

Cape of torments

Slavery and resistance
in South Africa

Robert Ross

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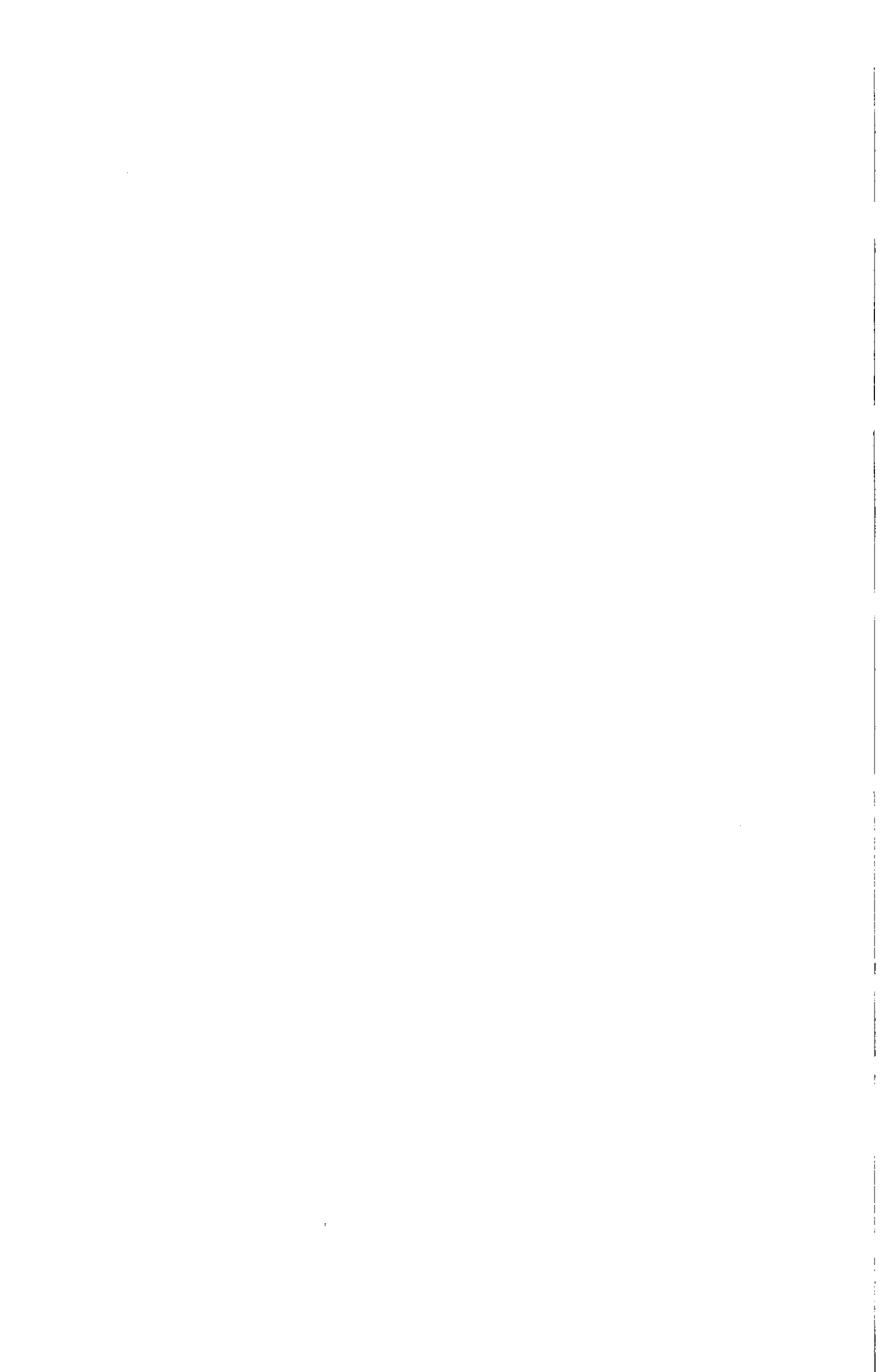
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For Tilla

and in memory of Johanna



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Abbreviations

- 'AYB': 'Archives Year-book for South African History'
CA: Cape Archives
c.s.: Cum suis
'JAH': 'Journal of African History'
LR: Landrost
'RCC': G. McC. Theal (ed.), 'Records of the Cape Colony',
36 volumes, London, 1896 -1905
'RCP': 'Resolutions of the Council of Policy'
'SSA': 'Collected Seminar Papers of the Institute of Common-
wealth Studies, London, The Societies of Southern
Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries'
VOC: Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (the Dutch East
India Company), and also the archives of that body,
held in the Algemene Rijksarchief, The Hague
XVII: The Heren XVII, the Directors of the VOC

Glossary

- baas: boss, master, hence baasskap: mastery.
- Bastard: of mixed descent, hence Bastard-Hottentot: someone of mixed Khoisan and white or slave descent.
- Bomvana: an Nguni-speaking group living in the southern Transkei
- Bosjesmans-Hottentot/Bushman: see San.
- burgher: citizen, a man who has been accorded rights of citizenry, and thus no longer in the service of the VOC.
- burgherraad: burgher council in Cape Town, also member of the Council.
- burgherwagt: civilian watch in Cape Town, see also ratelwagt.
- Caffer: in the eighteenth century this had two meanings (1) Xhosa, or more generally African, (2) hangman's or fiscaal's assistant.
- Cochoqua: A Khoikhoi group in the south-west Cape.
- coeligeld: see koeligeld.
- complot: plot, hence complotteren, to plot.
- coopman: merchant, an official rank in the VOC hierarchy, hence ondercoopman: undermerchant.
- Coranna: see !Kora.
- drossen: to runaway, desert, hence drosser, runaway, gedrost, ran away.
- fiscaal: public prosecutor, head of police.
- geweldig: fiscaal's subordinate, in charge of Cape Town's police.
- Gqunukwebe: mixed Khoisan-Xhosa group.
- Grigriqua (also Guriqua): Khoikhoi group living near Saldanha Bay.
- Griqua: Bastard group living north of the Orange River.
- Heren XVII: The directors of the VOC.
- Hottentot: see Khoisan.
- Khoisan: the indigenous inhabitants of South-western Africa, generally divided between the Khoikhoi (or Hottentots), who were herders with a more organised political structure, and San (Bushmen or Bosjemans-Hottentots), who were hunter-gatherers and raiders.
- kirry: stick, club.
- knegt: servant, generally a man hired by the VOC to one of the burghers, and acting as overseer.
- koeligeld: money earned by a slave in Cape Town, generally by retail selling or providing some service, which had to be turned over to his or her owner.
- !Kora: Khoikhoi group living along the Orange River, and later throughout Transorangia.

- legger: a barrel of wine containing 152 gallons.
mandoor: a slave headman, (in American usage, driver).
Mpondo: an Nguni-speaking group living in the eastern Transkei.
mud: a measure of volume for wheat and other grains, equivalent to a hectolitre.
Nama: a Khoikhoi group living in the north-west Cape and southern Namibia.
Ndebele: an Nguni-speaking group, arising after the 1820s, living first in the Transvaal and then in Zimbabwe.
Nguni: a Bantu language group, also the people who speak those languages.
ondercoopman: see coopman.
onderschout: see schout.
perstijd: the time of year in which grapes were pressed to make wine.
plakaat: edict.
politieruiter: mounted policeman in service of the landrost.
Poolsche bok: a rack, on which slaves were tied to be flogged.
posthouder: the commander of a VOC post.
ratelwagt: civilian watch in Cape Town; see also burgherwagt.
recognitiegeld: tax for a loan farm.
rijksdaalder: the coin of the Dutch republic, worth four shillings in 1795, thereafter known as Rixdollar.
schout: the fiscaal's second-in-command, thus also onderschout.
sjambok: a rawhide (or hippopotamus hide) whip.
slavenhuys: slave quarters.
Sotho: a Bantu-speaking group living in and around Lesotho.
taal: language.
tamboer: drummer.
tap: drinking shop.
Thembu: an Nguni-speaking group living north of the Xhosa.
Tswana: speakers of a Bantu language closely related to the Sotho, living in Transorangia, the Transvaal and Botswana.
uytjes: bulbs.
veldcornet: elected head of a subdistrict and its militia.
veldkos: wild food that can be gathered.
veldwachtmeester: an early designation for veldcornet.
volk: people, in South Africa often used for labourers.
Xhosa: an Nguni-speaking group living immediately to the east of the Cape Colony.

1 Introduction

In the winter of 1488, Bartholomew Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa. To that point that marks the division between the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, he gave the name 'Cabo Tormentuoso', because of the tempests he had to endure in his frail ships. Later, when they realised that the peninsula he had passed indeed marked the entry to the great trading world of the east that they sought, the Portuguese changed its name to the Cabo de Bonne Esperanze, the Cape of Good Hope.

The hopes of Bartholomew Dias and of his king João II were fulfilled. Within a decade Vasco da Gama had reached the west coast of India and for the next century Portugal was to prey on the commerce of the Indian Ocean and, until that pre-eminence was shattered by the Dutch and the English, to be a power in the world such as it never had been before, nor has been since. But for those who have come to live at the Cape the storms have not yet ceased. Ever since, a century and a half after Dias's voyage, the Dutch founded a colony there, life has been harsh for many, for most of the people who have lived at the Cape of Good Hope and in the country of South Africa which is the successor of Van Riebeeck's settlement. South Africa has become the most criticised, the most hated, land in the world. It was not so in the past, but that is merely because the criteria by which these things are judged have changed; and because it was not then the exception that it is now that it has become rich through the industrialisation following the discovery of mineral wealth some hundred years ago. Long before this, though, the Cape Colony was a brutal place. For longer than the period which separates us from abolition the ruling class of the Cape owned slaves, the colony's economy being organised around slave labour. And there has never been such a society that was not brutal in the extreme. A mild slave regime is a contradiction in terms. Slavery is a form of social oppression that is based on the use of force, which is always available to, and frequently employed by, the slave-owning class to impress its will on the slaves. If, somewhere in the world, there exists a social institution that is called slavery in which brutality and denigration are absent, then the concept has been stretched so far as to be empty and meaningless.

As a mild slave regime is impossible, everything touched by slavery is brutalised. At the Cape of Good Hope there are many exquisitely beautiful farm houses built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They are rightly the pride of South African

architecture and, with the numerous rock paintings of the hunter-gatherers, represent the high point in the visual arts of that country. They were built by slaves and with the proceeds of the exploitation of slave labour. They have been maintained intact very largely by the continued oppression of the farm labourers of the south-west Cape, most of whom are the descendants of slaves. Beautiful they may be, but neither they nor the society that built them can be the objects of romanticism.¹ The petals of the protea are as poisonous as those of the magnolia. The class that had these houses built had human beings plucked away from their homes and shipped from all the ports of the Indian Ocean to the Cape. Then they were worked in the fields, until they died. Until the abolition of the slave trade, there were few measures taken to ensure that the slave labour force was able to reproduce itself. The life of the slaves was harsh, short and frustrated. There were few women slaves, especially on the farms.²

In addition, the slaves were controlled by the massive use of judicial force. It is true that at the Cape the slave-owners themselves were forbidden to punish their slaves beyond a certain degree.³ They could only employ what was appropriate for 'domestic correction'. The slaves could even enter complaints with the central government when they considered this norm to have been exceeded. The government of the Dutch East India Company was concerned to maintain the monopoly of force in its own hands. This did not mean that the slaves were able to escape from the rigours of exceedingly vigorous punishment. They could be sent by the owners to the 'fiscaal' (the public prosecutor and head of the police) or to the local magistrate to be flogged or to work on the treadmill, more or less at their owner's discretion. For more serious offences they were subject to a legal system that exacted punishments of the utmost barbarity. Slaves convicted of theft were likely to be hanged. Those who had murdered other slaves or Khoikhoi would be broken on a wheel, with the 'coup de grace'. Killing a white would elicit the same punishment without the coup de grace, and in particularly violent cases this would be preceded by tearing eight pieces of the unfortunate slave's flesh away with red-hot pincers. When the victim was the slave's own master, even this was not enough. The condemned man would be impaled on a stake driven up his anus and left to die. If he were lucky, he would become unconscious in about two days.

The corollary of this viciousness on the part of the masters was that the slaves too were brutalised. There is a tendency for the romanticism and nostalgia for the life of the slave-owner to be replaced by a too-simple veneration of the noble slaves who maintained their dignity and their humanity in the face of the unspeakable atrocities of their owners. There were indeed noble and humane slaves, just as there were some kind, if patriarchal, masters, but neither type was the rule, certainly not at the Cape and probably nowhere else either. There is no getting away from

the fact that many of the slaves acted in ways that are against the norms of any human society. When faced by the institution-alised barbarism of the slave regime, they responded with their own atrocities. This, of course, is the kernel of my argument. It is against reason to suppose that a brutal society would not turn many of its members into brutes, and it is also implausible that all those brutes would be among the slave-owning class, although of course many of them were. In fact, to gloss over the warping of men and women's values and personalities by the fact of their bondage is to negate the reality of much of their experience and, in a subtle way, to whitewash the institution of slavery itself.

In this book I will be analysing a facet of the responses of the Cape slaves to the fact of their slavery and to the society in which they lived. The basic fact of that society so far as the slaves were concerned was that they were at the receiving end of a peculiarly vicious method of extracting economic surplus by a ruling class. To a certain degree the divisions within that class allowed the slaves a certain lee-way.⁴ Nevertheless, such benefits as this may have brought them must not in any way be allowed to outweigh the core fact of the legalised violence to which the Cape slaves were subjected.

This coin has two sides. As E.P. Thompson recently remarked, no worker known to historians has ever had surplus-value taken out of him without finding some way of fighting back.⁵ This is perhaps especially true of slave societies. It is necessary to stress the point that resistance, not acquiescence, is the heart of the history of human slavery.⁶ By their resistance, indeed by all their actions - the slaves of the Cape helped to shape the society of the colony in which they were forced to live, with results about which they were not always glad. I am therefore attempting to analyse part of one side of the dialectical relationship that led to the construction of early South African society.

This book, then, is about the attempts of Cape slaves to better their lives by taking actions which their masters did not sanction, of which they did not approve and which, when they had the chance, they punished severely. As such, it is written in the descriptive rather than the analytical mode. I have tried to be concrete, to tell stories of particular individuals, with names, as often as I could recover them, and in this way to expound the hidden structures of life at the Cape.

The most obvious problem for the historians of slave resistance at the Cape might be the absence of a large-scale rebellion. Pace the penultimate chapter of this book, which examines the two small risings that did occur from other points of view, the explanation of this phenomenon is in fact no problem. In a review of the various slave rebellions in the *New World*, Eugene D. Genovese recently presented a list of eight unweighted conditions 'that favoured massive revolts and guerilla warfare'.⁷ These were

(1) the master-slave relationship had developed in the con-

4 Introduction

text of absenteeism and depersonalization as well as greater cultural estrangement of whites and blacks; (2) economic distress and famine occurred; (3) slaveholding units approached the average size of one hundred to two hundred slaves, as in the sugar colonies; (4) the ruling class frequently split either in warfare between slaveholding countries or in bitter struggles within a particular slaveholding country; (5) blacks heavily outnumbered whites; (6) African-born slaves outnumbered those born into American slavery (creoles); (7) the social structure of the slaveholding regime permitted the emergence of an autonomous black leadership; and (8) the geographical, social, and political environment provided terrain and opportunity for the formation of colonies of runaway slaves strong enough to threaten the plantation regime.

Of these eight conditions, only one was unequivocally present at the Cape. Foreign-born slaves decisively outnumbered the 'creoles'.⁸ Arguments could be made for a couple of others, but only by stretching the evidence. Colonies of runaway slaves were founded, but they never grew to the size necessary to challenge the colonial regime, since they were spread along the length of the mountain chain and the largest consisted of at most sixty men and women - and generally of far fewer. There were also a number of wars affecting the Cape. The British twice conquered the colony, in 1795 and 1806, but the degree to which this led to genuine conflict among the ruling class can be seen from the fact that in 1806 the Burgher Senate of Cape Town held sessions to arrange the supply of food for the Batavian forces up to the date at which the town was captured and then, without a break, performed the same office for the British even though the Dutch governor had not yet surrendered.⁹

On one occasion, a slave who had heard rumours of a French attack on the colony tried to persuade his fellows to rise against their masters, threatening them that 'we will kill all the slaves and hottentots who do not want to work with us, as well as the Christians.'¹⁰ The attempted rising was a fiasco, however, and the instigators were hanged - they had gathered no adherents - and these were all the repercussions war and political strife seem to have had for slave rebelliousness in the Cape Colony.¹¹ Neither the affair that led to the sacking of Governor Willem Adriaen van der Stel in 1707 nor the Patriot movement of the 1780s were vigorous enough to threaten the basic fabric of Cape society, even though they were the two major political movements of burghers against the VOC leadership and, at least in the former case, were accompanied by fears that the slaves were getting out of hand.

None of the other five conditions that Genovese has suggested are applicable to the Cape. There were a few absentee owners at the Cape, but the relation between master and slave was

generally immediate. For all the booms and slumps in the Cape economy, these never led to any suspicion of starvation, even among the slaves, since the colony was dependent on locally produced food which seems always to have been sufficient. Slave-holding units were always small. In 1773, for instance, no slave-owner had more than 101 slaves, while only ten held 50 or more.¹² Although slaves generally outnumbered the whites, the ratio was never heavy, even if the latter is taken by district and the Khoisan are included along with the slaves. Nor finally, can a slave leadership be discerned emerging during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In short, the relationships of power were too heavily in favour of the whites for a large or even medium-scale revolt ever to break out at the Cape.

The lack of rebellions does not mean, of course, that the slaves acquiesced in their slavery. They expressed their discontent in many ways, but above all by deserting. In this book, therefore, I intend to bring a number of these runaways forward out of the distant background they have so far occupied in the historiography of the Cape Colony.

This work, then, is about struggle and conflict, as indeed almost any work on South African history must be, since conflict has been a major theme of the country's history ever since the beginning of colonial rule. However, this book is not, as a result, about class or about any other collectivity except those imposed by the ruling order.¹³ Classes in the nineteenth-century European sense of the term could not and did not exist at the Cape. It may be asked, then, what was struggling? The answer, of course, is that no thing was engaged in struggle. People were. The masters were attempting to implement an aggressive, conservative policy. They hoped to maintain and improve the current order of exploitation, for the betterment of their domination and profit. Against them, the slaves were struggling to counter this continual offensive and thereby to improve their personal lots. But it was and remained a personal, individual matter. The slaves (and those Khoisan who were forced into an equivalent position) were not able to act in unified ways that allowed the growth of 'true' classes. The slaves were atomised. There is no sense of slave community in South Africa, except in Cape Town - and it is thus predictable that it was precisely in the city that political militancy of a communal type became possible during the course of the nineteenth century. But even this had to wait until after emancipation. There are no signs before then that the individual 'criminality' (as the masters and mistresses saw it) took on wider connotations. The only slave 'plot' in the city turns out on investigation to evaporate into little more than the vapourings of a white panic.¹⁴

In the countryside, in contrast, even the degree of communality that can be observed in Cape Town was absent. The farms were too scattered, the numbers of slaves on any one farm too few, the control of the masters too pervasive. That the slaves

often behaved in much the same ways can be ascribed to the similarity of the situations in which they found themselves. These led them to fight as individuals, not to form a culture of resistance that could encompass them all. Perhaps this is inherent in the condition of being a slave, and certainly serious slave rebellions are very rare phenomena, in comparison to the numbers of societies in which slavery has been a crucial institution.¹⁵ But for the societies of the New World contemporaneous with colonial South Africa, it is claimed that a slave culture was created which formed the basis of what might be called class consciousness, stretching that concept only a little, and which stiffened the backbone of black protest. But it would require a torturer's rack to stretch the normal meaning of that term far enough to cover what can be observed at the Cape.

Although I do not believe it to be the case, it could be claimed that this situation is an artifact of the information available to historians. A comparison with work on the slaves of the United States will perhaps illustrate the problem. With the partial exception of investigations of the Malay community of Cape Town, there has been in South Africa very little collection and analysis of folk-tales, stories, songs, in short the oral literature of the south-west Cape.¹⁶ Out of this, it might have been possible to reconstruct facets of slaves' and ex-slaves' experience in the way Americanists have been able to recreate slave culture.¹⁷ And it is not only the lore that is missing. In comparison with the United States, the number of descriptions Cape slaves gave of their life is meagre in the extreme. Whereas for the USA there exist a good eighty slave autobiographies, of greater or lesser reliability, and the texts of two thousand interviews with ex-slaves,¹⁸ for the Cape there are probably no more than twenty analogous pages, relating to two successful runaways.¹⁹ Even the plantation records are absent, so we cannot reproduce the uses to which these have been put to reconstitute the internal dynamics of slave families or the ambiguities of the relationship between slave and master or mistress.²⁰

The temptation in such a situation might be to abandon work on class conflict and concentrate on what is, in this work, rather sketchy and incomplete, despite plethoras of information, namely the description of the development of the economy and the place of the slaves within it.²¹ I recognise that the relationship between these sorts of concerns and those that are more central to this book is dialectical. Each facet of the society continually influences the ways in which the other will develop. These are the circumstances not of their own choosing under which men and women make their own history. To concentrate on one side of the dialectic and to give scant attention to the other is to imbalance the picture. If, then, this book is imbalanced, so be it.

The decision to concentrate on that one side of the theoretical relationship (between struggle and 'socio-economic structure') and, at least for the time being, to pay little attention to the

other, did not derive entirely from my own temperament. There were also very strong practical considerations, stemming from the discovery of an exceedingly voluminous (and, exceedingly verbose) mass of source material in the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague. These were the records of the Court of Justice in Cape Town covering almost the whole period of Dutch East India Company (VOC) rule. They contain the minute books of the court, the prosecutor's demands, backed up by legal argument, the court's eventual sentence and, most precious of all, the depositions of witnesses and the confessions of the accused. In short, they are, in archeological terms, the 'material deposit' left by the exercise of judicial terror at the Cape.

My discovery was relative, of course, since there exist at least three copies of most of the material - despite its being purely in manuscript - and these can be found inventoried in the archives in two - perhaps even three - continents. Moreover, they have been used by other historians, notably by J.L.M. Franken, Richard Elphick and James C. Armstrong, though not to answer in detail the sort of questions I raise in the course of this book.²²

The court cases tell much about the life of the slaves and their masters, but they are also crucially silent about much. The problem is that for an event to be recorded in the judicial records it must have been something out of the ordinary. Only with the modern conveyor-belt proceedings of the South African pass-law courts can men and women be tried every day for everyday actions. Before then, 'criminals' were a highly unrepresentative, tiny fraction of the population. Again, in the old Cape Colony, the administration of 'justice' was of such severity, such violence, that second offences were a virtual impossibility, unless they were committed in the abnormal circumstances of Robben Island, then as now the prison of South Africa (though now there are others besides the Island). Very often, of course, what was unusual in the matter was that the 'criminal' got caught. Things that were the normal practice for survival among the slaves might be criminal in the eyes of their masters, and, knowing this, the slaves made sure their masters did not find out what was going on. Only rarely, for instance, could the Court of Justice penetrate the world of 'domestic theft and receiving' of Cape Town as the slaves were able to finance their pleasure - above all wine and gambling, but also opium-smoking - by stealing from their masters and passing the goods (above all cloth) on to the Chinese community that for the first half of the eighteenth century had the receiving business in its own hands. The Chinese had been recruited for the work, it would appear, most of them having been sent to the Cape as punishment for similar crimes in Batavia. They could then dispose of the goods to the sailors who had little objection to such illegality, since all private trading to Europe was in itself against the law and there was thus no extra incentive for them not to touch stolen goods.

