policies of state after 1910. The climax of these policies had been reached in the contemporary apartheid policies. The evolution of this perception has created certain problems for its originators, particularly the early ones. Their argument was that because the emigrants were fleeing from the antithesis of their beliefs, the British, then the British must represent the epitome of government and the principles of government. What was perceived to be the British capitulation to Boer

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85 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 103, pp. 242-243 and p. 272.

86 JK Ngubane, An African Explains Apartheid, pp. 33-34.

87 M Pheko, Apartheid..., p. 41.

demands at the time of Union caused a considerable dilemma. It is, however, not intended to expand on this theme at this stage as it will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The modern writer did not have to wrestle with this apparent contradiction. Magubane, A contemporary author, contradicted the views of earlier writers and argues that Britain allowed the Great Trek to create a new defensive zone to the north against African attacks.[88] Similarly it is argued by Tsotsi that the Boers only succeeded by virtue of British support and that, in fact, the Voortrekkers would have been annihilated without British aid. In effect the emigrants were the trailblazers of British colonization.[89]

Whatever the ultimate interpretation of and significance attached to the Great Trek all writers are agreed that the actual emigration and the four decades immediately succeeding it were a time of dislocation and dispossession, irrespective of what drove the Boers out of the Cape. Plaatje gives prominence to a speech by Dr Abdurahman in 1913 in which he likens the Voortrekkers to a "desolating pestilence" who callously laughed at the devastation they wrought.[90] The Trekkers' aim was to continue the practices which had been prohibited by the passage of Ordinance 50 of 1828 and the abolition of slavery between 1834 and 1838.[91] The emigrants had taken umbrage at the passage of Ordinance 50 and emancipation and left the Cape to practise slavery once again.[92] These views are also echoed by Abrahams who adds an additional grievance by claiming that the emigrants believed that the freed slaves would be given Boer land by the Cape government. Consequently

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88 BM Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p. 45.

89 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 30 and p. 36.

90 ST Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa..., p. 156.

91 DMJ Ncube, The Influence of Apartheid and Capitalism on the Development of Black Trade Unions in South Africa, pp. 8-9.

92 B Head, A Bewitched Crossroad. An African Saga, p. 31.

there is regret that the frontier farmer had ever allowed the second British occupation in 1806.[93] The Retief Manifesto was a clear indication that "the trekker path in every part of South Africa was [to be] marked with bloodshed, land robbery, military and political suppression of the indigenous African people", which initiated the process of national dispossession.[94] More blandly put the Great Trek brought the Free State, Transvaal and Natal into being for Whites.[95] By creating an awareness of these territories the Trekkers were, in effect, opening up the territory to colonization.

In the British phase of colonization of the Cape an explanation for the facility of subjugation and dispossession had been sought and found in either the missionaries or military force. In the interior the same arguments would not hold because, after all, it was the Trekkers' stated intention to avoid contact with the indigenous peoples. Thus they were precluded from exerting those influences that the British sponsored missionary was able to do. What conditions pertained then that allowed the Boers to succeed without the ancillary forces that were available to the British? Generally it is held that internal divisions amongst the Blacks of the interior paved the way to their subjugation. The Mfecane and its attendant effects were seen as a major contributor in this regard.

To an extent Molema sees the Boer intervention in the interior as a necessity. He claims that the Mfecane heralded a period of stagnation that hindered any progress in social and intellectual advancement.[96] In the light of Molema's view on social evolution it can be assumed that the Great Trek and its aftermath were seen as an evolutionary necessity, even though he might have doubts about the agents of change.

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93 P Abrahams, Wild Conquest, pp. 29-33.

94 M Pheko, Apartheid..., p. 42 and p. 148.

95 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, pp. 14-15.

96 SM Molema, The Bantu Past and Present, p. 120.

Less concerned with the necessity of change was Tsotsi. His contention is that without the depopulation in Natal, occasioned by Shaka during the Mfecane, the Voortrekkers would not have managed to settle there.[97] This view directly contradicts that of D Dube who contends that Shaka, through his consolidation of state and army was in fact girding his loins for the colonial onslaught. Perhaps his somewhat generous attribution of Shaka's motives can be found in Dube's desire to refute LM Thompson's insinuation that Shaka was a psychopathic expansionist.[98] In a similar vein the causes of the Mfecane are attributed by Matsetela to a response to the penetration of merchant capital at Delagoa Bay.[99] The materialist interpretation does not reflect the forces that were unleashed which made people jettison "human nobility" in a bitter struggle for survival.[100] There is no indication that some of those who survived would become known as the "`people who had returned to meat-eating after the starvation of the (difaqane)'."[101]

Shaka's armies and the flow of refugees they precipitated entered a land of plenty and left a trail of desolation amongst a people that had no inkling of what lay in store for them and were thus not prepared for the upheavals that were to befall them.[102] So total was the impact that people's time scales were changed. They no longer counted time in harvests reaped, but in wars fought.[103]

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97 WM Tsotsi, From Chattel to Wage Slavery..., p. 38.

98 D Dube, The Rise of Azania..., pp. 30-32.

99 T Matsetela, "Uprootal and its Effects", in M Mutloatse (ed), Umhlaba Wethu..., pp. 28-29.

100 B Head, A Bewitched Crossroad. An African Saga, p. 22.

101 T Matsetela, "The Life Story of Nkgono Mma-Pooe: Aspects of Sharecropping in the Northern Orange Free State, 1890-1930", in S Marks and R Rathbone (eds), Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa..., p. 215.

102 T Mofolo, Chaka, p. 136 and p. 4.

103 B Head, A Bewitched Crossroad. An African Saga, p. 22.

Even though there might be differences of opinion on the causes of the Mfecane there appears to be unanimity on the perception that the upheaval amongst Blacks at this time was considerable. The impression is further created that these upheavals created a battle weary people who grasped at any opportunity that offered a semblance of stability. Alternately it is argued that the people had become so physically exhausted in the struggle for survival that they had no will to resist when the next wave of subjugation, the Great Trek, swept over them.

In the introductory paragraphs of this chapter it was mentioned that Blacks were far more concerned with their immediate situation. Part of this concern is reflected in discussing those events that contributed to the present. It is to be expected that the more immediate past has a far greater vitality. Many of the writers lived through the eras that are to be discussed in succeeding chapters. Alternately they were or had been in close contact with the generations that had lived through the social, political, economic, religious and cultural changes in society that followed on the mineral discoveries after 1870.

Despite the greater concern with the events of the immediate past, the foundations for the contemporary perceptions had to be sought in the relatively distant past. The events and consequences emanating from colonization, imperialism and dispossession had to be shown as the cornerstone of the current condition. In effect it had to be demonstrated that these events were not isolated incidents but part of a continual process that found its final expression in the present. The significance of the particular themes discussed in this chapter lies in their relevance to the perceptions that the writers possess of their current situation. Because the writers were creatures of their time their perceptions were also a reflection of the spirit of their time. Thus one finds the sometimes conflicting viewpoints that have come to the fore during this chapter. This apparent conflict becomes more pronounced when one moves onto the era to be discussed in the next chapter, as this era is much closer to the realm of experience of the writers concerned.