On other occasions, what was extraordinary was the reaction of the authorities. They always knew that the colony could get out of their control. It never actually did - and one of the main problems of this book is to find out why not - but at times the members of the Court of Justice and the Council of Policy believed that that moment was near. As a result they began bringing slaves before the court for actions which in other years would have earned the slaves no more than a painful visit to the Caffers, though no doubt that was bad enough. Especially in the 1730s and to a degree early in the 1760s, the regular life of the Cape Town slaves becomes clearer for us because what was tacitly accepted in normal times was now persecuted.²³

On the other hand, although the action that brought a man or woman before the Court of Justice may have been unusual, it frequently occurred within a humdrum context. In the crime records slaves can be found eating, sleeping, cutting wood, working in the smithy, bringing in the harvest, pressing the vines and getting drunk at the master's expense and without permission when the harvest is in. One slave, April, had lived alone in the sand-dunes north of Cape Town for years, collecting shells to be burnt for lime, but this is only known because in 1742 he was arrested for harbouring runaways. The slave 'man-door' on the farm of Marten Melck slept in the women's quarters, but this detail, so suggestive of social relations on the farm within the slave community there, only comes to light because he was assaulted by two other slaves as he got up one morning.²⁴ Again, to move outside the slave community, there is no description of the travels of a farmer to market to rival the one given by Willem van Wyk in 1743. He tells how he managed his oxen, where he spent the nights, how he used his extended kinship network to find lodgings and hospitality, how long it took him to travel from north of the Piquetberg to Cape Town and what he was carrying with him. But these reminiscences were deliberately preserved for posterity, because his step-daughter, who travelled with him to Cape Town and remained there, got pregnant and accused Van Wyk of incest on the journey. Parts of Van Wyk's story - precisely what the sleeping arrangements were each night - are thus suspect, but the deposition as a whole gives an otherwise unavailable texture to our knowledge of the early trekboers.²⁵

Nevertheless, at bottom the most interesting and the most telling information to be found in the records concerns the crimes themselves. It is not as a painting by Claude, where the background and the landscape dwarf the action into insignificance. Rather the assaults, the robberies and the murders that the Cape slaves committed and for which they were punished provide the most important motif that dominates the whole scene.

How are we to judge these crimes? In their work on crime in eighteenth-century England, the authors of *'Albion's Fatal Tree'* initially made a distinction between two kinds of offence and offenders.

There are 'good' criminals, who are premature revolutionaries or reformers, forerunners of popular movements - all kinds of rioters, smugglers, poachers, primitive rebels in industry. This appears as 'social crime'. And then there are those who commit crime without qualification: thieves, robbers, highwaymen, forgers, arsonists and murderers.

As they progressed, however, they found that the two concepts collapsed into one another. Very often the same sort of people were punished for both sorts of offence. There was no regularity as to which criminals were protected by their fellow villagers or townsmen from the arm of justice. Many criminals who might seem to be engaged in activities against the economic exploitation of the many by the few - notably poachers and smugglers - were brutal in the extreme to those whom they feared might betray them. The terror of the authorities had brought forth a kind of counter-terror among its adversaries.²⁶

Something very similar can be seen in the case of the Cape slaves. It would be very tempting to see resistance, proto-rebellion and the stirrings of class consciousness in every action by a slave against his master that brought him before the Court of Justice. This might in fact not be stretching the matter too far. Very often, when a slave had been punished too hard by his master or by the knegt,²⁷ or indeed when such punishment was threatened, the slave responded by assaulting and often killing his tormentor. Most of the attacks of slaves on whites were motivated by such considerations. Not infrequently this would be followed by the slave running amok through the streets of Cape Town, cutting down every man, woman or child, slave or free, he met, until finally he himself was killed.²⁸ A clearer example of resistance could not be wanted, even if it was a very individualistic matter. If this was the regular turn of events, there would be no problems. Slaves would be 'good' criminals, directing their energies against their wicked oppressors and being barbarously tortured as a result. Unfortunately for such a fairy story, it would seem as if slave murders were far more rarely directed against the whites than against fellow slaves or against the Khoi, their partners in degradation. Unless these further killings, assaults and robberies are ignored, the initial black-and-white pattern (with, of course, the whites as the blacks) becomes disturbed. Like the so-called 'Cape Coloured' population itself, the morality of the matter comes in all intermediate shades.

Luckily, however, the historians' job is not to dole out prizes to those who were farthest along the most progressive path. Rather, they have to try and understand the roots of human behaviour in the past, whether they approve of it or not. Above all they have to keep matters in perspective, never to let them escape from the context in which they occurred. At the Cape of Good Hope, that context was exceedingly unpleasant for the majority of those who lived there, the slaves and, increasingly,

the Khoisan. The slaves reacted in a variety of ways to their situation. Many resigned themselves to living out their lives in bondage. But this acquiescence was purely relative and at sufferance. There was always the chance that it would spill over into violence. A particularly vicious master would bring forth repeated resistance on the part of his slaves,²⁹ but this was almost always an individual act. Concerted slave rebellions were exceedingly rare at the Cape. Moreover, if they saw the chance, the slaves would leave, and did so in large numbers. The major part of this book is indeed about these runaways. Alternatively, the pressure of slavery would lead to individuals cracking up, with the results being seen in the sexual life of the slaves and in the murders and assaults of one slave against another.

So, by a chance of evidence, we know much about the violent acts (whoever may have been the victims) of the Cape slaves, and relatively little about the patterns of daily life.

The crime records, the major source of our knowledge of the slave world, provide scraps since they have preserved a massive amount of testimony deriving from the slaves themselves. Rather, it derived indirectly from the slaves. The Court of Justice worked entirely from written material; the prosecutor collected his evidence, had it copied and circulated it to the members of the court. Occasionally there is mention that a case had to be put off for a week because the members of the court had not yet had time to read all the material. As a result there are numerous depositions and confessions above the mark of the slaves. There are also the reports of their interrogations which were presented to the court in question-and-answer form. But these records have been filtered through so many sieves that the grit of reality (as distinct from truth, which survives) has tended to be lost. In the first place the depositions are often translations. Very many of the slaves could not speak Dutch and interpreters were often needed to render the statements into that language, generally from Malay or Portuguese;³⁰ secondly, even if the original interrogation was in Dutch, the conventions of eighteenth-century officialdom translated the statements that were made into excruciatingly complicated linguistic formulations. A sentence of three hundred words is by no means unusual. This cannot be a precise reflection of reality since no one ever spoke like that. Far too often the conventional convolutions have robbed the statements of whatever spontaneity and life they may have had, even in the overbearing atmosphere of the interrogation rooms and given by men and women rightly afraid of a gruesome death.³¹ All the same, distorted as it may be, out of the evidence come pictures of the slaves' lives from which it is possible to reconstruct parts of the life-experiences of very many of the oppressed at the Cape.

2 The beginning and the setting

As in the New World, the first large group of slaves to be imported to the Cape included the first to run away.¹ In 1655, only three years after the foundation of the colony, one of the few slaves already at the Cape ran away and was never heard of again.² On the 28 March 1658, nearly six years after the foundation of the colony, some 174 slaves were landed from the Dutch East Indiaman, 'Amersfoort'.³ They had come originally from Angola, and had been captured from the Portuguese off the coast of Brazil. Many of them were young, and in his diary Van Riebeeck records that these would not be able to be put to work for four or five years.⁴ Nevertheless, on 3 June, seven of these Angolan slaves, five men and two women, left the Cape and headed northwards. The initiative in this matter was taken by the eldest of the slaves, who worked cutting wood, but he was able to persuade four others who had been engaged in the cornfields and one who did duty in the castle itself to join him. The slaves - we do not know their names - could be mobilised by an appeal to ethnic consciousness, or, to put it less strongly, they shared a common language and origin within Angola. The other Angolans described them as 'up-country cannibals' (*bovenlanders ende menscheneeters*).⁵ A few days later they were reported by the Khoikhoi to have been seen on the coast in the direction of Saldanha Bay, but thereafter they disappeared from the sight of their short-time masters, and thus from the historical records. Maybe they were incorporated into, for instance, the Nama, or - it is not entirely impossible - found their way back to Angola.⁶ It is more likely, however, that they starved to death on the beach, or were killed by the Khoisan.

Their escape served as an inspiration for many other slaves in the as-yet-minuscule colony at the Cape of Good Hope. Throughout the rest of that winter slaves continued to desert in large numbers. By the end of August there were in total twenty-eight slaves still at liberty, most of whom belonged to the various freeburghers, as the whites outside the Company service were called. Moreover, a number of others had been recaptured at various times, often as a result of the help of the Khoikhoi of the south-west Cape, who were rewarded for their success, but also cajoled into acting as policemen for the colony. A number of the leading figures among the Khoikhoi were held hostage until at least the Company's slaves were returned - though the Angolans were never taken.⁷ Some of the Khoi believed that their own enemies had passed the runaways along the trade

routes to the Inqua, or Hamconqua well to the east. Probably this was merely an association of ideas, since slaves who were used for agricultural work would be of most use, so they thought, to that group of Khoikhoi who engaged in cultivation - albeit of dagga (cannabis).⁸ The slaves found some way of surviving, evidently, although the Cape authorities did not discover precisely how. The slaves continued to escape, despite the fact that the Council of Policy ordered that all adult men belonging to the Company should be locked in chains and allowed the burghers to do the same with their slaves.⁹

From then on, until slavery was abolished 180 years later, and in a certain sense even after that, slaves continued to run away, in varying numbers, in all directions and for diverse reasons. At times the runaways threatened the order of the colony. After the initial outburst in 1658, this seems next to have happened in 1690. There had been indications of growing unrest earlier, and in 1688 a group of eight slaves led by a free black stole arms and fled inland. Intercepted by a commando¹⁰ in the shrubbery of a dry river bed, four of the runaways were captured after a fire fight in which a burgher was wounded. Two years later four slaves took more direct action against the colony, attacking a farm in the neighbourhood of Stellenbosch, which had been founded a year or two before.¹¹ One burgher, Bastiaan Berghman, was killed and another, Gerrit Willems de Vries, severely wounded. According to one of the slaves who was later captured, they intended to burn the cornfields when they were ripening, take the white women prisoner and then head for Madagascar. It has been claimed, deprecatingly, that the slave who made this statement - his name is not known - was delirious, and certainly he died a few days later of wounds received while being captured. However, there seems no reason why his statement should not be taken at face value, unless it is believed that any attempt at revolution is in itself evidence of madness. The Dutch took the movement seriously. Patrols of soldiers, burghers and Khoikhoi were sent out and rewards were offered for the capture of the slaves - the Khoikhoi were to receive arak, meat and tobacco, if they were the successful ones. Eventually, three of the four were killed and the fourth captured after he had come down from Table Mountain to buy bread in Cape Town.¹²

The timing of these events is significant. They occurred at the moment that the Cape Colony began to expand away from the confines of Table Mountain and its slopes across the Cape flats into the richer agricultural lands of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein. At least one of the slaves involved himself lived in Stellenbosch. He had been sold some four years earlier by an official of the company to a farmer there.¹³ Evidently he resented the change. The heavy work on the farm, the deprivation of the company provided in the town, the closer supervision of his master, these all led him to feelings of insupportable exploitation, to decisions to take action against the masters. Such feelings and

decisions would recur throughout the next century.

SLAVE LIFE

In the slaves' reaction to, and creation of, this new society of the Cape, two things mattered above all: the work they were forced to do and the ways of life they were able to create. These developed out of a synthesis between the cultures of their lands of origin and that of the Dutch. What they brought with them, however, was exceedingly heterogeneous. There is no sense in which the slaves who were transported to the Cape possessed cultural heritages with even the loose structural compatibility that has been suggested for the West Africans taken to the Americas.¹⁴ They derived almost exclusively from five areas: the Indonesian archipelago, Bengal, South India and Sri Lanka, Madagascar and the East African coast. They had been bought in the slave markets of Batavia, Chinsura, Cochin, Boina and Delagoa Bays or Mozambique Island, brought there by an as-yet-little-understood network of traders including Bengali Banians, Buginese trader-pirates, Chinese junk captains, Sakalava kings, Prazeros on the Zambezi, Portuguese officials in Delagoa Bay and south to Natal or kidnappers in south India.¹⁵ From there they were sent to the Cape, very often in small numbers and semi-illegally as the 'cargo' of sailors and officials on VOC ships, otherwise in more regularised, probably large French and Portuguese slaving ships which sold off a number of their generally sickly slaves on their way to the New World.¹⁶

At present it is impossible to give the relative proportions of slaves imported to the Cape from these five main areas, just as no study has been made which can give, even approximately, the total number of men and women forcibly migrated to the colony. Impressionistically, Malagasies were the largest group, since they were thought to be especially suitable as agricultural labourers, although in the last years of the slave trade large numbers of East Africans were also imported as agricultural labourers.¹⁷ Earlier in the century, and especially in Cape Town, Indonesians were perhaps the most numerous.

As to the cultures of these areas, it is of course possible to discern structural principles common to the societies of the East Indian archipelago. This is the classic *ethnologisch studieveld* of Dutch anthropologists, who have been able to find much that is general to all Indonesian societies in such matters as kinship, ritual and myth.¹⁸ Some affinity may also be seen between the island and the Indian sub-continent, whence first Hinduism and then Islam diffused to the archipelago, and also with Madagascar, where an Indonesian language is spoken. Indeed Madagascar forms a bridge between the two shores of the Indian ocean, in ethnographic and historical terms, since the Red Island was colonised from both Africa and Indonesia.¹⁹ Thus it is possible to

find various pre-colonial links between all the major areas from which the Cape slaves were drawn, but they are far too tenuous for there to be any sense in describing a common culture beneath the surface of the various societies from which the Cape slaves derived. To cope with the problems of human existence - the explanation of misfortune, the construction of ritual, the grammar of relationships, the necessity for communication - the Cape slaves had to acculturate to each other as much as to the Europeans who were their masters.

This is seen most clearly in matters of language. It was by no means unknown for slaves who shared a land of origin to converse in their native language. Indeed, the only known letter written by a Cape slave was in Buginese, in that language's ancient script.²⁰ However, there were only three languages in general use at the Cape in the eighteenth century, Dutch, Malay and Portuguese Creole. The latter pair were the languages of the port world of the Indian Ocean with Malay - which has now, as Bahasa Indonesia, become the official tongue of the archipelago - slowly ousting Portuguese as the century wore on. But the language of the *feringhi* (as Europeans were known to the world of Islam) maintained its status long enough for the term 'lingua franca' to have lost its original reference to the Portuguese, who, like all Western Europeans since the time of the Crusades, had been known as Franks to the world of Islam. Significantly, one of the early uses of the term in something approaching its modern sense is to be found in a description of the speech of the Cape slaves.²¹ Though they were not Europeans, Portuguese was their *lingua franca*. That language, probably intermingled with many Malay words, plastered over the differences between their native tongues and also, very often, allowed them to communicate with their masters and mistresses. The Court of Justice did not need an interpreter to interrogate a slave who could speak Portuguese, although his or her testimony would be translated before it was presented in written form to the full court. Against this, in dealing with those for whom Malay was the second language, an interpreter was required.²² Many of these, though, were Chinese criminals banned to the Cape by the Batavian Court of Justice.

Much the same process can be seen in the growth of Afrikaans. This simplified form of Dutch entirely replaced Malay and Portuguese at the Cape during the nineteenth century, as forced immigration from the East came to an end and the Cape's links with the trading world of the south China and Java seas was broken. But the simplification had already occurred by then, it would seem. Exactly when this happened is difficult to ascertain, since the skill of writing was acquired together with a certain knowledge of Dutch grammar and with the ability to read the 'correct' taal, the *Hollandsch* of the 'Staten Bijbel'. Some idea of the language spoken in the eighteenth century can be gained from studying the letters of marginally literate frontier veldcornets²³ but only during the first half of the nineteenth

century were texts written in the dialect that was to become formalised as Afrikaans, either in theatrical sketches featuring 'Hottentots' or in Islamic devotional works which gave a phonetic rendering of Cape Malay speech in Arabic characters.²⁴ These two cases are significant. The earliest clear examples were either put into the mouths of so-called 'Coloureds', or were written by them. Although these do not explain the process whereby Afrikaans came into being, they can be taken as symbols for that process. Afrikaans emerged, so it can be maintained, not because tendencies already at work were accelerated within the linguistic developments of Dutch, but through a process of creolisation. Dutch was not the first language for so many of those who had to speak it during the first century and a half of the Cape Colony's history. Some of these were Europeans, for the VOC had many Germans and Scandinavians among its employees, but most were slaves and Khoisan.²⁵

This is not a popular thesis among the white Afrikaners of modern South Africa. H.J.J.M. van der Merwe, for instance, once claimed that, with research, 'it becomes completely clear that Afrikaans originated in and from the spoken language of the whites'.²⁶ From their language, that is incontrovertible, but in it? Contact with Europe remained sufficiently intense for the creation of a new language, purely by the principles of natural selection as it were, to be most unlikely in such a short time. The language was modified in becoming the speech of the Asians and Africans, or rather in becoming the medium of communication between master and servant. As such it was, and remains, an expression of the exploitative social relationships of colonial South Africa.

Afrikaans, then, is a language created out of the interaction of slaves (and Khoisan) with Europeans. In this sense, too, it is a paradigm for the construction of slave culture. The slave trade had torn the slaves away from their roots in Africa or in Asia, and some new patterns of meaning had to be found in South Africa. The very diversity of the slaves' ethnic origins and the piecemeal nature of the slave trade meant that the processes of acculturation within South Africa had to be particularly speedy.

To speak of acculturation, however, does not imply that there was a 'culture' in which the slaves could participate. It may perhaps be useful to distinguish between vertical and horizontal acculturation, that is to the dominant culture of the country in which the immigrants - for slaves were immigrants - found themselves, or to the sub-culture of the particular groups in which the newcomers found themselves. At the Cape, the former was all that was open to the slaves. A slave sub-culture had itself to be created, whenever a slave-worked colony was founded. There are countries in which such a slave culture can be discerned as a separate entity, and the period at which it was created was identified.²⁷ But the Cape is not among them, unless, in Cape Town during the last years of slavery, some degree of communal consciousness evolved. At least as I read the evidence,

there are no signs that there were any institutions, norms or values that were specific to the slaves (other than the very fact of bondage, of course). Certainly they were not at all general among them. What the Cape slaves failed to provide for the numerous newcomers who entered the colony every year was a way to feel at home. The slaves entered the colony as individuals, not as shiploads within which various ties might have grown up. Very largely they remained as such. Even the ethnic identities which are so commonly created among migrants in strange cities did not become the basis for communal action among the Cape slaves, except perhaps in the fevered imagination of the whites.²⁸

This individualisation, and the failure of the Cape slaves to develop a culture of their own to which newcomers could be assimilated, probably derived from the absence of family ties among the slaves. This was exacerbated because in general adult slave men outnumbered slave women by four to one, although the ratio was less horrifying in Cape Town than in the countryside. As a result only a minority of men could have become husbands of slave women, although there were also those who had Khoisan wives. The personal tensions on the farms were therefore frequently considerable, with regular jealous murders, cases of bestiality and homosexuality. This last was often condoned by the masters, despite its being, or perhaps because it was, a capital offence under the laws of the colony.²⁹

The consequences of this strong imbalance in the sex ratio were certainly experienced by Cape slaves as one of the major manifestations of their oppression. There was also a more insidious effect that the slaves themselves did not notice. Because of the imbalance in the sex ratio and perhaps because of the low fertility and high mortality of the slaves themselves, there was never any possibility of the slave population reproducing itself, at least until the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. This absence of generational continuity among the slaves made it much more difficult for them to develop a sense of community based on kinship networks loose enough to incorporate many newcomers as 'fictive kin'. The values which one generation of slaves had created for themselves in their bondage could not be passed on to and elaborated by their sons and daughters, for there were far too few sons and daughters and far too many immigrants.

Nor were there any further institutions among the slaves for incorporating the immigrants. In many similar situations churches and religious brother- and sisterhoods have been able to welcome the newly arrived, whether slave or free.³⁰ In the Cape, until Islam took a grip in Cape Town late in the eighteenth century, there were no signs of religious bodies among the slaves.³¹ Before then, some slaves were baptised into the Reformed Church, but this was not accompanied by any form of widespread religious community. Only in the early nineteenth century were there any beginnings of mission work among the slaves, or of slave acceptance of and contribution to the life of the church.³²

As a result, the slaves were forced to accept vertical acculturation, to accept the culture of their masters, though never completely. Throughout the various sectors of their lives, the slaves were not accepted into that culture and did not themselves accept its norms and values. Even if culture is defined simply in terms of a system of communication, the matter is not completely clearcut, since many slaves did not learn Dutch (or proto-Afrikaans) but remained speaking Malay or Portuguese Creole.³³ But if culture is given a somewhat wider meaning, then in no sense did the slaves become incorporated into their masters' culture, nor did they form a culture of their own. Cultural incomprehensibility was eliminated, but not in such a way as to create a community of action. Mintz and Price have written that 'the Africans in any New World colony became a community and began to share a *culture* only insofar as, and as fast as, they themselves created them'.³⁴ This is just as true, maybe even more so, for the Cape as for Surinam or Santa Domingo. Just as Afrikaans is a language created in South Africa, so the slave community and culture, such as it was, was built in the streets and alleys of Cape Town and in the fields of the Boland. That culture, though, was in many ways a general Creole culture of the colony, and the community had few ties to hold it together, and may, indeed, not have existed in any recognisable form until the last years of slavery. The Cape slaves could not create any communality to transcend the individualisation of their enslavement and transportation to the Cape.

CAPE TOWN

Certainty as to the nature of slave society and of slaves' vision of the world and of the right ordering of society cannot be achieved, therefore. As regards their work, the ground is less treacherous. The main patterns of the economy of the Cape have been established.³⁵ From the 1690s on throughout the eighteenth century, and probably till the abolition of slavery in the 1830s, the basic economic pattern of the Cape Colony remained the same, although of course the scale changed enormously and the balance between the various aspects of the economy swung slowly away from agriculture towards pastoralism. It was based on two main dichotomies, first between Cape Town and its agricultural hinterland and, within the latter, between the agricultural districts of the south-west Cape and the vast ranches of the interior.

Cape Town was a mercantile community whose citizens lived by buying cheap from the farmers who brought their produce in from the countryside and selling dear to the sailors from the passing ships and by exacting a similar profit from trade in the reverse direction. At the same time, the Cape was the centre of the colony's administration, with many officials with trading salaries and the gains of their illegal trading business to spend. Since a

very high proportion of the Colony's white population came into the town in the course of each year and since most of those who had a good deal of money to spend lived there or very close by, artisans were almost all based in the Cape. These could be whites, slaves or free blacks, who were manumitted slaves or their descendants.³⁶ Butchers, bakers, carpenters, masons, waggonwrights, silversmiths, potters, tailors, wig-makers, these could all be found in the town, and scarcely, if at all, outside it.

As a result the slaves in Cape Town had a wide variety of occupations.³⁷ In some cases, they were the units of conspicuous consumption. At the end of the eighteenth century a Dutch sea-captain, with entrée to the highest circles of Cape society, wrote of the households:

I would reckon that a white servant in Europe does twice, or even three times more work than these 'slaves'; but I would also be certain that, in a house where everything is well-ordered, four or at most six slaves can easily do work. However, I believe that, except for the least substantial burghers, there are many houses, large and small, where ten or twelve are to be found. As they divide tasks, they are necessary. One or two have to go out each day to fetch wood, which takes all day. If the mistress leaves the house, there must be two for the sedan chair. The slave who is cook has an assistant in the kitchen. One does the dirtiest work every day . . . and two are house slaves. Many Cape women do not gladly sleep without a maid in the room, and thus one is kept for this and, better clothed than the others, also has the job of lady's maid and carries the Psalm Book behind on visits to church. If there are children, each has a maid, although sometimes two daughters share. Small children need one to themselves. This is without one who washes and makes the beds, a seamstress and a knitter, as three or four are always kept busy that way, and I still have none for the stable.³⁸

Such luxury was the exception. While most households would have a certain domestic staff of slaves, there were also many 'craftsmen, carpenters, cabinet makers, masons, shoemakers, tailors, cooks, coachmen, valets or handicrafts, men, while the females fill the station of mantua-maker, cook, nurse or of various other domestic servants'.³⁹

Also living in Cape Town were fishermen, both slave and free (often free black), and many slaves were used to grow vegetables in the market gardens of Table valley. The retail trade, especially in foodstuffs, was also very much in slave hands, as many were sent out by their masters with orders to bring back such money as they could earn - and with the threat that they would be thrashed if they could not raise enough. Nor should it be imagined that domestic service was a sinecure. The fetching of water and, above all, the hauling of firewood were gruelling jobs even if the slaves could sometimes bring in extra

loads for their own account. These slaves died young.⁴⁰ All the others, too, had to fear a sadistic master or mistress, who could either take a whip themselves, illegally, or send them to the Caffers, the fiscal's assistants, who made sure that, despite the concern of the VOC to monopolise force, the slaves did not escape from the proper hierarchical relationship to their owners. To do this, they not only flogged those who were sent to them and acted as the executioner's assistants for the more formal, judicial punishments - frequently exceedingly barbaric - on the scaffold, but also patrolled the streets at night. This gave them unrivalled opportunities to engage in those activities they were required to prevent. Frequently, they made use of the chances they had, since they were all men who had fallen foul of the Dutch legal authorities in some other part of the VOC's possessions - generally Batavia - and had as a result been banned to the Cape.⁴¹

The Caffers were helped and their activities checked by the burgerwagt and the ratelwagt, patrols of Cape Town citizens organised on a rota basis.⁴² Occasionally they managed to intercept slaves in time to make an arrest or to forestall a crime, but these were the exceptions. In the conditions of Cape Town, the whites could not hope to maintain that discipline over their slaves that they regarded as essential. By the 1770s Cape Town had a resident population of about 7,000, excluding the numerous visitors on shore from the passing ships. It was no longer a town in which everybody recognised everybody else, especially as even among the residents many came and went each year.⁴³ It was difficult for whites to know whether the passage of a slave about the streets was legal or nefarious. Strict regulations were made to control them. If three or more slaves, belonging to different masters, were found gathering together, the agents of the police force might charge in among them wielding sticks to break them up. Further, no slave was allowed to be out after ten at night without a lantern, unless accompanying a member of his or her master's family.⁴⁴ But these measures had scant effect, and the owners knew little of their slaves' lives, and were consequently afraid.

Perhaps they had reason to be. In 1760, one of the leading officials of the company, the accountant Michiel Smuts, was murdered by a group of runaways led by his own slave Alexander, a Sumatran.⁴⁵ The group had been living on Table Mountain and, after they were captured by a commando, it transpired that they had been supplied with food and arms by a 50-year-old Bugis shepherd, known as September, who looked after his master's sheep on the lower slopes of Table Mountain. This would have been a heinous enough crime to have ensured his death, especially as the murder of Smuts had led to a full-scale emergency at the Cape.⁴⁶ But more than that he was suspected of attempting to raise the slaves, especially those of his own nation, in rebellion. The Dutch were afraid of the Buginese anyway, considering them to be the most dangerous and brutal

of all the Easterners (although the women were said to be the best in bed).⁴⁷ A Bugis plot was one of the worst nightmares of the slave-holders. September, moreover, was the leader of the Bugis community in Cape Town. He acted as doctor for them and had letters written in which he seems to have incited his fellows to join his complot. That plot, admittedly, may only have consisted of a desire to escape to the Xhosa, not to rise in rebellion, but the Dutch nervousness towards that part of the slave culture that they could neither control nor comprehend made them exaggerate September's role in events. The slaves had been discussing matters in Buginese, which few of their fellows - and no whites - could understand. It is not surprising that September was broken on the rack, without the coup de grace, and most of his accomplices hung.

This case, however, says little for ethnic (or for that matter class) solidarity among the slaves. It was another Bugis, Boone, who betrayed the group to the white commando, for which he received his freedom - and his master compensation.

The most natural leaders of the slaves do not seem to have had any role in the organisation of resistance. Throughout the period of VOC rule, the Cape was used as a penal colony, in which undesirables, frequently the political enemies of the Dutch in the East, were kept from endangering the profits of the East India Company in the Indonesian archipelago. The political exiles at the Cape were generally aristocrats and often learned Islamic teachers. In time they came to furnish the first Imams of the Cape Muslim community as this developed among the slaves and their descendants from the 1780s on.⁴⁸ They might have been expected to provide a nucleus around which the institutions of a Cape Town slave culture could grow, even if not necessarily in rebellion against the masters. Leadership by the exiles was not unknown; one major escape of thirty slaves was led by a Javanese exile,⁴⁹ as was an attempted revolt on Robben Island.⁵⁰ In the 1690s Sheikh Yussuf's dwelling, on the Cape flats, is said to have formed a rendezvous for runaway slaves, but it is far from clear how far the Sheikh had any role in this. From then on, until the development of Islam as a popular slave religion towards the end of the eighteenth century - there may have been some slave adherents before then, but there is no sign of any organised religion or gathering - the slave community had no ascriptive leaders, no one who stood out from his fellows for any qualities other than the force of his personality. The difference in status between a Javanese royal and a south Indian untouchable, for instance, was too great for effective communal action, even had the Dutch not kept a careful watch on the exiles' activities to prevent any such coalition.

Nevertheless, there are signs that some facets of Islam were beginning to be accepted by the Cape slaves before 1800. In 1786, for instance, a group of runaways armed themselves not only with forged passes from a butcher, which allowed them to lodge in the farms they passed on their way to the Xhosa, but

also with Islamic talismans in Malay script which would protect them from capture. They had acquired these from Norman, who was described as a 'Mohammedan priest'. He had been banished to the Cape from Batavia in 1770 and had acquired the reputation that he gave slaves advice, could prophesy the future and protect them from evil. Evidently, some slaves believed him, and the authorities considered him dangerous enough to put on Robben Island. It is unlikely, however, that his following was large and there is no indication that his religious teaching had struck deep roots.⁵¹

If religion was not the opiate of the Cape Town slaves, opium was, at least for some of them. In 1761, the Council of Policy decided to ban one of the political exiles, Soera Dioromo from Batavia, to Robben Island, because he had been running an opium den in the town. This was thought to be a dangerous gathering place for slaves and free blacks, where they could plot the crimes with which the town was ridden.⁵²

Whatever the motives of the Council of Policy in this case, it is clear that their action deprived the slaves of a place and indeed a means of relaxation. Unfortunately there is no record of how Soera Dioromo acquired his opium. However, Cape Town, as an inefficiently policed port city, gave innumerable opportunities for smuggling and, conversely, for the disposal of stolen goods. Cape Town, of course, was not just a city of masters and slaves. The visiting sailors and the local soldiers lived lives that were probably as oppressed as those of the slaves, and certainly the social distance between the slaves and this group of whites was very considerably less than that between a sailor and his captain. The myth that the white genes in the make-up of the modern so-called 'Cape Coloured' population derives exclusively from the passing sailors is only erroneous for its omissions, not for its inclusions. The Company's own slave lodge was the most renowned brothel in the colony. Those few slaves who were third- or fourth-generation South Africans were often very fair-skinned.⁵³ But there were other, less conspicuous places. Once the fiscal accused a brothel-keeper of providing sanctuary for runaway slaves, whom she seems to have been recruiting as her 'girls'.⁵⁴ There was another madam thirty years earlier - both these women, interestingly, were free blacks - who was sent to Robben Island because 'she kept a house of ill fame and had all sorts of people, both slaves and Europeans, stay with her till late in the night drinking and debauching' (*rinkelrooijen*).⁵⁵ Again, even if the activities may have been different, the same rowdy gatherings of slaves and Europeans, and slaves among themselves, were found in the licensed, legal public houses of Cape Town. In 1752, using the danger of fire as a pretext for increased control over these elements of the town's population, the Burgher councillor requested that the 'taps' in the south-east section of the town, near the church and the slave lodge, be closed since 'in these places all sorts of excesses are being committed by the low-class Europeans and

brought in 150 guilders. On the other hand, he had to buy bread and other foodstuffs and he had to pay 72 guilders (24 rijksdaalders) a year in 'Recognitiegeld' to the government, though this tax was easily evaded. Certainly he did not turn up in Swellendam for the yearly exercises. It can be seen that he was on the edge of bankruptcy. He owned few slaves,⁷³ but presumably had managed to persuade one or two Khoikhoi - or even Xhosa - to work for him as herdsmen. The picture that Swellengrebel gives is not exactly one of want. There is no indication that Botha was ever hungry as he probably lived largely off the game he shot. But it was a life of poverty. Living conditions were rude in the extreme, as the houses - if Botha lived in a house, and did not merely camp out in his waggon - had low clay walls, 4 foot high, 40 foot by 15 foot long, and then a dirty thatched roof going up to give some head clearance.⁷⁴ The floor was of mud mixed with cowdung. On that floor, butter, churns, freshly butchered meat and bread were piled up. Hens, ducks, piglets and even doves ran round between the humans. Even when only one family lived in such a house, this could easily mean some seven or eight persons. Often two or three times that number would be squashed together. The Khoikhoi and the slaves, if there were any, were probably lucky to live in the little mat-covered tents that were the traditional Khoikhoi dwellings of the southern Cape.⁷⁵

These two estates were the two extremes of the Cape colony. Melck was almost certainly the richest man at the Cape in the 1770s (with the possible exception of the governor). In 1776 his property was valued at around 240,000 guilders.⁷⁶ Botha was not absolutely the poorest. There were white men who had no property at all, because they were still in the service of the VOC, because they were not yet independent of their parents or because they were working for wages for another farmer. There were also probably independent working farmers whose capital and income was less than Botha's. Nevertheless, even though they were chosen purely because there happened to be very good information on them, these two farms provide the limits of the sort of operations on which slaves were to be found.

Obviously, although I chose to expand on the extremes, the vast majority of slaves lived in units far removed in size from those of Melck and Botha. There were in total in 1773 9,902 privately owned slaves in the Colony, divided among 473 owners, that is an arithmetical mean of 20.9 slaves per owner. The distribution, naturally, was highly skewed. Only 18.6 per cent of owners had 20 slaves or more. Only in Cape Town and in the rich agricultural Cape and Stellenbosch districts were there appreciable numbers with a slave workforce of more than 20 slaves. From the slaves' perspective, the matter is somewhat different. In total, 28.6 per cent lived in groups of over 20 (except that the slaves of a single owner might be scattered over several farms) and as many as 7.1 per cent in holdings of more than 50. Even so, it is clear that, in comparative terms, the

Cape, like the Old South of the United States, was largely a country of small slave-owners.⁷⁷

It always remained so. Nigel Worden has documented a certain trend towards increased size of slave-holdings during the course of the eighteenth century, at least outside Cape Town, but this was a very gradual process.⁷⁸ There was never anything like, for instance, the introduction of sugar to Cuba to bring about massive investment and soaring slave numbers.⁷⁹ Even in 1805-6, probably the high point of slave-ownership in the Cape, in Stellenbosch district only 45 slave-owners (out of 252) owned 30 or more slaves, and these made up scarcely more than a fifth of the total slaves in this district, where slave-holdings were large. Moreover, outside Stellenbosch and the Cape district only five slave-owners possessed 30 or more slaves.⁸⁰ Nor did things change in the years running up to abolition, when the ratio of slave to free swung decisively, as, after the end of the slave trade, the slave population declined, or at best stagnated, and the free continued its eighteenth-century increase. The British government paid compensation on 6,335 claims for a total of 35,742 slaves. But again, only 4.8 per cent of owners (303 in all) had 20 or more slaves, and only 0.02 per cent (15) 50 or above. 9,074 slaves (25.4 per cent of the total) were counted in the former group and only 964 (2.7 per cent) in the latter. The largest slave-owner in the Colony had no more than 84 slaves in 1834.⁸¹ It is clear that the critical mass of between one hundred and two hundred slaves, which Genovese suggested was a necessary average before revolt was at all likely, was never approached in South Africa.

As was shown earlier, about one third of the Cape slaves lived in Cape Town. The rest lived on the farms of the colony, and a few in the village of Stellenbosch, the only such settlement in the colony. It is difficult to be precise about the sort of farm a particular slave lived on, and thus of the proportion employed in various forms of agriculture, but it is possible to know what were the main products of his owner's farm (or farms). The rural economy of the Cape, though not a monoculture, revolved around two crops, grapes and wheat, and the keeping of cattle and sheep. The great majority of rural Cape slaves were in the agricultural sector. In 1773, 4,298 slaves were owned by masters whose farm grew grain or vines (or both), as against only 1,850 whose masters' only agricultural possessions were cattle and sheep. Against this, of course, many of the slaves who by these criteria would be 'agriculturalists' would in fact have spent their lives looking after stock, and, indeed, lived largely on the grazing farms of the interior, well away from the ploughed fields and vineyards of the south-west. Equally, others of these would have lived in Cape Town. Nevertheless, the concentration of rural slaves in the agricultural lands of the south-west Cape is quite clear.

It does not make sense to differentiate further, for instance between wine and wheat farms and their respective slave-holdings, at least not as regards the activities of the slaves. This is because

there was regular interchange of slaves between wine and wheat farms, since the peak labour periods for the two crops dovetailed.

The agricultural year can be taken as beginning in May with the coming of the first rains.⁸² At that time it was possible to begin with the ploughing and sowing of grain. A field that had lain fallow for the previous year was first spread with manure, if there was any - though Mentzel gives the impression that a large amount of manure was available because of the large cattle troupes on the farms.⁸³ Seed was then strewn on the field and ploughed in by the coulter, rather than being harrowed in afterwards. As a result the grain tended to grow in strips, as seed was picked up by the moulded board and deposited with the earth to its left.

Traction for the large and unwieldy ploughs was provided by draught oxen. Unfortunately, since it was necessary to plough as soon as the rains fell, the oxen were generally in a weak state, as the grass had only just begun to grow again. P.J. de Wit, a very rich farmer, recommended that only land that had lain fallow for the previous year should be ploughed up at the beginning of the season, the rest being cultivated in August, towards the end of the rains when the oxen had recovered their strength. Since he did not gather the great portion of his income from grain, it would seem he recommended to his sons that they concentrate on sowing barley at the beginning of the season. The price for barley in Cape Town was considerably higher than for wheat, but the latter was necessarily the main crop for specialised grain farmers. On the other hand De Wit had a certain if curiously reversed appreciation of the principles of crop rotation, since he suggested that beans should not be sown on the same field for more than two years, because the soil would be worn out, but should be replaced with one or other sort of grain. With the ending of the ploughing it was necessary to pay attention to the vineyards. Already immediately after the grapes had been picked the vines were smeared with a concoction made from boiled wine and herbs to prevent lice. Now they were pruned down, cut off twelve to eighteen inches from the ground. The soil was then dug over and, once every three years, manured. This was done by the end of August and from then until December was the slack time on the farms, as little had to be done except keep the vineyards free of weeds and the birds from the ripening grain. But from December through till the end of March activity was frenetic. First, the grains started to ripen and had to be cut. For this the slaves used sickles, bending low to the ground, binding the sheaves up in straw from the fields themselves and then loading them on to the waggons for carting to the farm house. The slaves had to work through the day, from sunrise until dark, although Mentzel says they took a long rest during the heat of the day. At this time of year, slaves from Cape Town and from the wine farms were hired out to the grain farmers to help in the harvest, while Khoikhoi were also brought in to ensure the crop was brought

home. Thereafter, the grain was stacked in sheaves on the threshing floor and trod out by unshod horses.

After the grain was in and threshed came the other high point of the agricultural year. While some of the slaves were busy transporting grain to the Cape to be sold, most were engaged in cutting and pressing out the grapes.

Every grape cutter at the vintage has a small basket, made of thin split Spanish reed standing next to him which when full, is carried to the pressing house. . . . A 'balie' or barrel . . . which is pierced at the bottom and along the sides with holes made with an half-inch drill, stands on a trestle in a second larger barrel, without holes except for a bung hole, through which the must that is trodden out, passes into a pail or barrel placed beneath it. A slave stands in the perforated barrel, holds on to a short piece of rope stretched above him and treads the grapes with which it is filled with bare feet.⁸⁴

There then began a process of fermentation, during which the wine was regularly decanted from one barrel to another in order to purify it. However, with the end of the 'perstijd', the heavy period of work on the farms came to an end. The new year, which had been postponed from January because of the load of work, could now be celebrated, with much drunkenness, and the slaves who had been hired by the wine farmers from the wheat growers to work at the vintage could now go home.⁸⁵

This, then, was the work rhythm for the great majority of Cape agricultural slaves, though not for all of them. There were those who were employed as artisans, particularly on the larger farms of the south-west Cape. In 1805, Lichtenstein visited the establishment of Philip Meyburg on the Eerste Rivier near Stellenbosch. He wrote:

The owner, . . . besides the numerous servants and slaves retained to cultivate his lands, a number of mechanics, some slaves, some free men, by whom everything wanted for his household, whether of clothes, furniture, implements for husbandry or tools of any other kind are made on the spot; and while the neighbourhood of Cape Town is very convenient for him for the sale of his production he can dispense with purchasing any thing from thence. Nay further, his near neighbours who have not all these conveniences about them often send things to him to be made, or hire some of his slaves to work at their own houses, as masons, as smiths, as waggon-wrights, as cabinet makers, as tailors etc. etc.⁸⁶

There were others who were able to escape from the trammels of the regularised supervision by their masters. The most notable of these were the ox-waggon drivers and cattle and sheep drovers. In particular the latter group constantly ran into conflict with the farmers whose land they had to pass through, as

the classic squabble between the stockman needing grazing for his flocks and the farmers out to protect their own land from their depredations took on a new harshness given the difference in status of the participants.⁸⁷ But both they and the waggoners could bring the slaves on even the most isolated farms into contact with their fellow bondsmen throughout the colony. In so far as there was any sense of unity among the Cape rural slaves, it was they who created it.

More than any other group, they had to cement together the shepherds of the interior, whose work was essentially lonely, and who lived on farms, often with many whites and few slaves. They also bore the brunt of the ambiguous relationship between the slaves and the nominally free Khoisan, who were increasingly being driven into a state of dependent servitude.⁸⁸ All the same, the pastoral life entailed less hard physical labour than that imposed on the agricultural labourers. This did not mean it was any more willed. There seems to have been a consistent pattern that old, worn-out slaves from the wine and wheat farms were sent up country when they were old, so that the last drop of their value could be realised.⁸⁹ Someone who has never been enslaved or similarly degraded cannot fully imagine the meaning of this wrench away from the life in which the elderly slaves had lived for maybe twenty or thirty years and to which they had become accustomed and perhaps reconciled. The resentment and the bitterness nevertheless shows through the historical record.⁹⁰

3 The structure of domination

Although slaves regularly threw off the bonds their masters had placed on them, colonial society was so organised as to minimise the possibility, or the risk, that this would happen. Institutions were developed by the slave-owner to contain and control slave obstreperousness. In other words, the power structures of colonial society, both at a formal and informal level, were designed and utilised to ensure the maintenance of the social order.

Though the very reverse of charity, this began at home, or, more correctly, on the farm. The owners attempted, in the first instance, to control their slaves by setting them to control each other. Unfortunately, we know very little of the ways in which this worked. It is clear that in the Company's lodge and on at least some of the larger farms senior male slaves, generally from among those who had been born in the Cape¹ were appointed as manddoors, or, to translate the term into American English, drivers. Obviously, these were especially trusted individuals and had some privileges as against their fellow slaves,² but whether these were handed down from the master or derived from the power they held over the slaves is far from clear. Presumably, in fact, it was a mixture of the two. Indeed, even the most elementary details, such as the frequency with which the masters appointed special foremen over the slaves and how these related to those over whom they had authority, have not yet been revealed by research, if they ever will be.

Given such ignorance, it is perhaps valuable to describe one case in detail, in the hope that it is representative of the general flavour of manddoor control.³ In November 1801, a slave of Abraham Mouton, Mozes, was sent with his fellows from the farm on which he lived to that of Gerrit Smit to help get in the harvest. After a morning cutting corn they had some food and slept for a while, and then moved out to cut another strip of wheat, except for Mozes who remained sleeping. After a while Roelof, 'an old slave who had been appointed manddoor or supervisor over them by his master' (apparently Mouton, not Smit) took a cane to Mozes to get him to work. Mozes indeed continued to work until the end of that particular strip (akker), but then refused to go on to the next. Roelof attempted to compel him, but Mozes drew a knife and stabbed him.

What is clear from this case is that there was no white man around to keep the slaves at the strenuous task of harvesting wheat with sickles. Maybe this was only because the slaves were

on a farm other than their own, but clearly the masters were, at least in this instance, prepared to let slaves work without supervision. The authority of the mandoor was evidently thought sufficient to make sure that the work was properly done.

This was not the rule, however. In 1782, a petition was presented to the Council of Policy signed by 78 burghers from Drakenstein district protesting against the requirement that they stand for a month on guard duty. There might have been a certain amount of special pleading in their request, but all the same it is notable that they were worried that they would have to 'leave their farms, wives and families . . . open to the refractoriness and wantonness of their slaves, from which, by continuation, even greater evils, such as rape, theft, robbery and murder can be feared'.⁴ Indeed, when slaves were left alone on a farm, other whites would bring the matter up before the Court of Justice, especially if there were guns left on the farm.⁵ Indeed, these complaints were made if a man, as a result of his weakness of character, was unable to maintain control over his slaves. In 1772, Christiaan Hendrik Hop, son of the man who had left his slaves alone on his farm thirty years earlier, was forced to sell out because:

he has lost all control and authority over his slaves to such an extent that they do not in the least respect him, but commit all kinds of excesses on the farm and during the night and at unseasonable hours allure to themselves all kinds of rogues with whom they drink and gamble, whilst in the daytime, instead of doing their master's work, they burn charcoal at the river side, which they convey hither with the wagon and cattle of their master, selling it in his name, and keeping the money for themselves.⁶

On the other hand, it was impossible for the masters themselves to take personal control over all their slaves, especially as often they owned more than one farm. Therefore, they had to employ knegten as overseers, and indeed, even when a master lived on a particular farm, a knegt often had the day-to-day control over the slaves. These knegten were sometimes the sons of burghers, or even free blacks.⁷ More often, though, they had been in the service of the Dutch East India Company before getting their release, either temporarily or permanently. They were thus the sort of men who had climbed their way up from the lowest levels of north European society. Sometimes this meant that their sympathies were more with the slaves than with their owners, at least to the extent of drinking with them in dubious tap-houses.⁸ More usually they earned their wages, and established their place in the new society, by maintaining the social order and keeping the slaves in their place. At least one slave who failed to raise his hat and was insolent to a knegt he met on the road was beaten so hard he died, since he had not shown sufficient respect for 'Christian people'.⁹

It is therefore not surprising that the conflicts between slaves and knegten, at least in the countryside, were if anything more frequent than those between slaves and their masters. It was the knegt who had to get the slaves to work and keep them at work, to instruct them as to the tasks to be done and see that those tasks were done properly. In this they clashed with the views of the slaves as to what effort could reasonably be expected of the slaves. Two short cameos will have to serve for many. In 1743, a group of slaves on the farm of Jan Vlotman had finished their work in the fields, as they saw it, and had returned to the kitchen of their quarters where they sat around a fire relaxing. Vlotman's knegt, Jan Frederik Heus, then came charging in and turned them out into the fields again, belabouring them with a heavy stick (a kirry). One of the slaves, Aron, was not prepared to accept this treatment and after a short while returned to comfort a sick slave and to lie down next to him, where he went to sleep. Heus then returned and once again tried to turn him out, making liberal use of his kirry. Aron complained that he had completed his work, and, as Heus was not amenable to such arguments, took up an axe and hit Heus twice in the face, severely wounding him. He was then grabbed by his fellow slaves, tried and, later, hung.¹⁰

On another occasion, eighteen years later, a Buginese slave of Olof Bergh, and his son, both living on a farm in the Langeberg, came into conflict with the knegt who seems to have been the overseer in the absence of Bergh, a rich man with the honourable position of burgher lieutenant, who probably owned several farms. The knegt, Jacob Hebel, considered the younger of the two slaves, Galant, 'always a slow worker and very insolent'. On this occasion he ordered Galant to go to a neighbouring farm with the oxen to fetch a barrel of water. Galant refused, whereupon Hebel, who was cutting up the carcass of a sheep, exclaimed 'You go about your work, or I will stab you in the ribs with this knife.' Clearly he felt that he was losing control over his underlings - maybe he had never had it - and had to resort to more vigorous measures to reassert it. Galant then called his bluff, retorting 'stab me then', only to discover that it was no bluff and so he received a wound in his side. His father, Simon, saw this and himself grabbed a knife and rushed at Hebel, forcing him to run away and take up his gun to protect himself. Only the intervention of the Court of Justice, the vigorous public flogging of both father and son and the banning of Simon to Robben Island for fifteen years - since he was already 56 almost certainly for the rest of his life - could restore order to a farm on which the slaves had refused to knuckle under to the knegt.¹¹

The owner and the knegt clearly had distinct interests as regards the slaves. The knegt had to maintain his position of authority on a regular basis, particularly if he did not live on the same farm as his employer. In contrast, the owner was more concerned for the welfare of his slaves, for whom he had paid

good money and who formed part of his capital, while he could generally find another knegt if he had to dismiss one. He demanded two contradictory services of his employee. The latter had both to see that profits achieved the desired level and that production remained high and to ensure that the slaves remained healthy, did not rebel or run away and were not maimed by punishment. This potential conflict could indeed become actual, as is illustrated by a court case from 1769, as a result of which a Cape-born knegt, Pieter van der Westhuysen, was banned from the colony for assaulting and illegally punishing Daris, a slave of his employer, Coenraad Feyt. The essence of the matter was that Daris had deserted from one of Feyt's farms to another, along with another slave. On his recapture, Van der Westhuysen had flogged him on a 'Poolsche Bok' in breach of Feyt's express order, and later kicked him in the head, so that he died. It was Feyt himself who appeared as major witness against Van der Westhuysen so that not only did he receive compensation for the dead slave but also saw to it that Van der Westhuysen was punished far more severely than was usual for the death of a slave.¹² The brutality of a knegt against a slave, which was little more than was usual in such cases, was punished because the master had lost a considerable sum of money and this went above any consideration of solidarity among the non-slaves of the Cape.

It should not be thought that slave-owners themselves were innocent of assault, maiming and manslaughter of their slaves - quite the contrary. Although perhaps the knegts were over-represented in the exercise of methods of barbarism, there were many masters who ordered, supervised and frequently personally inflicted on their slaves punishments that can only be described as torture, frequently to death. Certain men were notorious. In the 1740s, so it is reported, masters could discipline their recalcitrant slaves merely by threatening to sell them to Michael Otto, a large landowner renowned for his brutality.¹³ Another particularly cruel master was C.D. Persoon, an immigrant from Pomerania, who, by virtue of his bakery, his general dealing and quasi-legal import business, became one of the richer citizens of Cape Town, able to send his son to be educated in Europe, where he later became one of the leading botanists of his day. That wealth was gained through the exploitation of his slaves with a viciousness that was unusual even in the Cape Town of the eighteenth century. On a variety of occasions he had to appear before the Court of Justice, either because a slave had died under punishment or because one had finally decided no longer to accept punishment and had therefore turned against his oppressor.¹⁴

Such regular use of violence may have been rare. There can have been few owners who smeared their slaves in honey and left them out in the sun to be tortured by bees and mosquitoes, and in this Michael Otto was an exception. Nevertheless, the social system of slavery was kept in being by the continual threat of rigorous punishment. It is as if the machine of production required to be oiled by the blood flogged out of the

slaves' backs. Then as now, the sjambok, a hippopotamus hide whip, was the symbol of white baasskap in South Africa. Sometimes the whip was wielded by the servants of the *fiscaal* or the district magistrates, the so-called *Caffers*. A master could send his slave to be chastised by the *Caffers* virtually at whim, for instance if his peddling activities on the streets of Cape Town had not been successful enough.¹⁵ The Company and the legal officers were concerned to preserve their grip on the social relations of the colony, and no doubt to ensure that the fees were still paid, but the decision to employ these feared ex-criminals was entirely in the hands of the master. Indeed, the master also had the right, as head of the household, to inflict corporal punishment on his slaves, just as he could on his wife and children. Only when the norms of domestic correction were exceeded did this turn into a criminal offence, and in practice the boundary of what was permissible was drawn at the survival of the victim. When a slave died, or in some cases when he was maimed, the master would be brought before the Court of Justice and charged, not with murder or manslaughter, but with excessive punishment. The fine that was inevitably imposed for this was one hundred *rijksdaalders*, rather less than the normal price of a slave and one quarter of that imposed for the far more heinous crime of offending against the regulations concerned with the sale of wine.

The slaves reacted against this oppression with all the means at their disposal. This can be seen from the reasons they gave for running away. It may be that they only told their inquisitors what the latter were prepared to hear. Since the evidence comes from the records of the Court of Justice, the court's views of what constituted an infringement of the proper regulation of master and slave relations influenced the motives for running away that the slaves gave. Certainly, many of the slaves did not give a definite reason for running away and no slave claimed that the very fact of his (or her) bondage was sufficient to persuade him to leave a master whose authority he did not recognise. But that they felt it is clear. On one occasion in 1800, Maurits van Mauritius shouted at Cornelis Coetzé: 'You are my old master, you have had the command long enough, now I am your master.' Since the slaves had gained control over a lonely farm in the Roggeveld, this was indeed true, and Maurits proceeded to demonstrate it by bashing Coetzé's brains out with a crowbar.¹⁶

Occasionally the slaves believed that they could find a welcome among the Africans,¹⁷ or follow the example of a successful escape.¹⁸ In some cases, too, the motives given were of a less general nature, as in the case of Anthoni van Goa, who had been sold away from his wife and went back to try to meet her again,¹⁹ or when, on a number of occasions, a slave went to a relative of his or her master in the hope of gaining intercession and hence forgiveness for some misdemeanour.²⁰ Alternatively, the slaves' material conditions might be considered intolerable.

A slave who had not been given enough food,²¹ or sufficient clothing²² or whose master refused to buy him a mate,²³ was liable to desert. In the latter case, moreover, the master ran a considerable risk of being murdered.²⁴

Far more frequently, though, it was either punishment or the fear of it which gave occasion for an act of desertion. Slaves who had lost the cattle or sheep they were herding,²⁵ who had not got the master's food ready on time,²⁶ whose trading activities in Cape Town had not brought in enough 'koeligeld',²⁷ who had torn the clothes they were washing,²⁸ who had been providing food for runaways who had been captured and therefore feared reprisals,²⁹ all these left their homes rather than face the flogging they knew was coming to them. This was even more the case with those who had committed some more heinous crime, such as striking or even killing their master or the knegt placed over them. They knew that if they were captured they would be executed, often in a peculiarly long-drawn out and barbaric fashion, or at the very least be placed on Robben Island (which generally amounted to a death sentence). For these men and women, a successful escape was quite literally a matter of life and death.³⁰

Equally frequently slaves deserted in protest against the punishment their masters had meted out. Occasionally this punishment would be a sort of banishment, as when Simon van Mallebaar took exception to being sent away from the farm on which he lived to a lonely cattle post.³¹ Far more often it was after the infliction of corporal punishment that slaves took to their heels. This might have been legally - but no less brutally - left over to the Caffers.³² Just as often, if not more so, the master or his knegt took the imposition of punishment upon himself. Numerous slaves left their masters after having been flogged with a sjambok or on a Poolsche bok - or belaboured with a piece of wood.³³

More than any other aspect of their bondage, the Cape slaves seem to have resented and reacted against the degradation and the physical pain of being whipped.

To a large extent, then, there developed a spiral of punishment and resistance. The masters attempted to control their slaves by the exercise of physical violence, but in so doing they tended only to incite the latter to greater acts of insubordination and resistance - although, as they realised, if they had refrained from flogging their slaves, they could not have persuaded them to work or to remain obedient, and the whole fabric of Cape society would have fallen apart. As a result the Cape rulers were forced to create a whole series of institutions to ensure that they maintained their grip on the colony.

The structure of legal authority was capped by the Court of Justice, an admitted arm of the government of the VOC. This meant that to a certain extent it was prepared to support some of the interests of the slaves, as there was always a latent conflict between the VOC and the burghers for authority of the

Colony. In their efforts to ensure their own monopoly over violence, the VOC officials were prepared to listen to complaints of slaves against overzealous or brutal masters.³⁴ But this was at best but a marginal compensation to the slaves, not in any way to be set against the exercise of judicial terror by the court and its members who were far more likely to act directly in the interests of the slave-holding class to which, for all its internal divisions, they belonged. It was, after all, the court which imposed slow painful deaths on slaves driven to raise their hands or their daggers against their master.

The Court of Justice functioned as the highest legal authority throughout the colony, the magistrates of the outlying districts acting as prosecutors when cases from the areas under their control came up for trial. For the maintenance of public order, however, there was a definite distinction between Cape Town and the surrounding countryside, as a result of the varying problems presented by an urban environment on the one hand and the thinly settled countryside on the other. In the town, it was found necessary to maintain an almost permanent police force.³⁵ There were in fact two branches of this. The one was under the control of the *fiscaal*, the chief prosecuting officer of the colony. It consisted, in addition to a 'Geweldigere', or sergeant, of *Caffers*, convicts from the East Indies who were thus in effect slaves and who doubled as hangman's assistants. They were notorious among the whites, since having a free run of Cape Town at all times of night, they were suspected, frequently correctly, of all sorts of misdemeanours. By the slaves they were greatly hated, since they flogged not only on the order of the *fiscaal*, but could also be hired by private masters to do the work for them. Indeed, it was illegal for more than domestic correction to be inflicted by other than the *Caffers*. Numerous slaves ran away because they were threatened with the *Caffers*, or after they had returned from them.

The other work of the town police force was performed by the two watches, the *burgherwagt* and the *ratelwagt* who patrolled the city at night.³⁶ In times of panic, too, the watches patrolled with extra vigilance, occasionally making considerable hauls,³⁷ but in general the slaves knew how they organised their routine and could stay out of their way.

In the country, such a regularised system was evidently impossible. The various magistrates did indeed have *Caffers* under their direct control, and by the end of the century Stellenbosch had grown to the size where a certain regularity of patrolling was by no means excessive.³⁸ In the countryside proper, more ad hoc measures were necessary. The bounties for the recapture of runaways were higher the further from Cape Town the slave was taken, but more organised measures were needed.³⁹ From around 1715 onwards, there had emerged a system of defence whereby the Cape burghers could be called out on *commandoes*, civilian-run expeditions of mounted gunmen, which were highly mobile, could be called into action at

very short notice - provided the farmers were prepared to go - and thus formed most suitable methods of organisation for combating the small-scale guerilla actions with which the stock-farmers of the interior were confronted. This institution had first been developed to counteract the 'San' attacks which became especially frequent after the cattle plague in the years after 1713.⁴⁰ No longer were the burghers dependent on the troops of the VOC, several days away in Cape Town.

Such a system naturally proved equally effective for dealing with runaway slaves. After an escape, a master would call out his neighbours and their *knegten* into a posse and set off in pursuit. This might have a certain degree of success, especially as the slaves at this stage were not likely to be efficiently organised for defence or well armed. Often, however, a group of runaways were able to establish themselves in some fastness, acquire a certain store of arms and commence a regularised system of robbery on the nearby farms. In this case, more strenuous measures were required. A full-scale commando had to be called out to proceed against the runaways. In Stellenbosch district in particular such expeditions were regular.⁴¹

One example can serve for many. In 1742 Slamath, a slave of Anthony Lombard, had been a runaway for about eight years. His life had not been easy. With several other slaves he had initially attempted to reach the Xhosa, but the group had been attacked by Khoisan and dispersed, although they were able to maintain possession of the guns they had stolen out of their masters' houses. Some of the slaves had gone to the sea-coast, while others had found holes in the mountains in which to keep out of the way of the whites. Nevertheless, they soon came to the notice of the latter, mainly because, in order to keep alive, they regularly had to steal from the gardens and the sheep flocks of the neighbouring farmers. A number of commandoes were organised against them and several of Slamath's companions were shot dead. Despite this, Slamath was able to maintain his freedom and eventually came to the Paarl Rock, a granite mountain overlooking what was then one of the richest agricultural valleys of the Cape. Once again he was able to gather about a dozen slaves to him, and they began to take food from the farms in the valley below them. They also managed to suborn a shepherd, a Mozambiquan called January, into providing them with wethers from the flock he tended. Nevertheless, this contact proved their downfall, eventually. The regular disappearance of sheep was noticed and January was forced to inform his master where the drossers were hiding out. An expedition was made to the cave in question, a deep cavern with several galleries. Two whites and a 'Bastard Hottentot' went in, with candles to show them their way. In the first gallery they found nothing but empty pots, but, as they entered the second, Slamath shot at them, mortally wounding the Khoi and extinguishing the candles in the blast. The burghers pulled the Khoi out, but he died a few minutes later. Then they began to assemble a

commando. The head of the Stellenbosch militia came to take over. It was quickly realised that it would be impossible - or at least highly dangerous - to storm the cavern, but, on the other hand, they knew the slaves had only a few days' food with them. Therefore the commando settled down to starve the slaves out - a sign of the considerable discipline that it could muster. Moreover, it was successful. After three days the slaves surrendered. Most of the dozen received relatively mild punishments, being merely flogged and sent back to work for their masters in chains, but Slamath was executed in the most cruel and vindictive way the Dutch knew. He was impaled.⁴² The domination of the whites of the Cape over their slaves had once again been assured.

The point is that it had to be. The life on the farms was a constant contest between the masters and the slaves. The threat of the barbaric punishments imposed by the Court of Justice was the deterrent which the ruling class of the Cape had in their attempt to maintain control over the colony. But it did not always work. Frequently slaves challenged the authority of the masters and the agents, either by murdering them or by running away. This latter could entail considerable loss to the owner, since a slave who continually ran away lost a considerable amount of his value,⁴³ even if no more gruesome fate was reserved for him or her. The full rigours of the law were not imposed merely for running away, but if some 'crime' was committed, then they would be. As a result, in all probability, the owner's investment in the slave would be lost. This was part of the price of controlling the subject population of the Cape, but it was a price that had to be paid, if the structures of society were to be maintained, and with that the profit and pleasure of the ruling class.

4 The slaves and the Khoisan

When the colonists came to the Cape of Good Hope they did not, of course, find an unoccupied land. Rather, this country was inhabited by those peoples the Dutch called Hottentotten and Bosjesmans-Hottentotten, and who are now known to linguists and historians as the Khoisan.

By the time the Dutch arrived at the Cape, some fifteen hundred years after the introduction of cattle and sheep to the southern Cape, two intertwined threads can be discerned in the social organisation of the Khoisan.¹ The first was economic. Whereas all Khoisan were dependent to a greater or lesser extent on the products of hunting and gathering, some had been able to amass considerable herds of cattle and sheep. This enabled concentration of population impossible to those who could only exploit the natural resources of veldkos and game. Indeed it demanded them, for the purposes of defence. Thus through the highlands of Namibia and the north-west Cape, along the Orange River and, above all, in the rich grassland plains, the west coast south of St Helena Bay, through what was later named Swellendam district and the Little Karoo to the frontier with the Xhosa, around the Gamtoos River,² there had developed a number of tribes with populations up to, perhaps, 25,000 people.³ While they certainly still hunted and collected wild plant food, these people gained a considerable proportion of their subsistence from the milk and meat of their herds.⁴ Those who were able to live so called themselves Khoikhoi, the men of men - in this chapter often shortened to Khoi - and looked down on those who did not own cattle. These they disparagingly named San - rubbish-men is perhaps the best translation.⁵ The scientific term Khoisan is merely a portmanteau. The latter lived sometimes as clients of the Khoikhoi, particularly if they had themselves once owned stock and hoped thus to regain their former status. Others again had no such close links to the herder groups. They continued in the patterns of hunter-gatherer life that had been old when cattle first came into the Cape, sometimes in a wary peace with the Khoikhoi, whom they might serve as scouts and from whom they might receive stock as presents. But the gift might be viewed differently by giver and receiver. To the Khoikhoi, it established their superiority in that a gift emphasises a hierarchical relationship. To the San, the Bosjesmans-Hottentotten as the Dutch saw them, it may have been nothing but protection money. For there always remained a tension between the herder and the hunter, as the former's cattle and sheep were seen, quite

literally, as fair game.⁶ Often, of course, any pretence at the maintenance of these relationships was impossible, and a state of open conflict would exist, as indeed was by no means unusual between the various Khoikhoi tribes.

Linked to this continuum from the rich stock-owner to the stockless was another, political and institutional one. Within Khoikhoi, herder society, stock brought power. In the Khoikhoi language 'Chief' and 'wealth' were coterminous,⁷ and Gei!khu who was so rich and powerful his very name meant 'Great Chief' - or 'great wealth' - was obeyed, so the Dutch reported, with running and jumping.⁸ The authority that this entailed could not be maintained in the absence of stock. Poor chiefs were weak, not only towards their competitors, but also as regards their followers. In hunter-gatherer society, property could scarcely be accumulated and leadership was based on the force of individuals' personalities. An egalitarian ethic was the necessary result.

When the Dutch arrived at the Cape, they had to work out some suitable pattern of relationships with the Khoisan. Naturally enough, they conducted all their negotiations with the Khoikhoi chiefs, although in many cases it was the Dutch who provided certain individuals with the wealth necessary to set up as chiefs. The Dutch above all wanted to buy cattle, and only the Khoikhoi had cattle to sell, though not in the quantities and at the price that the Dutch had hoped for.⁹ But there were other than purely economic reasons. Only by working with an established structure of authority could the Dutch hope to control their unruly unbounded colony. While they were initially prepared to arm slaves against Khoikhoi attacks, from the first the Dutch commandeered the help of Khoikhoi chiefs for the return of escaped slaves.¹⁰ This practice was continued. Particularly after his defeat in the second Khoikhoi war (1673-7), the Cochoqua chief Gonnema was most diligent in this respect. This was in line with the need of all Khoikhoi chiefs to wage a continual campaign against cattle thieves, against San.¹¹ Nevertheless, they needed encouragement. The Company was afraid that runaway slaves would die of thirst, or of hunger or be killed by wild animals or by Khoi. Therefore, they proposed that all Khoikhoi, both those living near the fort and those who had settled far away, should be rewarded with the same amount of tobacco and beads as they would normally receive when they sold a cow.¹²

Those Khoikhoi tribes that were not under the direct influence of the colonial authorities were not so particular. Khoikhoi politics always felt the need for manpower, and runaway slaves could be welcome to maintain their strength in their competition with other groups. Certainly the slaves who attempted to reach the Nama could be assured of acceptance if they managed to get that far.¹³ On his trading expedition in 1724, Johannes Rhenius was ordered to do everything possible to regain the numerous escapees known to be among the southern Nama. In later years,

the various Nama groups in Namibia and the !Kora on the Orange River were the goals for those slaves who were held in bondage in the north-west colony, particularly as the !Kora, from at least 1800 on, were in a state of continual guerilla war with the colony and lived the sort of raiding, freebooting life attractive to an escaped slave.¹⁴ Throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century slaves made attempts, by no means always unsuccessfully, to reach the !Kora and Nama.¹⁵

But this is to anticipate. In the early years of the colony, there were several Khoisan groups who were quite willing to accept and to use runaways. Significantly it was above all where there was no clear structure of authority in Khoisan society that slaves were most easily assimilated. This was particularly the case with the Guriqua who lived in the country around the Oliphants River and who, as Elphick reports, had no chiefs at all other than at kraal (i.e. clan) level.¹⁶ As early as 1680, a certain slave - we do not know his name - came to live among the Guriqua for a whole year, after running away in company of three freemen (presumably Company servants) and suffering many hardships. The Guriqua were only prepared to give him back to the whites after being assured that he would not be punished. The Company was only too willing to comply, since in the year he had been among them he had managed to learn the Guriqua's language, something no European had yet been able to do, and could thus be most useful on future trading expeditions. It was therefore proposed that he be taken into the Company's ownership and that his owner, Johannes Pretorius, should be compensated with a slave from the lodge.¹⁷

Such friendship and accommodation did not remain the rule. In 1696, after the expedition of Isaac Schrijver to the north, the Company authorities once again came into close contact with the Guriqua and discovered that there were large numbers of runaways among them. The reaction of the Council of Policy is worth quoting at length. They had learnt that:

The Grigriqua Hottentots, who live on the other side of the Oliphants river, a Nation with whom the Company is used to having not the least correspondence nor friendship, had the habit of keeping and employing in their service all the runaway slaves of the inhabitants who reach them, without it being known where these fugitives were hid - a manner of acting totally contrary to the praiseworthy habit of other Hottentot nations, who, being of a more reasonable temper, and faithful to the Company, are accustomed, when they capture a runaway slave, to deliver him up, so he returns to his rightful master. Moreover [the Governor] was afraid that, in the near future, as their numbers increased, these deserted slaves - either in conspiracy with the Grigriqua Hottentots or after mastering them - might attempt to surprise and ruin some of our free inhabitants who live far apart from each other. In order to prevent such threatening troubles as might derive

from this, and to achieve the restoration of these fugitives, the Governor and Council unanimously decided to reinforce [Schrijver] with a sergeant, ten Company servants and twenty Stellenbosch free burghers. Once they have gathered, they are to march across the Oliphants river to the Grigriqua Hottentots, and, without the least bloodshed and in the most suitable and gentlest way, while pretending to exchange or trade, to capture the said slaves, who may be found there, or (in case of unwillingness or refusal) to bring one of the Grigriqua captains or some of their women and children to the Castle as hostages, to stay here until the Grigriqua Hottentots shall have restored the said slaves to the Company.¹⁸

Governor van der Stel's fears of a Khoisan uprising were fulfilled, as the northern border of the colony exploded in 1702. Much stock was lifted from the Company, from its Khoikhoi allies and from the burghers. It was not clear that runaway slaves had any part in these risings, as there was considerable pressure on the Khoikhoi from white settlers, who both raided cattle - under the guise of trading expeditions - and were already settling on and claiming to monopolise important Khoikhoi grazing land, particularly in the land of Waveren (the upper Breede River valley).¹⁹ Nevertheless, the slaves undoubtedly aided in this major threat to the outlying colonial settlements, although, a generation later, in the Khoisan-White war of 1738 in the north-west Cape, another significant challenge to the colonial domination of the area, there is no indication of slave participation.²⁰

Many of those slaves who managed to reach the Khoisan and to be accepted to any extent joined the San, the raiders and robbers. Thus there were occasions when slaves took part in San raids on Khoikhoi herding groups. In 1714, for instance, a group of more than a dozen slaves, led by Knapendeurotia - known to his owner as Hannibal - and Tromp van Madagascar, marched north from the Cape, with a number of stolen guns, in the hope that they would eventually reach Portuguese territory. On their way, they took an oath, symbolised by eating bread covered with blood, that they would never return to the Dutch.²¹ To the north of the Piquetberg, they fell in with the 'Bosjesman' Captains Trouwman, Jantje and Marcus, who saw in a group of armed and desperate men - they must have been hungry and frightened after their life in the open - the chance to launch an effective attack on their Khoikhoi enemies, under Captain Prins. This group may have been weakened by the smallpox epidemic of the previous year, in which it had certainly lost its leader.²² The slaves led the attack, shooting several Khoi at one of the small Company garrisons at the Piquetberg. Nevertheless, it was Trouwman, so it would appear, who was able to control the cattle and sheep they had lifted. Five cows, three slaves and five sheep were stolen, but Trouwman gave only one calf and one sheep to the slaves. Moreover, he and his fellow 'Bosjemans' were able to

melt away into the landscape and avoid capture in the ensuing hue and cry. Some of the slaves were able to do likewise, and their owners never heard of them again. Most, however, were intercepted. Knapendeurotia was shot dead. Tromp and ten others were captured and sentenced with varying severity, for Tromp being reserved the most barbarous execution in the Company's arsenal, impalement.²³

Indications of such alliances between slaves and San in later years seem very rare, although in 1779 a group of bandits in the Bokkeveld was said to have consisted of seven Khoisan men, five women and one runaway slave.²⁴ If anything, slaves were as likely to be the victims of San raids as whites, although Khoisan shepherds in service of the whites were far more vulnerable than either. However, even the San of the Nieuwveld, long among the most feared enemies of the colonists, were prepared to hand back the runaways they captured.²⁵ The reason for this antagonism, which was even more marked among those the colonists called 'Hottentots', must be sought not in any racial antagonism but in the development of labour relations on the farms of the colony, which permeated to all those who lived within its orbit.

The incorporation of Khoisan into the labour system of the colony is perhaps the most shadowy part of the eighteenth-century Cape's history, particularly in those areas where Khoisan came to work alongside slaves. In the Eastern Cape, where the colonists were initially almost entirely dependent on Khoisan labour, the process was effectively equivalent to the establishment of white settlement, and is therefore much easier - though still not easy - to study.²⁶ Even there, though, it is not difficult to exaggerate the completeness of incorporation until well into the nineteenth century. For instance, as early as 1773, Governor van Plettenberg wrote that throughout the Camdeboo (Graaff-Reinet) 'there are no Hottentots except those who since several years had hired themselves to the colonists and had come to live with them with their whole families.'²⁷ It is difficult to take this at face value, at least if it were to be extended to the whole of the Eastern Cape. The regular increase in the number of 'Hottentots' recorded in the 'opgaaf' rolls over the decades from 1800 on (from 20,426 in 1806 to 30,549 in 1823) can surely best be interpreted as indicating not a population increase nor any improvement in registration (though this may have played a part) but rather the continuing process of subordination of Khoisan to white masters.²⁸ In the western Cape, in contrast, where the process of incorporation was less fundamental to the colonial economy, it is far less simple even to date, let alone to measure, its intensity. As early as 1705, Adam Tas recorded in his diary Khoikhoi fishing, carting, running messages and forming teams of travelling harvesters, reaping rye and wheat.²⁹ Elphick indeed, dealing with the same period, attributes the greater apparent productivity of slaves in the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein districts, as against the Cape, to

the far more widespread use of Khoisan labour in the former area.³⁰ Unfortunately he does not exclude the non-agricultural slaves of Cape Town from his calculations but the point should still hold, especially as the phenomenon is still to be found later in the century, with this factor taken into account.³¹ Elphick also refers to Khoisan 'harrowing, pruning vines, pressing grapes and hauling building materials in ox-drawn waggons' and to Khoikhoi women who tried to live by hawking honey and besoms around the farms.³² Nevertheless, nearly a century later, the first missionaries found a number of relatively independent Khoi villages even in the closely settled regions of the western Cape, notably at Genadendal and in the Groen Kloof, which formed the nucleus of the early Moravian mission stations.³³ These were perhaps exceptional survivals but, together with the considerable migration of western-Cape Khoikhoi north into Namaqualand in the course of the century, they demonstrate that the forced subservience of Khoisan to the colonial labour process, real though it was, was neither complete nor total.³⁴

In part, this partial and temporary escape of Khoisan from the grip of the farmers derived from the decision of the colonists, whether farmers or in government. That the Khoikhoi were not to be enslaved was a fundamental tenet of VOC policy, dating back to the foundation of the Cape under Van Riebeeck, and resulting from the experience of the Dutch in Indonesia, especially Java.³⁵ As a consequence, the Khoisan maintained their rights as putatively free individuals. They could and did demand the intervention of the central government if the wages for which they had contracted were not paid.³⁶ Their bargaining position with the whites was by no means entirely unfavourable, especially as in the eighteenth century there was little legal backing to the relationship of labour, and, as a consequence, they could always threaten to leave employment during the harvest, and so push up their wages.³⁷ Thus, although the farmers were prepared and indeed forced to employ Khoi labour, particularly in the peak periods of the agricultural year, for the basic drudgery and regular maintenance of their farms, they preferred to use slaves when they could afford them. When they could not, as in the eastern Cape, Khoisan labourers had to be controlled by the immediate force of the farming community itself, and not by the threat presented by the government's judicial apparatus.

This does not, of course, mean that, even in the south-west Cape, Khoisan labourers were exempt from the exercise of terror. On the contrary, their status as non-slaves may have made them especially susceptible to it. The comment of Theunis Roelofs, a knegt on a farm in the Tjgerberg, is revealing, even though it was made in a state of drunkenness. After murdering Casper, a Khoi labourer, during a petty contest of will, he explained to a slave, 'there is no law for Hottentots, but if I should murder you or other slaves, then your master would lose money.' The Court of Justice did not agree, and Roelofs was

banned from the colony for life, but his argument and his attitude would have been widely accepted in the farming community.³⁸

Nevertheless, it was the Khoisan, not their potential master, who were largely responsible for their own independence, however fragile, temporary and precarious that may have been. Seeing the degradation and the powerlessness of the slaves alongside whom they had to work, the Khoisan did everything in their power to avoid being reduced to a similar position. Throughout the period of slavery they stressed their distinct, free status. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, an English traveller noted that the Cape Town Khoi, whom he otherwise viewed as degraded and servile, 'have a great love for liberty, and an utter Aversion to slavery. Neither will they hire themselves in your service longer than from Morning to Night, for they will be paid and sleep Freeman, and no Hirelings.'³⁹ Over a century later, a western Cape landowner noted that Khoikhoi 'are absolutely indispensable as herdsmen and waggon-drivers, but . . . cannot be brought to enter willingly in the hard labour in the fields.'⁴⁰ When necessary they defended their right to independence with guerilla war. Not until slavery was abolished did the Khoisan allow themselves to be lumped together with the ex-slaves, as the law no longer knew any distinctions in the status of the so-called 'Coloured' people, or indeed between them and the 'whites'.

Before then it was their desire to maintain a separate status that persuaded the Khoisan generally to co-operate with the whites against escaped slaves. Even the sight of someone they suspected of being a Khoi, in the distance, was enough to send a party of fugitives into a panic.⁴¹ They had good reason to panic. Time and again a party of runaways was captured by Khoikhoi, sometimes in company with a number of Europeans, sometimes alone. In the early years of the century, such groups as the Kleine Nama were still handing slaves back to the colonial authorities.⁴² Other slaves were taken by commandoes, in which the Khoikhoi had no scruples in participating, or simply by Khoikhoi who happened to intercept them.⁴³ An attack by a group of fugitives on a farm, generally to gain food, might be met violently, as when, early in 1744, two slaves accompanying Anthony van Mallabaar were killed by Khoikhoi wielding kirries on a farm in Lange Vallei.⁴⁴ Occasionally an owner would be warned of an impending attack by his Khoikhoi employees.⁴⁵ Other slaves, escaping farther into the interior, were believed to have been killed by Khoikhoi who were still relatively independent.⁴⁶

Slaves who had been captured were often handed over to Khoikhoi to be escorted to prison in Cape Town, though on occasion this did neither party any good. In 1746 a Khoisan named Claas was attacked by a runaway while attempting to arrest him,⁴⁷ while two years later another, Frederick, was murdered by two runaways in similar circumstances.⁴⁸ Sometimes the violence was distributed in the opposite direction, although

even then the government applied the same punishments. In 1765 Martin Blaauw was hung after thrashing Caesar van Mallabaar to death with a sjambok and kirry, while taking him from the Groen Kloof to the Cape.⁴⁹

This defensive reaction on the part of Khoikhoi was by no means irrational or atavistic. A group of runaways was always hungry and desperate, and generally violent. It was not only when San suggested it that a group of runaway slaves attacked Khoikhoi settlements in the hope of stealing cattle, just as white-owned farms were even more frequently raided. For instance, some time during the 1730s a group of runaways lost a sharp skirmish with a party of Khoisan in the neighbourhood of Swellendam. In all probability it was the slaves who were hoping to reach the Xhosa who began the fight. Certainly they approached the Khoisan, not the other way round.⁵⁰ Such clashes had occurred ever since the early days of the colony when, as Elphick reports, escaped slaves 'often had the opportunity to attack many Khoikhoi kraals.'⁵¹

This antagonism was probably derived from life on the farms, where it was particularly sharp. In their day-to-day relations, slaves and Khoisan frequently came into conflict as they struggled to improve their lot despite and in reaction to the control of the white overseers and owners. While Khoisan attempted, by no means always successfully, to remain distinct from the slaves in terms of tasks and, more generally, freedom of action, the two groups were generally required to live in very close proximity. Murders of slaves by Khoi and Khoi by slaves were a common feature of the life on the farms, several a year being occasionally punished by the colonial authorities. Some of them derived, apparently, from the work situation, as when, in 1735, a certain Titus was murdered by the Khoi Varken and Toontje 'because he continually cursed and beat them', or contrariwise, when Andries of Ceylon murdered a Khoi named Pieter, in revenge for a beating - although in this case the European knegt and other slaves had also joined in the beating and Andries hoped to take reprisals against them all by setting fire to the farm.⁵² Or again, one group of slaves, enjoying the temporary freedom of driving a waggon to Cape Town, beat up two Khoi men and raped two women who were engaged in the same task.⁵³ More symptomatic, perhaps, was a case in 1756 when December van Bali refused to allow Michiel to remove his own sheep from the kraal on New Year's Day, even though his contract had come to an end. The frustrations of a man without property or any chance of mobility towards one who had this luck is surely evident here.⁵⁴ But he was on dangerous ground. Shepherds, whether Khoisan or slave, always ran the risk of being murdered by those who wished to steal the sheep in their charge.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, it was in the basic business of living that the major frictions developed. Drunken brawls, often with fatal results, were not uncommon, certainly in the countryside and

even on occasion in Cape Town.⁵⁶ The slaves and Khoi increasingly lived together, both sets of labourers eating and sleeping in the 'slavenhuys'.⁵⁷ The slaves accepted the magical powers of the Khoisan as being particularly efficacious, not infrequently assaulting Khoisan whom they believed to have bewitched them.⁵⁸ Alternatively they accepted *materia medici* from the Khoisan, as when in 1770 April van Bengalen somewhat disingenuously claimed that the beans which he had received from a Khoi man and inserted into the food of two fellow slaves were simply to stop them plaguing him. They certainly would have done that, as they were the poison put down for hyenas, but in this context the importance of his action was the general acceptance that what was needed to achieve the result he desired would have to come from the Khoisan.⁵⁹

Above all, and this caused the greatest tension and the most frequent assaults, slaves and Khoi slept together. As I have argued elsewhere, the highly unbalanced sex ratio at the Cape - in the mid-eighteenth century, excluding the Khoisan, there were over three men to every woman - meant that the level of sexual tension was very high.⁶⁰ Competition among men to gain access to and then to monopolise a woman sexually was very keen, especially among the slaves, since slave women were often pre-empted by whites, especially by knegten. These, of course, the slaves could only challenge at their peril. Nevertheless, lasting relationships between Khoi men and slave women were not unknown. In 1791, for instance, after Anna had been sold to a new master, her husband, Klaas, turned up and demanded to be hired. When this was refused they ran away together to Cape Town with their child.⁶¹ Far more frequently, though, the relationship would be the other way round, between a slave man and a Khoisan woman. These too might be long-lasting. Felix van Boegis and Mitta lived as man and wife in the Roodezand for twenty-seven years and had thirteen children together, although eventually the relationship went sour. He was eventually hung for murdering her new husband, Salomon van der Caab, who had indeed first paid court to their daughter and been discouraged by his master.⁶² Sometimes the woman did not live on the same farm as the slave, who had to take off in the night to visit his wife, generally to the annoyance of his owner or overseer.⁶³ On the other hand, a master might refuse to allow a Khoi woman to live on his farm, even though one of his slaves considered her his wife. If so, the master ran the risk of being murdered.⁶⁴ Even an attempt at extra splendour, as when a slave walked out with a Khoi woman dressed in European clothing, could bring down the wrath of the master, and be sufficient excuse for a flogging.⁶⁵ Above all, though, it was when a man failed to get his way with a woman, or suspected her of unfaithfulness, that violence, often leading to murder, might occur.⁶⁶ Sometimes these incidents merely showed how cheap life had become. In 1787, Daniel Dikkop, a Khoi, murdered Cathryn van Batavia because she would not sleep

with him. Her (slave) husband had gone with their master to the Cape and left them alone on a remote farm in Swellendam district. He claimed, in mitigation - which did not help him - that 'he did not know that killing someone was a crime worthy of death, because this sort of murder often remains unpunished and Europeans shoot Hottentots dead without anything being done about it.'⁶⁷ Although they may have often been felt, such opinions were not commonly expressed. Even if whites could get away with murder, their bondsmen and women could not, especially when they destroyed a valuable piece of property at the same time.

The tensions did not always lead to these results. Suyverman and Couragie, two Khoisan youths who were forced to work on the farm of Dirk Marx in Swellendam, were once held captive by a runaway slave of Marx's who used Couragie (the elder of the two) 'as a woman' in the shelter where he was living. Later, on escaping his clutches, they were tried and accused of sodomy, but because of their youth and the forced nature of their offence they were given a very light sentence.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, despite such tensions, the very similar positions of slaves and Khoi in respect to white exploitation slowly led to an increasing accommodation between them. Increasing numbers of bastards were born out of the unions of slaves and Khoi, though they were looked down on by those other bastards who had whites among their ancestors.⁶⁹ There were complaints from at least the 1780s onwards that runaway slaves were able to pass themselves off as Bastards and so wander freely around the countryside. The answer to this problem, it was proposed, was to impose a system of registration, a proto-pass law, on the so-called Bastard-Hottentots so that their identities and their movements could be checked.⁷⁰

In time, moreover, slaves and Khoisan began increasingly to act together against their common masters. At least this was true of the western Cape. In the east, where the Khoisan population remained largest and where some sort of loose 'tribal' affiliation and consciousness was maintained up till at least the end of the century, this co-operation was absent. This was not because either of the two groups aided the whites against the other, nor because either was acquiescent in their bondage. On the contrary, very large numbers of slaves from this area ran away, while in 1799 the Khoikhoi rose in a major rebellion against the whites, in alliance with various Xhosa chiefdoms. Nevertheless, there is no indication that there were any slaves engaged in this uprising. In part at least, the Khoikhoi were attempting to regain their ancestral lands, from which they had been dispossessed in the course of the previous generation. The revolt was thus an attempt to turn the clock back, to achieve the restoration of lost rights, in addition to its unbounded character of protest against labour conditions, but like many other rebellions with similar ideologies the world over, it was none the less radical, even revolutionary, for that.⁷¹ But such an ideology of restoration did not appeal to

the slaves. They had no feelings of primordial attachment to particular pieces of South African land, nor were they keen to put themselves in a position where they could be recaptured and returned to their masters, at least not where an alternative, far safer refuge existed. In the eastern Cape there was such a refuge, among the Xhosa.

In the west, in contrast, there was no such convenient goal for flight. Nor did these people have the same remembrance of their last life as had their fellows further east, after the process of driving Khoikhoi from their lands and forcing them to abandon their flocks had been going on for a century. The obstacles to the combination of slaves and Khoisan were thus absent to the west of, say, Outeniqualand. Examples of combined action are by no means infrequent, at least from the mid-eighteenth century on. Slaves and Khoisan stole sheep together or in a drunken frenzy beat up a knegt together.⁷² Occasionally there were Khoisan among groups of runaway slaves, as in the group found swimming in the Breede River by one Michael Prentz. He took their clothes away, barricaded himself in his house with sand-bags and shouted to the four slaves and one Bastard Hottentot that he would send their clothes back to their masters, where they should return to claim them. The slaves would have none of this, and attempted to set fire to his house. One of them put his head in through a window, whereupon Prentz shot him dead and the others disappeared into the night, presumably still stark naked.⁷³ On another occasion, one Uithaalder was captured in the Hex River valley with a group of runaways whom he was guiding to 'Cafferland', in exchange for a suit of clothes and presumably a new life.⁷⁴

This case exemplifies one of the problems recurring at so many points throughout this book. Although Uithaalder was tried, his four companions were not, although they were undoubtedly punished by their masters. If they had not fallen in with Uithaalder, we would not know they had ever escaped. On the other hand, by definition a Khoikhoi could not escape from bondage. Therefore it is impossible to say in purely quantitative terms whether more slaves ran away or attacked their masters' persons and property in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries than had done so a generation earlier. To make such a claim, for instance, it would be necessary to know how many slaves performed these actions at all, and in how many of those deeds for which slaves were not tried, because they were successful, there were Khoisan accomplices. These points are highly relevant to the argument I am trying to make, namely that, with certain exceptions, the steady reduction of the Khoisan to a position of bondage scarcely distinguishable from that of the slaves led to a slow growth of solidarity encompassing individuals from the two groups and to a slow diminution of estate conflict between them. But whenever historians use such words as 'more' or 'increasing', they have a duty to ask the supplementary questions 'how much' and 'how many', since

answers to these questions alone can verify, or falsify, the claims that are being made. But in this case the verdict has to be 'ignoramus'. Only one thing is clear. In the mid-eighteenth century the number of cases - which I have seen - in which slaves and Khoi took opposite sides, as it were, clearly outnumbered those in which they acted together. Fifty years later, the reverse is the case. But that fact, though a fact, is fraught with such difficulties of definitional and statistical nature that I would not care to give the precise figure. Nevertheless, such is without doubt the clear impression given by the materials on which the investigation of the lives of the Cape Colony's oppressed can best be based.

One example will have to serve for many. On 7 December 1801, the bondsmen of a lonely farm in the Roggeveld rose against their masters. Some months earlier, seven of them, the slaves Maurits, Louis, Cedras and Paris and the Khoi Young Flamink, Wildschut and Thomas, had already decided to murder their masters, Cornelis Coetzé and his two sons, Cornelis and Hercules, to steal their cattle and to flee with them to the Bosjesman or to some group of Hottentots. On the 7th they took advantage of the fact that all the white men were away from the house, to steal the flintlock that hung in the hall. Then they waited until Cornelis the son came home. The Khoikhoi who had been entrusted with the gun, presumably because they had some experience with such a weapon, then shot at him, but missed. Nevertheless, the slaves were then able to grab him, throw him to the ground and stab him to death. They then went to the schoolroom where they found the knegt, Frans Scherfenoord, whom they seized, knocked senseless with an iron and then killed, knocking his brains out with a stone. The two bodies were then dragged off to the bullock kraal.

Sometime later, Hercules came home with a butcher, Werner, with whom he had been viewing the stock. The slaves and Khoi fired at them and managed to wound them both. Werner exclaimed 'O God, what have I done to you, thus to murder me', and attempted to fly, but he too was knocked down and killed. Hercules, however, managed to reach the bedroom where, together with his father and his wife and some of the 'maids' he managed to lock himself in. It did not avail them. Maurits was able to break open the door with a crowbar, and, taking revenge for his mistreatment as a slave,⁷⁵ to kill old Cornelis. Young Flamink broke in through a window and put a bullet through Hercules's head. They found his brother's wife, Sophie Christina van Wijk hiding under the bed clothes and threatened to kill her, but, 'on her continual entreaties and vows that she never should part with them', they spared her and the maids. They then ransacked the house, gathering together clothes, money and food, which they loaded onto a waggon. Next morning they set off, northwards, forcing the womenfolk to come with them and driving off the cattle and horses. They decided that when they reached the Slangeberg, just south of modern Williston, they

would pause and try to persuade some other Khoisan or 'Caffers' to join them before heading north to associate themselves with 'the Hottentots Captain Africaander or some other gang of that description'. Moreover, by this stage, the group had gained a number of recruits, so that it was made up of seven slaves and nine Khoisan, apart from the women. Maurits had come to be recognised as the leader of the group. 'While some of the Murderers had given [him] the name of king . . . at his desire [he] was by others called and considered their Master (or Baas).'

Although they had managed to gain a good start on their eventual pursuers, the group was too encumbered to make good their escape. Their attempt to travel by waggon and to take large numbers of cattle with them was suicidal. They travelled too slowly and left too clear a trail behind them. Nine days after the murders, on 16 December, they were intercepted by the commando under Veldcornet Gerrit Maritz which had been sent after them. Most of the group surrendered quickly, although Paris was shot dead by the commando, and a few, including Maurits, were able to escape, having the good fortune to be out hunting at the moment of the commando's attack. Maurits and two accomplices were, however, later taken by a butcher's knegt in the Witsenberg, while they were, presumably, heading for Cape Town after a change of plans. In the end, of the sixteen, only four evaded capture.⁷⁶

In this case, it is thoroughly clear that the oppressed, whether slave or Khoisan, did not make the same distinctions as to status as their masters or the Courts of Justice did. Rather they collaborated fully in their struggle against their masters. Perhaps it cannot yet be described as a class struggle. There was no attempt to broaden the basis of their resistance beyond the individual farm. The relationships of master and underling were still based on a face-to-face interaction. No feeling of class consciousness can be discerned beyond the immediate desire to turn the relations of power upside down. Nevertheless it is clear that here in the Roggeveld, and undoubtedly on many other farms elsewhere in the colony, any attempt that the Coetzés may have made to control their labourers by setting them against each other failed utterly. The Khoisan had not wanted it to be so. They had waged, and in 1801 were still waging, a determined rearguard action to prevent their being degraded to a status equivalent to that of the slaves. But it is all too obvious that men like Young Flamink, Thomas and Wildschut experienced that struggle as having been lost. Their grandfathers would not have acted in such close connection with even those slaves whose meals and work they shared.

It should be pointed out that these events occurred at a moment before the legal position of the Khoisan had been fixed, albeit temporarily as that of labourers bound to the whites by one-sided legal contractors. The bonds that held Young Flamink to the Coetzés could, in all probability, not have been upheld or

maintained in a court of law, although of course they were all the more brutal as a result. In default of any contract enforceable by the colonial authorities - and indeed, in the Roggeveld, in default of any presence on the part of the colonial authorities, for practical purposes - the relations of supremacy and subordination could only be maintained by the naked exercise of terror and force, of which there were only too many examples.⁷⁷ It was in an attempt to regulate this brutality that in 1809 the British government introduced the so-called Caledon Code, which was the colony's first systematic compilation of regulations governing the relations between white master and Khoisan labourer. Three years later the regulations were substantially expanded. Although there were already a number of measures to provide for what was euphemistically called the apprenticeship of the Khoisan, it was only with the establishment of contracts of employment that the subservience of the Khoisan to the white employers became a legally enforceable fact.

The British were proud of what they had done. They saw their legislation as providing effective protection for the rights and the persons of their Khoisan subjects. One colonial official, W.W. Bird, even claimed that it 'rescued the Hottentots from a system of hardship and cruelty, practiced towards them by the Boers, which would, in the course of a short time, have extinguished the race.' He described it as the Magna Charta of the Hottentots.⁷⁸ This was not just hypocrisy. There are indications that the level of violence dispensed by white masters on Khoisan servants decreased markedly during the early decades of the nineteenth century. For instance, the agents of the London Missionary Society, whose reports had once been full of descriptions of the most disgusting brutality, no longer wrote to their committee in London of farmers flogging and otherwise maltreating Khoisan labourers.⁷⁹ It is notoriously difficult to argue from negative evidence, but, since the information network of these missionaries was as good as ever, and since they were still engaged in the struggle for Khoisan rights, it is difficult not to conclude that there was a slow process of what might, exceedingly euphemistically, be called normalisation at work in the labour processes of the South African farms.

There was a price to pay for the protection of the government, as John Philip, the leader of the critical wing of the missionary faction, knew only too well. He reserved some of his most cogent philippics for the workings of the proclamations of 1809 and 1812. As a result of the various omissions and regulations contained in them he argued, with justice, that the Khoisan

are condemned to a perpetual state of servitude, nor have they the power, by any exertion, however great and praiseworthy, of liberating themselves from the bondage; for, no sooner is the period of their contract for serving one inhabitant expired, but it becomes necessary for them to enter into service again; and the only option left to the Hottentot, is, whether he will

engage himself to the same master, or to another. Their condition, therefore, is, in this respect, more deplorable even than that of the slaves, for the latter have generally a hope, however faint, that they may possibly one day obtain their freedom.⁸⁰

Maybe there were some who were indeed able to find their way on to the mission stations, or into various rather freer occupations, as artisans, woodcutters or transport riders,⁸¹ but these were few, and even Ordinance 50 of 1828, the so-called Emancipation of the Hottentots, which removed the restriction imposed in 1809 and 1812, did little in fact to ameliorate their situation. In one way or another, the Khoisan had been reduced to a state that differed but fractionally from that of the slaves, and from which there was equally little chance of escape.

This apparent digression into the process whereby the Khoisan were brought into something approaching perpetual servitude has a purpose, since it was of profound importance for the slaves' experience in the years around their own emancipation. In gross terms it could be said that as the 'Hottentots' came to be treated like the slaves, so, *mutatis mutandis*, the slaves came to be treated as 'Hottentots'. It can be argued that the remarkable degree of acquiescence that the Cape slave-holders displayed when faced with the inevitability of slave emancipation derived not only from a pragmatic awareness of the fact that they were powerless to influence the actions of the Imperial government in London but also from the realisation that the colony already had a working system for the impressment of coloured labour. What had already been done with the Khoisan could now be done with the slaves, and the system was further reinforced by the enactment, three years after the slaves had been set free from their erstwhile owners, of a Masters and Servants Ordinance (later sharpened as one of the first major pieces of legislation of the new Cape Parliament) which made the breaking of a contract by a labourer a criminal offence.⁸² Ever since the beginning of the century, if not earlier, slaves and Khoisan had been forced together by the actions of their masters, and had acted together against the oppression that this entailed. As the century wore on, what had once been informal and not sanctioned by law became legal and enforceable.

At least in the view of the whites, from then on ex-slaves and Khoisan were considered equivalents. When, in the early 1850s, apparently in reaction to the Kat River rebellion, a panic set in among the whites of the Tizerberg, they believed that the 'Hottentots' were gathering at night and planning to murder them all. Nevertheless, their labourers would have consisted almost exclusively of ex-slaves and it was these, rather than the minority of Khoisan descent, who formed the threat, whether real or imaginary.⁸³ At about the same time, William Porter, the Attorney-General of the colony, arguing in favour of a non-racial franchise, observed that: 'I would rather meet the

Hottentot at the hustings voting for his representative, than meet the Hottentot in the wilds with his gun upon his shoulder.' But again it was the ex-slaves, particularly the Cape Town artisanate, who formed the mass of those 'Coloureds' who did get the vote, under the property-linked franchise that was adopted, as Porter was well able to foresee.⁸⁴ On a more general level, the stereotype that came to be associated with the Coloureds was that which had once been attributed to the Khoisan, not the far more variegated vision which the whites had of the slaves.⁸⁵ Only the peculiarly visible Malays of Cape Town formed an exception to this. All the rest, even the farmworkers of the wine farms who were overwhelmingly ex-slaves and their descendants, were all 'Hottentots'.

Among the Coloureds, the situation was rather more complicated. There were those, for instance the Griquas, who were proud of the Kholkholi-white ancestry and looked askance at the descendants of slaves who came to be part of their community.⁸⁶ More generally, though, as the memory of slavery has been erased from the consciousness, the internal stratification within the Coloured group has been expressed in racial terms. The elite looks down on the 'Hotnots' and, to a lesser extent, the 'Mazbieker', but the criteria for ascription to these categories have little if anything to do with somatic features, but rather derive from prestige within the community, from way of life and from occupation. To some small extent this is a hangover from the days of slavery, as the Khoisan and the Mozambiquan slaves were by far the most likely to be degraded farm labourers. Nevertheless, it would be vain to seek an explanation from the development of Coloured ideologies and actions in terms of the internal ethnicity of the community - in so far as it can be considered a community. Of far more importance has been the ambivalent relationship they have long had with the ruling whites.

5 Hanglip

It had not been a particularly dry summer, by the standards of Cape Town, and on three days in February there had been some light rain. Nevertheless, early in the morning of the 12 March 1736, the thatched roofs of the town must have been very dry, and moreover a south-east wind had sprung up in the night, blowing round the Devil's Peak and down the slopes of Table Mountain with a force that made it difficult to walk. Therefore when, in course of the night, a fire began in the tannery belonging to Jan Nicholaas Beugel, which lay just across from the vegetable garden of the VOC, on the southern edge of the town, it could easily have spread and burnt down the whole of Cape Town. As it was, it destroyed only five houses. The town was saved, the official diarist tells us, 'by the Grace of God and swiftly taken action', a combination of which Oliver Cromwell would surely have approved. The expedients included spreading an old sail over the thatched roof of the most vulnerable house to ward off the sparks, which it was able to do because the slaves kept it sodden. All the same, the owners of the five houses lost all their possessions, even down to the chickens in Rudolf Allemann's run, which were unable to escape and so were roasted alive, and eaten next morning by his slaves. The authorities of the town realised how nearly the night had ended in greater disaster. At the next meeting of the Council of Policy, the burgher council responsible for the administration of Cape Town asked that its equipment be increased by two hosepipes and one thousand leather buckets, to enable it better to fight fires. The Church Council considered it needed one hose and five hundred buckets, as did the government itself, forwarding the request to the Heren XVII in the Netherlands as a matter of urgency.¹

The Cape authorities were not certain whether the fire was accidental, for the houses had been destroyed so completely that no clues were left, no half-burnt brands as had been found after a similar arson attempt three months previously.² They must have had their suspicions, all the same, because at the same meeting of the council they ordered a commando to go out and round up the runaways, both slave and European, hiding in the mountains round the Cape. Later they discovered that it had indeed been a case of deliberate arson, one committed moreover by members of the most notorious band of runaway slaves in the history of the Cape colony, led by Leander Bugis and living on the coast near Hanglip, or Cape False.³ In this chapter, the

history of this band and its successors will be given. Because it was the longest surviving and largest of such groups at the Cape, the Hanglip maroon community represents the limit of what runaway slaves in South Africa were able to achieve.

The band had first come to the notice of the authorities some eleven years before the fire. The landrost of Stellenbosch had written to the governor informing him that a large number of slaves were hiding in the mountains around Cape Agulhas and asking that the reward for capturing them be increased to ten Rijksdaalders per head. This the council agreed to, with the proviso that if the Company had to pay the reward it should have a claim on the services of any slave captured.⁴ However, thereafter the matter no longer came to concern the highest circles of the Cape government. No doubt the landrost continued to keep a watchful eye on matters and to wish that more could be done to control his district, and a few bounty-hunters may have gone out, but they had no success. The colony was still too thinly populated, the attacks of runaway slaves too frequent and the policing presence of the authorities too meagre for them to do anything against a well-protected group which had as yet caused no great troubles for the surrounding areas.

The group cannot then have been long in existence. Probably in 1725, it was joined by Lena van de Caab, a slave of the Company. Two years earlier she had run away from Cape Town with Jochem, her husband,⁵ and had gone to live in the mountains of the Cape peninsula, about Hout Bay. They survived largely by stealing sheep from the kraal of Jochem's former master, Gerrit Victor. After two years of this precarious existence, they decided that they needed to find a safer spot and moved from the mountains of the Cape peninsula across the Cape flats - presumably along the coast of False Bay - to Hanglip, where they found four men living, Leander Bugis, Arend, Joumath and Andries. Probably it was not chance that they went there. Communications between Hanglip and Table Mountain were frequent, at least in later years, so it is likely that Lena and Jochem knew of the existence of the Hanglip group and went with the definite intention of joining it.

Hanglip was a very suitable location for a maroon community because it combined the safety provided by the mountains with the plentiful food supplies of the coast. The sea was not a weak flank open to attack, both because the cost of equipping a suitable vessel was too great and because the rocky lee shore was too dangerous given the ever-present threat of a south-east gale.⁶ Nor could Hanglip be easily surprised, either from the sea or overland, as any force moving through the mountains had to pass along one of a very few routes that could easily be watched, generally from high on the mountain slope above the paths. Again, the maroons could move along the coast to avoid continuous raids. At times, so the Dutch believed, if it was necessary, the maroons went as far as Mossel Bay.⁷ I have been unable to locate any report originating from the commandoes,⁸

but at least one of the expeditions returned completely empty-handed, except for a couple of runaways who had nothing to do with the Hanglip maroons, while another expedition was only able to capture a single man.⁹ As we shall see, there was a third commando which was able to take a sizeable proportion of the band, but, almost certainly, there were yet more commandoes which left no trace in the official records because they brought no criminals before the courts.

It is not absolutely clear where the runaways lived. In all probability they used the rock shelters overlooking the coast, where the mountain runs up against the sea and forms steep cliffs with roomy overhangs. Below them in the protection so offered against the weather, they built small huts. In this they were following the example of the hunter-gatherers who had lived along the coast before the foundation of the Cape Colony.¹⁰ They also had very much the same diet. When they were captured, the various members of the band said they lived off fish, mussels and klip kousen (either rock limpets or, perhaps whelks).¹¹ The fish were caught by hook and line, the hooks being made by Leander Bugis out of captured bits of iron or from bones, while Anna drew on the skills she had learned in her youth in Madagascar to make the lines from the bark of a shrub. No doubt an occasional tortoise found its way into their cooking, and the maroons also mentioned eating 'ijzeren varken wortels'.¹² But the most remarkable thing about this menu is its shortness; the veldkos¹³ is missing. There are none of the various roots, leaves and berries that had been the staple food of the various hunter-gatherer and herder groups of the south-west Cape. The Hanglip maroons were unable to exploit their environment in an optimal way. They could not move around the countryside to take each resource in its season,¹⁴ but more importantly they had not the knowledge to do so. Knowing which plant is edible and which poisonous, when to go to the hillside for the uytjes (or bulbs) and when to collect the berries from the shrubs, all this requires a degree of familiarity with the landscape which these men and women did not have. Nor did they have anyone to teach them. The hunter-gatherers and herders who had known these things had either been driven out of the area or reduced to being shepherds on the white-owned farms, and the Hanglip maroons had no contact - at least no friendly contact - with those who remained. There were no Khoisan among the Hanglip group at any time.

To compensate for these deficiencies in their skills, the Hanglip maroons had to rely, to be parasitic, on the colony from which they had fled. They needed clothing, for a Cape winter is cold even for those who are protected from the driving rains coming in from the north-west. They had acquired guns, stolen from their masters as they left, but to be of any use these required a regular supply of lead, powder and gun flints. From time to time they needed extra food, and brandy was always a welcome luxury. Now, maroon communities everywhere have

almost always had to retain some link with and some dependence on the society from which they fled. At least in the early stages of their existence - and in comparison with those New World societies which existed for centuries the Hanglip community was very short lived - maroon communities wherever they existed both required and preferred various commodities which they could not produce out of their local environment and therefore had to acquire either from the colony they had left or from those autochthonous peoples, such as the Amerindians, as there were in the neighbourhood. Indeed in many maroon communities the ties between those slaves who had run away and those who still lived on the nearby plantations remained close.¹⁵

In this regard Hanglip should be seen, paradoxically, as part of the suburbia of Cape Town where the runaways were accepted and to a certain extent glorified by their fellow slaves. For example, Aron, a Malagasy who later joined the Hanglip group, related how once, when he was up Table Mountain looking for wood, he had agreed to run an errand for Leander Bugis: he was given two dubbeltjes and told to go down into the town to buy gun flints. Next day he returned with the six that he had been able to acquire from one of his fellow slaves. Leander indeed was well known and feared by the slave community of Cape Town. Regularly he and two or three of the others from Hanglip would leave their hideout and cross the Cape flats, which could easily be done in a night. Moreover, since this part of the country was thinly populated and crossed by few wagon paths, it was easy to avoid undesired contacts with Europeans, or indeed with their slaves. Only on the slopes of Table Mountain were there a number of prosperous farms that had to be avoided. Therefore the maroons quickly climbed the kloofs behind Muizenberg on to the plateau of the Table Mountain range, where few whites ever came, except for the panting picnickers puffing up Platteklip Gorge to register one of the obligatory experiences for the book describing their travels to the East.¹⁶ For many slaves, in contrast, the mountain was the scene of their daily labours. The regular employment of a large proportion of Cape slaves consisted of climbing the lower slopes of the mountain to collect the firewood needed for the cooking stoves, brickworks and bakeries of Cape Town.¹⁷ It was the heaviest work in the town. For the Hanglip bandits - and as they approach Cape Town, perhaps they can be dignified with this title - the woodcutters were the most important group with whom they maintained contact. The two groups met whenever the Hanglipenaars came to the mountain, and they used the same paths. It was logical that when the government wanted to break the communication between Hanglip and the Cape they should charge with special responsibility for this the posthouder of 't Paradys', the Company's own jealously guarded woodlands above Newlands. More than any other free man, he knew the paths along the sides and crest of the mountain, and had thus most chance of intercepting the runaways.¹⁸ On previous occasions, so the govern-

ment believed with good reason, the runaways had been informed long in advance of all preparations made by the authorities to send a commando against them, and so had very easily avoided being caught.

From the mountain, then, Leander Bugis and his companions could easily descend into the town, to partake of the life of the slave community, of which the masters knew little and, since all the information we have is filtered through the masters, the historian can know even less. Where did they go for the 'debauches' to which they admitted later when captured? Presumably not to the 'tapperijen', although it was normal to find slaves drinking and gambling there along with the soldiers and the sailors - and, despite occasional complaints, the publicans provided too large a proportion of the Company's annual revenue for there to have ever been more than token attempts to control these houses.¹⁹ In the pubs, the runaways would have been too conspicuous, and probably too shabby, as they were always in need of new clothes. Rather they disappeared into the 'underworld' of Cape Town. They had good contacts with at least one of Cape Town's Chinese, among whom there were many who doubled the role of receiver with that of providing various services: food, drink and so forth. Here they were able to recruit new members for the band.

As the years went by, Leander himself came down into the town much less often, preferring to stay up above it and to send his companions to perform the business required by the group. It could be dangerous work. On one occasion, January, one of the youngest slaves in Hanglip, and then still in his teens, was recognised by a fellow slave, captured and brought before the fiscaal, who even asked him whether he did not belong to the Hanglip group and whether he knew Leander or Joumath (one of the other major leaders). But this must have been a random question on the part of the fiscaal. If he had had any suspicion that he had caught one of a band that was already becoming notorious, he would not have been taken in by January's lies nor would he have released him - to go back to the mountain, to regain contact with Leander and to return to Hanglip. But Leander was probably wise to remain outside the town at this stage. His fame had grown - we have seen how when the woodcutters heard that he was on the mountain they immediately jumped into action - and he thought that the risk of betrayal had become too high.

The maroons went to Cape Town occasionally to buy bread, but also, most importantly, to obtain lead, powder and gun flints, which were essential to their survival, to their confidence and to the power relations within the community. This is of course proof of the fact that they had to deal on the black market of the Cape Town underworld, as these commodities must have been stolen. On occasion the maroons themselves were the thieves. In exchange they could sell the fish they caught and the wood they collected on Table Mountain. Also there were

various stolen goods. The most notable of these were the silver buttons²⁰ from the coat of Philip, a smith who had himself deserted from the service of the VOC, and was living where the Palmiet River flows into False Bay in the same manner as the maroons and in close enough contact with them for his name and former occupation to be known. Then, one day, Leander, Aron, December van Bali and January van Bugis swam across the river, killed Philip, stripped him and threw his body into the sea - apparently in cold, mercenary blood. December and January then took his silver buttons into Cape Town and sold them.

It may be asked why the maroons maintained closer contacts with Cape Town than with the surrounding farms. The reasons derived from the experiences of the runaways while they were still enslaved. It is therefore necessary now to describe their backgrounds in such detail as is possible.²¹ Very often there is far too little information in the court records to allow the reconstruction of the community with any confidence of completeness. For instance, young Pieter reported that when he arrived at Hanglip late in 1736 among those living there were two men named Floris and Fortuyn. These individuals were never caught - as indeed many others were not - and so full details as to their age, origin and former owners are not known. In this of course they were far from alone. More remarkably they are not mentioned in the confessions of any of the other slaves. The suspicion must exist that these two individuals did not tell Pieter the names they were otherwise known by. It would have been a simple measure of protection when dealing with a young man whom they did not know very well and whom they could not trust to avoid capture.²²

Nevertheless, despite the obvious impossibility of hard quantification, a fair amount can be said of the maroons' life in slavery. What has to be avoided is the false precision which numbers can create. In any case, there were simply not enough individuals in Hanglip for statistical procedures to have any sense. In total, I have counted fifty names in the various descriptions of the Hanglip community, including eight female ones.²³ Here again there are problems. Would a slave-owner really have given one of his slave men the name 'Venus'? But he is described as a (masculine) slaaf. Most of the runaways left their masters during their twenties. Of the twenty-seven for whom the country of birth is known, all but four were first-generation South Africans. The exceptions significantly included the youngest whose age is known and his brother. The others came from across the sweep of the Indian Ocean, from Bengal, Malabar, Sri Lanka, Bali, Sumbawa, Sulawesi²⁴ and several from Madagascar. There were also three from Rio de la Goa, thus from modern Mozambique (or perhaps Zululand). Oddly all three were women, but perhaps the men all gravitated to the exclusively Mozambiquan runaway community in the neighbourhood of Hanglip. On the other hand, when the Malagasy Aron lived with the Mozambiquans, he was so put off by their habit of eating

snakes that he left and went to join Leander at Hanglip.

To return to the parasitism of the Hanglip maroons on Cape Town, this derived from the fact that most of them lived in the town before fleeing, or on one of the farms within such close proximity of Cape Town that the slaves had links with the urban underworld there. It was not entirely so. Four slaves belonged to men who owned farms in the Cape Dunes, at a short distance from Hanglip, and three of these farms were indeed attacked by the maroons.²⁵ Another single slave, Aron, belonged to a master who lived in Drakenstein district, according to the tax lists, but Aron himself had been a wood-cutter in Cape Town.²⁶ (Incidentally, he is the only one of the runaways whose occupation is given, another deficiency of the material.) Of course, in the intervening time, between his meeting with Leander on the mountain and his eventual flight, he may have been sold up-country, which would have given him an extra incentive for his flight along with the Mozambiquans, who were often farm labourers.²⁷ Of the others, all owners who were known and could be located in the tax lists were taxed within the Cape district, which, however, included a fair amount of countryside.²⁸ Those masters who could not be found were probably in the service of the Company, and thus residents of Cape Town, or, like the skipper Jan de Heere,²⁹ had left their slaves in South Africa on hire to a Kapenaar and intended to pick them up again on their way back east. De Heere must have been disappointed, since four of his slaves absconded to join the Hanglip community. Indeed there is clear evidence that eleven of the fifty (including De Heere's four) had lived in Cape Town, while another had a brother living there, whom he tried to persuade to join them. Pieter, the youngest of the group, had lived at Rondebosch, already very much part of Cape Town's suburbia, and his brother Marthinus probably did so too - at least he lived close enough to his brother for regular contact to be maintained. Three others lived on the rich farms of the Tjagerberg, some thirty kilometres from Cape Town. As for the others, it is difficult to be certain, although some belonged to masters or mistresses with no taxable property apart from their slaves, and so they presumably had had no agricultural background. Moreover several of the masters, such as the burgerraad Johannes Cruywagen or Pieter Jurgen van der Heijde, a butcher with a share in the contract to supply the VOC with meat,³⁰ were so rich that they must have maintained town establishments as well as their farms, and there is no knowing on which the slave had been employed.

All, it should be noted, had absconded. There is no mention of any slave children being born in Hanglip, although, seeing that several of the women had lived there for many years, it is unlikely that none were. Diana, indeed, was pregnant when she was captured. Still the life of the runaways was not conducive to the health of a young child. Any who may have been born must have died in infancy. The community was far from being

sufficiently well-established for any continuity from generation to generation to be possible.

All in all then, it is clear that ties of acquaintance, and indeed kinship, linked the Hanglip maroons with those slaves who lived in Cape Town. Evidence of contacts with the local farms is somewhat tenuous, but then the maroons may have omitted these details from their confession to protect their fellows. Cape Town was too large for any individuals to be suspected of actions which were but vaguely attributed. However that may be, there were clear dangers of consorting too closely with the farm slaves. Any regular relation between the maroons and the slaves of a given farm would have come to the notice of the white knegten, who often lived in close contact with the slaves.³¹ Certainly the Khoisan would have got to know about it and the Khoisan did not keep the slaves' secrets. They were far too concerned to maintain their distance from servility, since their free status was under continued de facto pressure from the farmers.³² There were Khoisan as well as whites in at least one of the commandoes against Hanglip. To give a more detailed example, Alexander was involved in the attack on the farm belonging to Hendrick Thomas Senior on the Cape flats, where he himself had lived during his life as a slave. Once he even went to Hanglip and then returned to his master before his final escape. The Hanglip maroons behaved brutally towards each other and were no kinder to those farm slaves they encountered. They may have had many of the attributes of social bandits in Cape Town,³³ but their relation with the slaves on the farms was often that of terrorists and extortioners. When they attacked the farm of Christian Maasdoorp on the Cape flats, they left with bread, an iron pot, a blanket and all but one of the slave's clothes. Twice they attacked the farm called Jan Bilsenkraal, which belonged to Johannes Swellengrebel (and later to his widow, Mevr. Ten Damme). On the second occasion, when Barkat and Alexander van Bengal were on their way to Hanglip, Barkat stabbed one of the slaves living there with an assegai and then strangled another who was screaming and threatening to raise the alarm. After these murders, they escaped with a blanket, one shirt, four smocks (*rokken*) and a sack of rice. This sort of brutality obviously made co-operation with the farm slaves impossible. The maroons lived, not as fish in the water of the local population, but as sharks among the fish.

There are, however, hints that such portrayal may be somewhat too stark. To a certain extent, the maroons could supply their needs by the surreptitious capture of an occasional sheep, while on one occasion a horse was shot and eaten. Its hide was turned into *veldschoenen*, the rawhide shoes that were long a standard feature of South African dress. This may have been done without the connivance of the slave or Khoikhoi shepherds, for all that the shepherds tended to blame the maroons for the loss of sheep that had had far more mundane fates.³⁴ Is it too

preposterous to suggest that the maroons chose this farm to attack because they believed that they could expect help rather than hindrance from Alexander's former fellow slaves, or was it simply that through Alexander they knew more about that particular piece of land than about any other? If the latter was the case, why did they have to send Pieter to make such a close reconnaissance that he was caught by the slaves on the farm? Again, why did the Hanglip slaves have a preference for attacking the farms of Johannes Swellengrebel and Cornelis Heufke in 1729? A group of them lived for a while on vegetables taken from the gardens of a windmill owned by Swellengrebel - who incidentally had been a high official in the VOC hierarchy before establishing himself as a rich burger. Later they attacked Heufke's farm on the flats, stealing cabbages and other greens from the garden and killing all the hens in the runs. Other farms of these two rich men were later raided from Table Mountain before a large number of the runaways were captured in Rondebosch by one of Swellengrebel's knegten with the help of a number of slaves. Among those who were caught were November van Sambouwa, a slave of Heufke's, and Pieter van Mallabaar, who was owned by Swellengrebel. The coincidence cannot entirely be due to chance, but whether the maroons were making use of more than local knowledge, and whether there was a conspiracy between them and those slaves who still lived on the farms, cannot clearly be demonstrated. The confessions of the slaves who were caught show the links with the Cape Town underworld although even these connections scarcely emerge from the murk left by the Cape authorities' ignorance of most of what went on around them. But they knew next to nothing of the contacts of the slaves of a particular farm with their neighbours, with Cape Town, with those who had won their freedom or with those, like the Khoikhoi, who had not yet lost it. And what they did not know we can scarcely hope to recover. There can be no certainties, no provable or falsifiable hypotheses, only suggestions.

These last attacks were made by a group of runaways who had been in Hanglip, but had left that community as a result of an argument with Leander Bugis. Therefore they moved back towards the Cape flats, and later to Table Mountain, which forced them to be more dependent for their food on the farms than the Hanglip group proper ever was. Clearly they could enjoy neither the security of that refuge, protected as it was by both the mountains and the sea, nor the food that could be garnered from the rocks on the shore. In a sense it is not so surprising that the Hanglip group split up. It was never able to develop the sort of institutions that might have allowed it to perpetuate itself. The fifty slaves that are known to have been connected to the Hanglip group at some stage or another could never have all lived together, even allowing for the vicissitudes of death or capture. Indeed, when a slave was taken, he or she was routinely asked who was living at Hanglip at the moment of his or her arrival. Never were more than ten individuals mentioned. Neither

safety nor the available resources would have allowed more.

The tensions and fission that were inevitable, given the resource base, found their expression in personal animosities. At least three slaves spent a few months in Hanglip and then returned to their masters, though one of them later came back. Living at Hanglip was a dangerous matter and not only because of the danger of recapture. When Lena and Jochem arrived at Hanglip they found three dead bodies, including that of a certain Scipio. Perhaps Scipio got what he deserved, because he was killed in retribution for his own attempted murder of Amil. Scipio had thrown rocks down the cliff at Amil, who was sitting fishing above the sea. Amil was able to save himself by diving in and swimming round a promontory. He then returned to land, took his kirry and felled his erstwhile assailant with a blow on the head. The corpse was then thrown into the sea and remained trapped against the shore.

Later there was a dispute between Leander and Jochem over a flintlock which the latter had obtained (how is not stated) from a slave of Ernst Mostert. Leander was a violent man who thought little of murdering his fellow runaways at minimal provocation. The argument over the gun also had overtones of conflict as to the leadership of the group. It is significant that the row came to a head at a moment when four of the maroon men were away in Cape Town, since they included a number of Jochem's supporters. Thus in the course of a row, Joumath took an axe (*bijl*) and struck Jochem, whereupon the rest of the group joined in and finished him off, burying the body. Lena, Jochem's wife, then decided to leave Hanglip and move back towards the flats, taking with her Philander (who feared that Leander would kill him) and two of the others who had been in Cape Town at the time of the murder. Thereafter, in their rather desperate wanderings round the Cape flats and the fringes of Table Mountain, they had to live by robbing farms, until finally they were caught and brought to trial. Those who had taken part in the murder of the silversmith Philip were put to death, some being hung and others broken on a cross. Three others, who had been picked up in the meanderings round the flats, were flogged, branded and sent back to their masters. Colon, however, who had killed one of his fellow slaves while escaping, was also executed. Lena, perhaps because she belonged to the Company, was spared, although she too was flogged, branded and chained to a block for the rest of her life. Even so this did not prevent her, seven years later, from stealing linen from the Company's garden while it was hanging out to dry.³⁵

By this stage the authorities in Cape Town had begun to take interest again in the suppression of the Hanglip maroons. During the course of 1733 a commando including both burghers and Khoi was sent out against them. They had a certain amount of success since they managed to capture Mey, a slave of Willem Das, and were able to surprise the rest of the group, who nevertheless managed to escape to their hideaways, although Joseph was shot

in the arm. Thereafter Toesina returned the fire on the commando and it was driven off without making any more captures.³⁶ The fiscaal must have been confident that the others would soon be caught. At his suggestion Mey was put to work in chains on the public works of Cape Town until his confreres were brought to what went under the name of justice. Apparently this was enough punishment anyway. Mey was not hauled up again some four years later for the trial of his erstwhile companions. The hard work breaking rocks, the poor diet and the additional weight of his chains had worn him down and eventually killed him.

The knowledge that the white ruling oligarchy was beginning to gain about the Hanglip maroons did nothing to increase their confidence that they could maintain their hold over the colony. Indeed, it was not only Hanglip. There was at least one other group of about fifteen runaways more or less established on Table Mountain. This group, with the panache that develops from necessity, lived by cutting and selling wood in Cape Town. They used the proceeds to buy bread and salted herrings, mainly from slaves.³⁷ Since they were in all probability woodcutters before they took to the mountain, their freedom brought them no actual change in their occupations - and probably marginally worse living conditions - but only the intangible benefits that accrued as a result of the absence of supervision, of the driving to perform tasks at the limit of their capacity, and of degrading physical, corporal punishment. Finally a few members of this group were taken, some by Europeans in Cape Town, others by slaves as they attempted to steal a sheep from one of the kraals on the slopes of the mountain.

The degree to which a general crisis of authority was seen to be developing through 1735 and 1736 can be seen from the statements of the fiscaal when, in October 1735, he was demanding heavy punishments for a group of eight slaves who had run from their masters and then been captured by a farmer in the Swartland. They were not convicted of any crime apart from that of running away in a large band. Normally, they would not have come before the central Court of Justice in Cape Town. Their owners preferred to deal with these matters themselves and as long as the fiscaal or the landrost gave his fiat they were always allowed to do so.³⁸ In 1735, in contrast, the fiscaal claimed that it was necessary to take firmer action. He argued:

The desertion of privately owned slaves is becoming increasingly prevalent. Not only do they roam around but they gather together in whole troupes. They conspire and everywhere incite each other to commit great disorders and irregularities in the countryside. Where possible they steal hens and ducks and all sorts of garden produce. Therefore, in the opinion of the prosecutor, this creeping evil can no longer be remedied by private chastisement at the request of the owner, but in order that it may be stemmed, it demands a public example and a more severe punishment.

Perhaps the fact that the slaves in question had stolen a gun from their master increased the fiscal's determination to take a strong stand, even though the gun was never used. He realised that the masters in question would suffer loss as a result of the punishment of their slaves, but 'is conscious that the public welfare should be preferred above the private interest of the owners'. In this sentiment the Court of Justice agreed. One of the group, Titus, who had previously been punished by the court for desertion and sheep theft, was sentenced to spend the rest of his life working in chains on the battery. His seven companions could look forward to being released from the same work, if they survived, at the end of three years.³⁹

At the same time the nightly patrolling of Cape Town became more rigorous. Throughout its existence, the burgherwagt and the ratelwagt had attempted to check on the nefarious activities of the slaves (and others) after dark.⁴⁰ In the years 1736-8, however, they brought slaves before the Court of Justice for more trivial offences. On two occasions slaves who were sitting in huts in the gardens above Cape Town were arrested as they drank coffee and arak and ate rice and curry during the evenings.⁴¹ Again one group of slaves and free blacks were flogged after being suspected of 'complottering', in other words gathering together on the streets after ten at night.⁴² In these cases, it was not so significant that the offence was punished. Slave-owners would always have had their slaves flogged for being out at night. Rather it is the intervention of the highest authorities of the colony that is symptomatic of the degree of concern, not to say panic, among the ruling groups of the Cape. The Hanglip maroons had made their presence felt.

Part of the reason for this disquiet was the escape of a number of convicts from custody. They included Alexander of Bengal, who had been in Hanglip for a while - though at his original trial he did not admit it. On one occasion, while away from his master, he had come into the Company's slave lodge, where he was recognised and arrested. The mandoor then told a slave to take him to the prison, but Alexander was able to stab Lourent, the slave in question, and effect his escape. Later, however, he was captured on the Cape flats, having been hit in the legs by a gunful of shot. He was then sentenced to be flogged, branded, pilloried under the gallows with a rope round his neck and then put to spend twenty-five years working at the Company's works in chains. Nevertheless, in company with three others, he managed to overpower the corporal who was guarding them as they were cutting wood on the Lion's Rump. They stripped him, robbed him, taking his money, clothes and gun, and set off along the Lion's Head onto the lower slopes of Table Mountain. Apparently the corporal in question had been guilty of negligence. A plakaat was issued to forbid such practices as guards taking the convicts under their control into the pubs of Cape Town. Moreover, from then on a single man was no longer to have control over four convicts.⁴³ In any event, the four slaves

got away and intended to go to Hanglip. They ran out of food on the way, not surprisingly, and had to call at a farm on the Cape flats in an attempt to persuade the slaves there to give them some. The knegt discovered them, however, and three were captured. Two of the three later died in prison, perhaps of wounds, while the third, Titus, was hung. Alexander was able to escape and, as we have seen, arrived in Hanglip after robbing a farm and murdering one of the slaves there.

The Hanglip group was still driven by internal tensions. Toesina was murdered at the orders of Leander Bugis around this time. Apparently Leander had ordered him to go into Cape Town to buy flints, but Toesina claimed that he did not know how this should be done. Since his master, Johannes Cruywagen, was one of the largest landowners in the colony, he may very well never have lived in the town, and thus did not know how to make contact with its underworld. In any case, he was hit on the head with a kirry and buried in the Cape flats. Since Leander and his fellows did not go on to buy flints, maybe they were not essential to the existence of the maroons, at least at that moment. The order to Toesina merely provided an excuse to eliminate him.

The tensions can also be seen from the fact that, shortly after the murder, the group split in two. Joumath became the leader of the breakaway section, which included at least three of the others and later picked up a number of runaways whom they met while wandering round the countryside. Initially they moved up to Swartland and then crossed over the mountains. For a time they came to join in with a group of slaves from Mozambique, before again leaving them with, to their satisfaction, two women. In an argument over the women, Joumath came to stab and kill Mars, another example of the basic brutality of life among the maroons. Eventually they came back to Hanglip, settling on the coast a few miles along from Leander's group. Any differences there may have been between the two bands were made up. From then on there were regular visits between them.

In response to the increased vigilance of the ruling groups at the Cape, the Hanglip maroons about this time began to go over to the attack. There were three fires in Cape Town in the summer of 1735-6, all caused by arson and at least one by the Hanglip maroons. A little later there was a more insidious attack that had no effect that the Europeans could notice. They attributed to pure chance such results as there were from Batjoe throwing the rotten bladder of a toad-fish⁴⁴ into the water supply of the town, but Batjoe did so with the clear intent of poisoning the whole town. This was too much even for Leander Bugis who was with him on the mountain at the time and told Batjoe that he would have no part in the action. There was already quite enough on his account.

The authorities were beginning to strike back. Immediately after the major fire in March 1735 a commando was sent out against Hanglip, but was unable to capture any of the maroons.

It may have been during this attack that a number of drossers were surprised on the beach, but were able to get away into the caves, shooting one of the Europeans in the arm. It was nevertheless suspected that news of the preparations had been sent to Hanglip by their contacts among the Cape Town slaves. Certainly when, next September, the Council of Policy decided to send out another commando, it took special precautions to ensure secrecy. It was realised that surprise had to be achieved if there was to be any hope of taking the runaways prisoner. Whether or not it was as a result of these measures, the commando was successful. One of the knegten on a farm in Hottentots Holland (known as the jongen Haagedorn) seems to have been able to guide the commando to the caves of the drossers, and the reward of one hundred Rijksdaalders for each runaway captured or killed may have increased the enthusiasm of those who went out.⁴⁵ Seven of the group were on the beach fishing when the commando arrived, and five were captured. The other two were lucky, saw the Europeans coming in time and were able to escape. Another two, Perra and Leander himself, were on the hillside looking for arum lilies. Both carried flintlocks. Perra was able to hide behind a rock and last saw Leander as he was going up the hill with the posse after him. They did not catch him alive, but may, of course, have shot him. Perra then found himself alone. After a while he went back to Table Mountain and spent about ten days there before he was forced by hunger to return to his master. He was then handed over to the Court of Justice and, if somewhat later than the others, was tried and hung.

At about the same time, moreover, it proved possible to arrest one Salamat in Cape Town. He was suspected of providing Joumath with food, but, remarkably, he was released because the evidence against him was insufficient.⁴⁶ But from then on no more was heard of the Hanglip group, as then constituted.

In the aftermath of the capture of Leander's group, the whites of the colony seem to have thought that the east coast of False Bay was now secure. As early as 1738, a group of eight slaves living in the neighbourhood of Vishoek, just to the north of Hanglip, did not know anything about Joumath or any of the other survivors, and lived by robbing the farms of Hottentots Holland, in preparation for making a journey to the Xhosa.⁴⁷ In 1739, a white stock farmer, Andries Grove, was given a tract of country named Wilgemoed which lay near the mouth of Palmiet River, just to the west of Hanglip. He intended to use it as a cattle farm, but he was too optimistic. Within two years the grazing ground had been given up again.⁴⁸ Perhaps it was merely the difficulty of bringing his cattle across the rocky valleys that caused Grove to abandon his new holding. It is more likely that he did not consider his property safe. In July 1741, it was necessary to send out a commando to Hanglip to 'visit the caves and holes there and see whether any fugitive slaves are living there, as the neighbouring people would not expect anything

good from that.⁴⁹ They did not capture anyone, but Hanglip remained an area into which the whites did not penetrate. Only in the 1770s were farms again taken up anywhere near Hanglip,⁵⁰ and when William Paterson went along the shore with Robert Gordon in 1779, he commented that: 'From Hottentots Holland to this place, the country is quite uninhabited, the whole tract consisting of precipices and rugged mountains.'⁵¹

But was it quite uninhabited? There are indications that it remained a hideaway for runaways throughout the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth centuries. In 1765, a certain Fortuyn was captured by the slaves of Daniel Malan in the region of Hanglip after he had stabbed one of their fellows in a raid on a vineyard to collect grapes. He was returning to what seems to have been a sanctuary, although he was not further interrogated about his life on the run.⁵² In 1772, the government warned the landrost of Stellenbosch that a group of runaways might re-occupy Hanglip.⁵³ These warnings were not without justification. In 1786 there were a number of slaves living in a cave (*kleijgat*) in Hanglip, from whence they sortied to steal oxen. It is a good indication of the difficulty of the terrain that during their return one of the stolen oxen fell into the sea from a cliff, and also that they could easily escape a commando by disappearing further into the mountains.⁵⁴

At the end of the century, a maroon community at Hanglip once again came to the attention of the authorities. In 1797, the landrost of Stellenbosch heard that a group of some thirty slaves was living at Hanglip. They were said to have committed murder and robbery against the neighbouring farms. He sent a commando of about twenty burghers out to try and capture them but this had no success, as it only took three runaways who had nothing to do with the main complot.⁵⁵ Some time later Samuel Hudson⁵⁶ describes how a man in Cape Town, one of whose slaves had run some six years earlier, found out that he was living in the Hanglip caves. Unfortunately for the runaways, the master had another slave, who was so faithful to him that he was prepared to infiltrate that group. This he managed to do by telling the maroons that he had committed some crime that absolutely prevented his ever returning to his master. For many weeks they were very wary of him, never allowing him into the inner sanctum of the community and watching him very carefully to ensure he did not escape to betray them although they did take him out on their plundering expeditions. Nevertheless, after a while he was able to pass on information to his master that both he and the runaway they sought would be out of Hanglip that evening on an expedition. As a result a commando was able to capture them. Hudson does not say what was the reward for the traitor, nor how the runaway was punished.

Still, from the traitor he was able to gain valuable information as to the way of life of the new generation of Hanglip maroons. Around 1800, the group were living in a deep cavern down into which they had to climb on a rope. They found:

Cave within cave to a very considerable extent and only two openings to them: the one from the rocks a single person might defend and that from the sea inaccessible except in very particular weather it being covered with sunken rocks around the entrance for miles and the tide washes into the cavern for a very considerable way. There are many of these openings which have so much the appearance of each other that 'tis very difficult to find the real entrance.⁵⁷

Apart from its inhabitants, the only people who knew the secret of the cave were slave fishermen from Simonstown, many of whom took their boats across False Bay at the right stage of the tide and disappeared from their masters' ken. Then they lived off the fish they had caught, either from the boats or off the rocks. The rest of the necessities and luxuries of their life they acquired by holding up the farmers' waggons as these crossed the Hottentots Holland Pass.⁵⁸ They may have disposed of the goods they captured in Cape Town. Hudson had heard, and could well believe, that the group had contacts there with the Malay slaves, and even among the free community. They could buy rice and other goods there and a regular route had been arranged for transport to Hanglip.

In one important respect the Hanglipenaars of 1800 differed from their predecessors. They had been able to establish a way of life that could be reproduced from generation to generation. The man who was recaptured by his fellow slave's treachery left a wife and five children behind in Hanglip. Most of the others were also said to live the same normal life, at least in this respect. The tensions, the repressions and the murders of Leander's time were much less common, it would seem. It was possible for the group to survive far longer.

As a result of this new-found stability, the Hanglip group seems to have survived until the abolition of slavery. Some twenty years after Hudson wrote, a full century after the initial foundation of the Hanglip group, the maroon community once more breaks through the screen of historical invisibility. Marthinus Teenstra, a Dutch agricultural expert who was staying at the Cape to recover his health, reported to his friends in Groningen a story told him by a certain Jacobus Swart on the dangers of crossing the Hottentots Holland Kloof alone.

Also waggons travelling alone are not infrequently attacked by a band of armed robbers and robbed of everything. These robbers mainly consist of gedrost, that is fugitive, slaves and Hottentots who reside in the inaccessible mountain of Hangklip with women and children. According to the story of these farmers, a number of these robbers watch the narrow and unusually steep pass by night, while others of the band sometimes spend a whole month out robbing, and then in an armed group travel the country with bloody hands and rob this farm and that and plunder it when shown resistance. So they acquire

cattle, tools, furniture and clothing in large quantities, and are thus provisioned for a few more months. Swart told me that last year a slave from such a band returned after living in these caves for sixteen years, after which he asked for, and received permission to return from the robbers.⁵⁹

Teenstra could at first hardly believe this story. It seemed to him impossible that a European government would not root out such a nest, especially as it lay so close to Cape Town. Nevertheless he later had his story confirmed. He wrote that:

In Caledon a slave has just been captured who belonged to the Hanglip bands. According to him there were three separate groups, one consisting of thirty, one of twenty-two and the third of eighteen people. During my stay in Caledon five oxen fattened for slaughter were stolen from a farmer on the Onrust river. After this W.H. Klein, the *veld-cornet* at Caledon, went into the mountains for six days. On a similar expedition a few years earlier, the abode of one of the robber bands was discovered by the fires burning at night and thus fourteen of them were surprised and taken. This time things were less successful; nothing was found except empty holes and twenty slaughtered oxen, part of which were salted down and the rest cut into thin stripes and hung up to dry.⁶⁰

There is, of course, always the danger that this sort of hearsay evidence contains considerable exaggeration. I have not been able to discover any archival material which corroborates Teenstra's account in all its details.⁶¹ Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that the Hanglip region remained an abode of maroon slaves well into the nineteenth century. Slaves who had been living there for some months were caught on the shores of Kogelbaay, a few miles north of Hanglip point. They had kept themselves alive by robbing the farms of Hottentots Holland and the oxen on the Sir Lowry Pass. The captives did include women and children, and indeed established couples, as both Teenstra and Hudson suggest. It is far from implausible that the round-ups in 1820 became the basis for the story that Teenstra heard when he visited Caledon some years later, especially as the captured slaves were brought to that town. On the other hand, that group, by the admission of its members when brought to trial, was far less stable, less well organised, than those described by Teenstra and Hudson.⁶² Maybe this is an example of the degree to which rumours will always multiply all horrors, but it is just as likely that the colonists never managed to achieve anything against the better-organised and defended maroon communities deeper in the fastnesses of the Hanglip mountains, which even today are among the most inaccessible and wild of the whole Cape. Simply because these reports may seem implausible, if it is thought that the Cape government had full control over the colony, they should not be rejected as without any basis in

truth, for they may indeed be fully reliable. Certainly Teenstra and Hudson were truthful reporters of what they were told, certainly there were runaway slaves in the Hanglip mountains and certainly, in the early 1820s in particular, the Cape authorities knew their control over even the settled agricultural districts of the south-west Cape was far from complete.⁶³

So far as I know, there is no evidence of any continuity of personnel between these bands and those led by Leander and Joumath ninety years earlier. Even if there were, the differences between the two groups can be seen in the rather weak connections that the later groups had with Cape Town. Rather they survived, to a much greater degree than their predecessors, by taking oxen and other goods from the nearby farms. It was the rocks, the coast, the security and the fishing that made the area so attractive for the maroons. The colonists never managed to gain control of the area before the abolition of slavery. After abolition, the maroons did not have the same pressure to avoid being taken, although the farmers were still concerned to maintain their ex-slaves in quasi-bondage,⁶⁴ and the ruling class of the Cape cannot have looked kindly on individuals who had been professional cattle thieves. But what became of the maroons I do not know. In fact the re-creation of Cape society after emancipation of the slaves is one of the least understood topics in South African history. In this case, my guess is that the ex-maroons became the core of the communities of 'Coloured' fishermen in such villages as Hermanus and Hawston.

If this supposition is true, it is possible that among the fishermen there survive traditions of the way of life of the escaped slaves. What is remarkable, however, is the extent to which they, and indeed most other facets of life under slavery, seem to have faded out of the collective memory of the south-west Cape. Not completely, of course. In the 1920s, an archeologist who dug in the cave at Rooiels, on the Hanglip peninsula, was informed that it had previously been inhabited by 'rebel Hottentots' who had robbed farms and waggons near Hottentots Holland.⁶⁵ These can only have been the Hanglip maroons, not the 'Bushmen' he assumed them to be. Much later, C.F.J. Muller, was told a story by one of the white inhabitants of the area as to how a brave young (white) man on one of the commandoes to Hanglip had been able to penetrate the caves in which the runaways were holed up and shoot the leader dead, which so distressed the others that they surrendered.⁶⁶ Perhaps if he had inquired among the labourers on the same farm, he might have heard a rather different story. But Leander Bugis never became a hero of legend. He had many of the qualities for it, and his wanton bloodthirstiness could always have been glossed over. There have been many pirates and criminals who have been brutal men during their own lifetime and honourable, even noble, after they were dead.⁶⁷ In the Cape this did not happen. In any individual case, of course, it is little more than pure chance what gets preserved in the memory, in the folk-

songs and tales. That Leander, of whom a lot is known from other sources, was not so glorified, may of course be a matter of hazard. Even in the most fertile soil for legends, many potential plants do not spring up. It is only remarkable that there seem to be no such heroes, no such stories. It is as if the board has been wiped clean, the memory of slavery eradicated. A particular amnesia has set in. This must have to do with the nature of post-emancipation 'Cape Coloured' social history. What the processes are I do not know, although they must have had something to do with the continued oppression of large numbers of ex-slaves by their ex-masters and with the concern of those who had escaped from this position to set themselves apart from the rural scene. And in Cape Town, there were new fights, new heroes, more appropriate to the life of District Six or Bo'kaap. Still, for historians this is strange, especially in a land in which history had become such an important part of the mythology of group identity and the rhetoric of politics. It might seem as if the figure of Leander - disappearing up the hill with the commando after him and out of sight - was ripe for legend. All the same it is as well that he has not become legendary. It would only mean that there was more legend to wipe away, one more false issue to be confronted because it is of importance, not in the history as it was, but in that history laid down by those who manipulate it to create and maintain something in the present.⁶⁸ Any such legends would have to be debunked. Hanglip was a Hobbesian world, with no one to play Leviathan. Life there was nasty, brutish and short, and the maroons were forced by their insecurity to act in many exceedingly unsavoury ways. Even at their most revolutionary, their motives were pure revenge. If Batjoe had managed to burn Cape Town to the ground that night in March 1736, his fellow slaves would have suffered as much, if not more, than their masters. A revolutionary might say that that was an inevitable cost of bringing about a better society. For Batjoe and Leander it would not have mattered a damn.

6 The slaves and the sailors

In the course of 1705, the governor of the Cape, Wilhem Adriaen van der Stel, wrote to the Heren XVII in Holland asking them to have a sharper watch kept on ships arriving from the Cape. There had been numerous cases, so he believed, of slaves from South Africa stowing away on the vessels of the VOC. Those with light complexions were particularly able to do this. Passing for white already had its attractions. When they were in the Netherlands, too, the slaves were able to assimilate into Dutch society without too much trouble. This is not surprising, as the great port cities, Amsterdam above all, annually took in thousands of immigrants from all over Europe, and many of the slaves would have had artisanal skills for which they could find a market even if the economy of Holland was no longer as buoyant as half a century earlier. At any event, they found the freedom of Amsterdam, Middelburg or wherever preferable to the slavery of the Cape. Van der Stel claimed that letters had been intercepted in which they had written to their fellows who were still in bondage, telling them of the better life they had now won for themselves and suggesting to their fellows that they should come and join the successful escapees in the Netherlands.¹

It was by no means unusual for slaves in other colonies besides the Cape to escape by sea from their bondage. Wherever they had that chance, they took it. It gave them the opportunity to live the life of free men (and women) without the enormous privations required to set up a maroon community in the interior. For instance, in the famous Somerset case in England, Sergeant-at-law William Davy, who was arguing that slavery could not exist in the motherland, made the revealing distinction that

If the owner of a slave from Africa or America were to bring him into this Country or if he comes with his master into this Country, the Master himself manumits him. But if he escapes and comes here not being brought by his Master - it should not have that operation.²

This distinction was also made in the Netherlands. In 1776 the States-General issued a plakaat which laid down that every slave who remained for six months in the Netherlands was to be free, but an exception was made for all those who had fled to Europe 'without the knowledge and permission of their masters, but who had come here in a clandestine manner'. These slaves could always be reclaimed by their owners, and the local justices were

to be allowed to use force to achieve this end, should that be necessary.³

For the slaves living in Cape Town the opportunities to escape their bondage by water were unrivalled by any others elsewhere in the world. Up to 189 ships of a dozen different nationalities put into Table Bay in the course of a year, and were concentrated in the months January to April. The sheer number of vessels became so great that the Caffers could not possibly control movements to and from them. Increasingly, too, these ships were of foreign nationalities. After 1772, over half of all the ships in Table and False Bays were not Dutch.⁴ This did not mean, of course, that they were opposed to slavery as such. There is no evidence that anything like the underground railway of the United States was ever running slaves out of the Cape. All the same, the captains of British, Danish or Spanish ships, chronically undermanned as the merchant fleets always were after a long voyage, would have had few compunctions in accepting recruits without inquiring too closely into their backgrounds, especially if the escapees only presented themselves after the ship had left port. Even the Dutch East India Company's own ships carried escapees from time to time. Probably it was easier for the slaves to hide on board in the latter years of the century as the numbers of Asians among the sailors of the VOC increased. By 1792, over half the sailors at the Cape were 'Moorish', Javanese or Chinese.⁵

The Cape authorities could not prevent contact between the slaves and the ships in Table Bay roads. On the contrary, it had to employ large numbers of its own slaves as dock-workers and lightermen, although they were often in large enough gangs to make desertion difficult.⁶ Slaves owned by the burghers also had many opportunities to visit the ships. They were sent on board each ship as it arrived to tout for custom for the lodging houses of Cape Town and, as Thunberg remarked, of his visit in the 1770s.

We had hardly come to an anchor before a crowd of black slaves and Chinese came in their small boats to sell and barter, for clothes and other goods, fresh meat, vegetables and fruit, all of which our crew were eager to produce.⁷

This was merely an extension on to the water of their activities in the streets of Cape Town. The retail trade in foodstuffs and old clothes (many of them stolen) was in their hands, with their masters taking a fixed sum out of the profits as rent. It was natural, therefore, that they ran the bum-boats of Cape Town's harbour, for all that this allowed them opportunities to escape.

Nor were the bum-boats the only small craft operating in Table Bay. Even more numerous, perhaps, were the fishing smacks that provided a large proportion of the slaves' diet. These too were largely manned by slaves.⁸ Nor were they adverse to taking run-aways on board ship. A frequently reissued plakaat ordained that:

everyone who owns fishing smacks is ordered to bring them to the sea wall in the evening under guard of the Castle watch whether or not there are ships of foreign nations in the roads. The smacks may not be taken from there except when they are purely for the purpose of fishing and there are no foreign ships in the roads. Then permission may be granted for them to fish at night. The fine for breaking these regulations is 15 Rijksdaalders.⁹

These regulations did not prevent runaways being taken out to the ships in the Bay by the fishermen. On one occasion, a tamboer was hauled off the Dutch ship to which he had been illegally taken by fishermen even though, so he claimed, he was too drunk to know whether those who had helped him were black or white.¹⁰ Another man was once rowed out to a French ship with a barrel of wine and his sea-chest, for no more than eight Rijksdaalders. The matter was so normal in the fishing community that the soldier in question was passed from one skipper to another without any ado.¹¹ Even the prisoners exiled to the Cape from the east were on occasion able to use this route to escape from their relatively light bondage. In 1778, the Prince of 'Rady Macaretta' (presumably Masarete on Buru in the Moluccas) was able to reach Holland, having been able to stow away on a Dutch return ship, and from then on he seems to have managed to build up a new life.¹²

It can thus be seen that the Cape authorities did not only have to contend with slaves escaping from the Colony by sea, but also with occasional prisoners, whom they scarcely differentiated from slaves anyway, and with its own employees taking this route out of the colony. For the Company officials, if not for the private citizens, this was if anything a more serious problem. Especially after the 1730s, the VOC was continually short of manpower - not in itself surprising considering it was annually sending around 8,000 men to the East, of whom less than a third ever returned.¹³ Nor did the VOC's officials view their fellow Europeans with any feeling of racial solidarity. The attitude of the high officials is typified by the comment of Governor de Chavonnes in 1716. When asked whether slave labour should be replaced by white immigration, he replied that no more whites should be dispatched 'as we are amply provided with drunkards who keep our hands full'.¹⁴ The other members of his council, with the exception of his brother, agreed with him. Officialdom had become a small clique cut off not only from the burghers but also from their own underlings. Increasingly, they were themselves born at the Cape, but then almost exclusively as the children of other officials. Even those among them who had come from a rather simpler background in Europe had generally married into the ruling elite and, certainly, had turned their back on the ordinary soldiers and sailors of the VOC.¹⁵ In their turn, the low-level employees responded occasionally by full-scale mutinies, but more frequently by deserting, which they did whenever they saw the chance,

and in large numbers.¹⁶ At the Cape evidently they had that chance. Not only did an unknown number of sailors jump ship in Cape Town, where they were either picked up by the fiscal and his agents and tried by the Cape Court of Justice, or managed to slip away on foreign ships.¹⁷ The local garrison did likewise. Over the period 1770-9, to take a random but probably not unrepresentative period, an average of over twenty-five men left the service of the VOC annually and were not recaptured - this out of a total establishment of under 2,000.

Frequently they left in the company of slaves. This was not something they always cared to admit afterwards. Joshua Penny, for instance, an American who had been pressganged into the British navy and jumped ship during the First British Occupation, claimed that he lived for fourteen months on Table Mountain without seeing another soul - something which is highly unlikely.¹⁸ Others had no chance to make equivalent cover-ups. There were Europeans as well as slaves among the deserters handed over by the Xhosa to the Dutch in 1805.¹⁹ A century earlier, a group of men had attempted to escape from the colony by going north. They included seven runaway slaves, one Dutch horseherd and two sailors. One of the former, Simon van Mallebaar, was captured by the Klein Nama north of the Oliphants River, handed back to the Dutch and, eventually, hung. He had stolen silver from his master. The others seem to have effected their escape and to have disappeared from the knowledge of the Dutch authorities.²⁰

Perhaps it would be better to say that the slaves left in the company of the sailors. How many did is far from certain. Once on board a foreign ship the chances of recapture by the Dutch were minimal. In default of registration of runaways, it is impossible to give any clear idea of the number of slaves who took this - or for that matter any other - way out of their bondage. Nor, indeed, is it important. Enough went for desertion and marronage to be a constant part of the equation of Cape society, to influence the ways in which people reacted to each other, to be part of the hopes and fears of men and women. On the other hand, not enough escaped for there to be a major drain on the economy as a whole, although at least one of the VOC's decisions to send a slaving expedition to Madagascar was occasioned by the decrease in the number of Company slaves 'as a result of deaths and desertions'.²¹ Between these extremes there is very little to be said. All the same, what little information that there is seems to show that stowing away was the favourite way of casting off their bondage for those slaves who lived in Cape Town - or at the very least the most successful. Between 1724 and 1747 some forty-four slaves completely disappeared from the Company's slave lodge in Cape Town. Of these no fewer than thirty went in the first three months of each year.²² This improbably high proportion is significant because these were the months during which the fleets were in town. The Indian ocean monsoons combined to congregate both outward and homeward ships at the

Cape at that time of the year, although there were a few sailing at other seasons.²³ The obvious explanation for the concentration of escapes in January, February and March, then, is that the slaves took advantage of the crowded harbour to find a passage to freedom as stowaways.

But how did they go? Where did they go? What did they do when they got there? These are the questions that obviously arise from the knowledge that slaves ran away by sea, but they are not ones that can be answered. The men and women who had been able to escape were still in danger of being caught and returned to the Cape. This indeed happened to a group of five slaves and one sailor who managed to reach Cadiz on board a Spanish frigate in 1778. The Dutch consul was able to intercept them and, after negotiations with the Spanish authorities, they were sent back to the Cape and their bondage.²⁴ Twenty years later this event was still remembered at the Cape. It was seen then as a great exception, and as an event that caused the disgrace of the Spanish captain involved.²⁵ The exception, however, lay not in the escape but in the recapture. Even when they knew how the slaves had gone, the Dutch generally could not get them back. A slave might be hauled off one of their own ships.²⁶ The Council of Policy regularly had to exhort its own captains that, if they should find runaways on board, they were not to let them go free, nor let them serve as a sailor, but to send them back for the punishment the Capetonians thought they deserved.²⁷ But with foreigners it was different. The VOC could rant and rave and threaten to deny supplies to the Danish East Indiaman, the 'Ganges', on which twelve to fourteen blacks had been able to conceal themselves. Even then, although some had been found hiding behind the barrels and chests in the hold, the slaves were not handed back.²⁸

More normally, they did not know how they had gone. Few slaves ever broke cover once they had got away, and then only when, like Manna van Bougies, they could make a claim to their freedom.²⁹ In general, the slaves disappeared from the knowledge of their masters, of the Cape authorities, and thus from that of the historian. The chance that one of them would turn up in the historical record elsewhere - and that I would come to hear of it - is minute, and has not occurred.

Nevertheless, a certain amount of speculation is in order. Maybe the slaves were able to establish satisfactory life styles for themselves in those great sinks of humanity that were the port cities of north-west Europe. The letters Van der Stel intercepted would seem to suggest that some were able to do so. The romantic would like to think that at least a few were able to find their way home to the communities in which they were born, an attractive proposition if they had been kidnapped or captured in war, but there is no evidence for this having occurred. What evidence there is is of more tragic kind. On at least five occasions, slaves arrived in Holland on board a ship belonging to the Dutch East India Company. Without contacts other than

those made on the ship, alone in the cities with no one to turn to, presumably broke and probably hungry, they fell easy prey to the *zielverkopers*, those crooked recruiting agents who made a profit - a handsome one - by furnishing the VOC with recruits.³⁰ One of them, Jan van der Caab, had even got married while in Middelburg to a widow, but could not provide for his wife and her children. Within a year or so the slaves were back on a Dutch East Indiaman, with a new name and a new identity, heading south. Joseph may have been hoping to get home to Malabar, but the other four were all Cape-born and so forced by the circumstances of the Netherlands to take the one job they must have most wanted to avoid. They must have hoped that in the mass of humanity on the ships they could escape notice, but they were unlucky. Remarkably, even though it was the largest enterprise in the world at the time, with the most employees, the VOC was still a face-to-face society in which it was all too easy to be recognised. Their masters sent in petitions to the Council of Policy of the Cape government - the same request, word for word, rather remarkably, on three occasions - and the slaves were hauled off, tried, sentenced and put back to work.³¹ Joseph's defence that he had been made drunk and kidnapped on board ship did not impress the court, and the fact that all the stowaways were sentenced gives the impression that they were attempting to maintain their freedom. Not even the conditions on board a Dutch East Indiaman could be worse than slavery at the Cape, apologists notwithstanding.

The pattern was continued even after the British conquest of the Cape. While examples are few, there were nevertheless two slaves who escaped by sea and later returned to the Cape, where their owners attempted to reclaim them. One of these, Jack, fell in with sailors of the merchant ship 'Walker' in the early part of 1806. These sailors persuaded him to engage on the ship himself, but his time on board the 'Walker' was short. Before the vessel left Table Bay, it was visited by a press gang of the British Navy, and Jack, together with other sailors from the vessel, was forcibly enlisted into His Majesty's Marine as John Paulfield.

The great maw of the British military machine had no scruples as to where its manpower came from. Indeed, somewhat later, the Vice-Admiral commanding the Cape station made a point of commandeering slaves captured on Spanish and Portuguese prizes to serve in the navy, where they did not receive wages, but only their food. But he would not allow too many captured slaves to serve on the same vessel, for fear of mutiny.³²

John Paulfield came to serve on a thirty-eight gun frigate, HMS 'Lida', as a common sailor.³³ The fleet to which it was attached then sailed for South America under the command of Admiral Sir Home Popham. Paulfield was thus present at the British capture of both Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Thereafter the 'Lida' returned to Britain with despatches reporting this British success, but was wrecked at Milford Haven. Paulfield

was then transferred to HMS 'Volunteer', on which he spent the rest of the war, mainly cruising in the Mediterranean, until he was paid off in Marseilles in 1815. Thereafter he found passage on ships of war first to England and then, at his own request, to Cape Town.³⁴

Of the second sailor, Hendrick, far less is known. He was a slave of G. Munninck and left the colony in 1811, but the circumstances of this are uncertain. By the end of the war he was serving, under the name of Henry Simons, on board the HMS 'Curacao' as Captain's Steward. His ship was primarily engaged in the blockade of St Malo. Since the 'Curacao' had never been at the Cape, he must have found his way to England in another vessel, and there enlisted, or been pressed, into the navy. After the 'Curacao' was paid off, he returned to the land of his birth, carelessly leaving his discharge papers in London where they could not be recovered.³⁵

On their return to Cape Town, both Paulfield and Simons were claimed as slaves by their respective owners. Presumably the two men had considered themselves to be free, on the basis of their military service. Otherwise they would not have returned to the Cape. The legal position was less clear. According to the Mutiny Act of 1807, all blacks in the King's service were held to be free, except in those cases when the owners had not given their consent, nor received compensation.³⁶ Initially, the court at Cape Town decided that John Paulfield should be returned to his master, and that Hendrick should be declared free. The grounds for these decisions are unclear, but presumably they were related to the circumstances under which they had escaped. Eventually, however, the cases were sent to London, where the legal officer of the Colonial Office decided that, under the terms of the Mutiny Act, neither could be considered to have a claim to freedom. Both Paulfield and Simons, once more known as Jack and Hendrick, were therefore returned to their respective owners.³⁷

These few examples of slaves who tried to gain their freedom by enlisting as sailors show the great need for manpower of all the fleets, both merchant and military, during the age of sail. This hunger could on occasion override the claims of slavery. But there is more to it. The slaves could only escape in this manner because they had struck up contacts with sailors who were on shore in Cape Town. It is worth stressing once again how possible this was. Cape Town was an open, underpoliced city. Like any major port throughout the world it abounded in bars, cheap eating houses and brothels, and the authorities could not control them all nor did they wish to. Men and women from all groups of Cape Town's population were to be found in the bars, above all, drinking, gambling and brawling. The slaves could spend the money they had been able to accumulate from their petty trading, or had stolen. To give one example, in 1746, Thomas van Mallabaar confessed to having gambled and drunk away the Spanish reals he had stolen from his master, the ondercoopman Willem van Kerkhof, with soldiers, free blacks and

other slaves.³⁸ If the fleet had been in town there would have been sailors there as well.³⁹ The respectable citizens of Cape Town complained of the places in which this occurred, as respectable citizens always do.⁴⁰ But it is only in modern times, since the District Six, the quarter of the city where the sailors and the Capetonians came together most, has been razed to the ground, that the authorities have become able to control that intercourse.⁴¹ It is thus no wonder that there were many slaves who were able as a result of these contacts to exchange their bondage for the life of a sailor, in which the restrictions of discipline were heavy, but would come to an end, and allow freedom.

7 The slaves and the Africans

The patterns of marronage in South Africa were greatly affected by the continued existence, beyond the borders of the colony, of unsubdued African peoples with a tradition of accepting individuals from all sorts of backgrounds. As we have seen, from the beginning of colonial settlement, escaped slaves attempted to reach the Khoikhoi communities of the northern Cape, where they hoped to be able to live a free life. From the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, in contrast, the preferred goal of escaped slaves was the Xhosa people to the east of the colony, while in the last years of slavery many escapers headed north to the Griquas, the !Kora, and the Tswana and the Namibian Oorlams. Hanglip notwithstanding, the possibility of reaching the independent African communities across the Fish River and, later, north of the Orange meant that very many slaves did not take the risks involved in establishing maroon communities hidden away from colonial presence. The Africans complemented the ships in Table Bay as a refuge for runaway slaves. One of the consequences of this was that the direct pressure of maroons on the colonial order, which Genovese claimed was one of the contributing factors to slave rebellion, was lessened, though it was by no means obliterated. In a curious transformation of the famous 'safety-valve' theory of the function of the North American frontier, the presence of African communities which could serve as havens for escaped slaves may have taken some of the steam out of the potential for rebelliousness among the Cape slaves.¹

First of all, however, the slaves had to reach the Xhosa. This was by no means easy. One group of slaves, wood-cutters and charcoal-burners living relatively undisturbed on the shores of Hout Bay on the Cape peninsula managed to steal a fishing smack and a sail and, filling it with food - mealies, pumpkins and apples - attempted to reach the shores of the Xhosa country in that. Unfortunately for them, the boat was not sufficiently seaworthy to cope with the trials of the Cape seas in April, and they were forced on land, first in Hanglip and then again further east. If they had remembered the skills of the sea from their young days spent in the Moluccas, Sumbawa or southern Sulawesi - and this is by no means impossible - then those skills were not enough to keep the boat afloat. Thereafter, they tried to complete the journey overland, but they were so weakened and demoralised that the nine of them allowed themselves to be caught by just four men, two of whom were black.²

Most of the runaways, of course, had to walk all the way, no small undertaking, especially considering that the easiest passes through the mountains and the fords across the rivers were occupied by the colonists, or at least regularly watched. In addition, the slaves had to find food on the way, to defend themselves against potential Khoisan attacks, and at the very least, to be strong enough to overawe solitary Europeans who might otherwise capture them and claim the bounty. It is therefore not surprising that the descriptions which survive of the trek to 'Cafferland', as the whites and slaves always called the country of the Xhosa, invariably concern fairly large groups, of between half a dozen and forty-five escapers. It was not a trip to make alone.

On the other hand, the group of forty-five was too large to have much chance of success, either. In the winter of 1709, Jacob Smit, a Sinhalese slave of the ex-*Secunde* of the government, Samuel Elsevier, gathered together this large number of his fellow-slaves, including two women and a suckling baby, from the village of Stellenbosch and the farms around it.³ He may have been able to achieve the organisation this required because the control on the farm he lived on had been reduced as a result of the banishment to Europe of his owner in the aftermath of the Van der Stel affair.⁴ He had also been able to find a guide, Ary, a shepherd, who as a result of his occupation had more freedom of movement than other slaves, and thus more knowledge of the countryside. He knew a route, Jacob said, along which the party could avoid all contacts with the Khoisan and so come to a country where 'things would be better for them than now'. Jacob, indeed, had considerable prestige among the Stellenbosch slaves, perhaps because of his occupation - his name suggests he was a smith - or because he had previously run away to the 'Amaquas', a group of San near the Four-and-Twenty Rivers. Jacob himself had managed to steal a pistol, a carbine, two flintlocks and some powder horns, and had made some three hundred lead bullets, presumably in the smithy in which he worked. There were also two other flintlocks and two rifles ('getrokken'). These were to be used, claimed Jacob, only to hunt food, and indeed seem never to have been turned on humans.

Despite these various precautions - Jacob had also stolen a number of clothes which he later distributed to the runaways as protection against the cold of a Cape August - the trip was an unmitigated disaster. It began quite well, as the slaves marched up the Franschoek Kloof in regular order, with men carrying the flintlocks acting as rearguard. They crossed the head of the pass on the so-called elephants' road and then continued down the valley of the Rivier Sonder Eind. About this time they were seen by a solitary individual, though they were not sure whether he was a Dutchman or a Khoi. Jacob then drove them on even harder, as they had heard from the various slave shepherds they met and from whom they received sheep to eat, that a

commando of a hundred men was following them. Such a large group of runaways would indeed have elicited a major reaction of this type from the whites. The pace was too hot for some of the slaves. One of them, Francis, turned his ankle and had to be left behind, although Jacob went back to try and recover him. He returned alone, however, and claimed he had not been able to find Francis, but, feeling his authority already weakening, he threatened to shoot any other stragglers dead, rather than risk being betrayed to the pursuers.

After a day's march, they reached the confluence of the Rivier Sonder Eind and the Breede River, in the neighbourhood of modern Swellendam, which of course had not yet been settled by colonists. Here the expedition finally turned completely sour. Unfortunately for the escapers, the Breede River was in flood, a normal consequence of the winter rains in the mountains of the south-west Cape from which it flows. There was no way in which they could get across, even though they made rafts in an effort to pass it. The tensions inherent in such a large party then came to the fore. First of all, the Malagasies as a group decided to abandon the attempt to regain their freedom and, after an argument with Jacob, took off in the night. Worst of all for the remainder, they managed to carry off most of the guns. The others spent two more days trying to cross the river, marching upstream for two more days before finally the whole party dispersed into the mountains. Unable to cope with the rigours of the winter, at least one of them died there, while the others returned to the neighbourhood of Drakenstein, hoping to resume their journey after the end of the rains, but they were never able to attempt this. Some were captured by the Europeans in the Franschhoek Kloof, while most of the others - perhaps all, but the evidence is far from clear - gave themselves up to their owners, after they had heard that the Malagasies had also been received. Only Jacob and Ary, as leaders of the expedition, were tried and because they had not committed any major crime, apart from inducing their fellows to desert, they received, by the standards of the Cape, relatively light punishments.⁵

Such dramatic failures were rather rare. The impression that the records give is that once a group of runaways had been able to gain a few hours' start on their potential pursuers, they were not recaptured, although without doubt far more slaves did indeed escape and were retaken than those few who came before the Court of Justice after a failed trip to the Xhosa. Occasionally a group would be caught by a commando sent out after it, or attacked and robbed by Khoisan, so that they could go no further.⁶ In general, though, the slaves were able to move relatively easily through the country beyond the first mountains of the Cape folded belt, often, it seems, travelling along the coast where they could be sure of regular food supplies. After all, throughout the eighteenth century, the population in these districts was sparse, and many of those who were there were sympathetic to the escapers. The masters' best chance was to

squash the attempt before the slaves had left the vicinity of the farm. Sometimes they succeeded. Nigel Worden describes how; in 1742:

a plot was formed by slaves living on four separate farms in the remoter districts of Drakenstein by the Oliphants River. Slaves escaped one by one from their masters, each bringing food and ammunition with him, whilst the refugees living in the hills obtained supplies from slaves still on the farms. The plot was discovered, however, before the slaves left the district for 'Cafferland'.⁷

Frequently, though, all measures to apprehend the slaves on their trip to the Xhosa failed. During the course of the eighteenth century numerous slavers escaped from the European owners and were incorporated into Xhosa society.

It is impossible to say how many, and even if figures could be found, they would probably not be very illuminating, although posing the question does highlight once again the problems that the successful escaped slaves left far fewer traces, either at the time or in the archival record, than those who failed. What can be said, however, is that the leakage of this particular form of bonded labour away from the farms of the eastern Cape was one of the reasons why there were relatively far fewer slaves on the frontier than in the western parts of the Cape colony. The poverty of the potential owners obviously had something to do with this, too, but not everything. Not even the Van Reenens, the biggest butchers in the colony in the last years of the VOC's rule and among the richest families at the Cape, would put slaves on their farms on the Fish River.⁸ The slaves would have known that a welcome was awaiting them among the Xhosa, especially as they could often bring arms and livestock with them. They knew the distance was short and the possibility of pursuit into what was almost enemy territory slight. The risk of desertion was therefore so high that it was thoroughly uneconomic to use slave labour to any large extent in Graaff-Reinet, let alone in the Zuurveld. One farmer who tried, Stoffel Lombard, 'lost ten slaves in consequence of his vicinity to the Kaffers, and I fear in a great degree by unnecessary severity'.⁹ This was no isolated occasion. In 1824, for instance, Rachael, a slave of Hans van der Merwe, fled to the Xhosa in a fright after her husband had been flogged by their master so severely with a rope that he died three days later.¹⁰ But because she and her fellows could go so easily, the force inherent in any system of slavery had to be applied with more circumspection than further west. Once again, slave action had shaped the economic pattern of a large area of South Africa.

The Europeans naturally did everything they could to get back those slaves who had reached the Xhosa. Occasionally, and especially in the early days of European contact with the Xhosa, this was left to private enterprise, as it were. For instance

Willem Prinsloo was granted permission to go after two slaves who were known to be among the Xhosa on condition that he did not use the opportunity to barter for cattle. Prinsloo was doing this for the owner of the slaves, in return for a considerable reward.¹¹ Later, as the relationship of colonists and Xhosa became more intense, the former tried to arrange this matter more formally. For instance, when in 1803 the Governor J.W. Janssens met a group of Xhosa chiefs under the leadership of Ndlambe in an attempt to regulate matters at the conclusion of the Frontier War of 1799-1802, one of the conditions of peace was that:

Whatever slaves of either sex, or of any age, shall have gone over to the Caffers during the war, or shall have fallen into their hands in any other way, shall be returned to their masters.¹²

Ndlambe and his colleagues agreed to this proposal of the governor, especially as an amnesty for the slaves was given, but it is doubtful whether many slaves returned to their masters as a result. One at least came back, apparently as a result,¹³ and occasionally other Xhosa chiefs might offer to return escapers, if they saw it to be to their temporary tactical advantage,¹⁴ or if, like Cungwa, as far west as the Lang Kloof in 1808, they saw some financial advantage in the matter.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the landrost of Uitenhage complained that Cungwa, Ndlambe and Habana still had many runaway slaves among their followers.¹⁶

Some twenty years earlier Cungwa's policy had been different, and more in line with the general actions of the various Xhosa chiefs. Lucas Meyer, one of the Veldwachtmeesters of Graaff-Reinet district, challenged him about the absconding slaves and Hottentots whom he was hiding in his kraals and who were committing depredations on the Christians (as his own people admitted). Cungwa was not interested, being far more concerned with cattle that the Rarabe had taken from him some time previously. In any case, Meyer reported, 'we must remain quiet about the slaves and Hottentots, seeing it was not he [Cungwa] that took them away from the farms - he had not enticed them so he need not return them.'¹⁷

This pattern was followed by all Xhosa chiefs, no matter what position they took up within the conflicts of the time. For instance, there were also runaway slaves living with Botumane, one of the sub-chiefs under Ngqika, Ndlambe's greatest enemy. Moreover they were close enough to the centres of decision-making for one of them to be a useful spy for the British on Ngqika's plans.¹⁸

The Xhosa chiefs had good reason for giving refuge to the slave runaways. As individuals without kin or other attachments, they could be made into clients fully dependent upon their patrons. Sparrman wrote of the matter as follows:

If I may be allowed to judge from two instances, the slaves of the Christians are of a much more warlike turn than the Xhosa themselves. These, consequently, when they elope from their masters' service, are sure to be well received and protected by the Caffres. At least, a Caffre prince, notwithstanding that he had a handsome consideration, had . . . refused to deliver up two slaves belonging to the Christians, alleging, by way of giving a reasons for his refusal, that they were his best warriors.¹⁹

These particular individuals (perhaps the ones Prinsloo had gone after?) may have been fine warriors, but that cannot always have been the case. But, if they knew what was good for them, the runaways would certainly have been the most loyal of a Xhosa chief's retinue. For instance, when Colonel Collins visited Hintza in 1809, he found that a large number of those who lived around that chief's main settlement were deserters from the Colony, both white soldiers and slaves. They were supported by Hintza, who gave them milch cattle, a traditional loan of a Xhosa patron to bind a client to him, and many had Khoi wives living with them.²⁰

On the other hand, it was not long before the escaped slaves were able to acquire kin within Xhosa society, and thus become full members of it. The Xhosa had a long tradition of incorporating and assimilating strangers. Throughout Xhosa history Khoisan men and, especially, women had been taken in, as is shown not only by the multiplicity of 'clicks' in the Xhosa language but also in the traditions. Sometimes whole clans were brought into the Xhosa polity, in which case their leaders would gain political rights as councillors. Alternatively, individual Khoisan, often those who would otherwise have starved, would attach themselves to a Xhosa chief as his clients. Indeed it has been argued that this 'openness' of Xhosa society was a matter of conscious policy, a deliberate ideology.²¹ The Xhosa and other Cape Nguni were used to incorporating white castaways saved from ships wrecked on the Transkei coast. The descendants of these castaways acquired chiefly status among the Mpondo and Bomvana.²² There were also slaves who came into Nguni society in this way, after the ship on which they were being transported to the New World ran on shore.²³ It says much about the conditions of the slave trade that, after slaves and slavers had got ashore, the latter were murdered by the former.

That slaves who had escaped from the colony were treated in the same way as these castaways is therefore not at all surprising. It is, of course, peculiarly difficult for a historian to discover much about these people. On the one hand, at least until the 1830s, their successful incorporation was dependent on their being able to avoid detection, and potential capture, by the whites. On the other, there was never the same morbid fascination among historians with them as with those white castaways who 'went native'. No doubt memories of slave ancestry has

been retained in various Xhosa families, but it has rarely come to light.

There is an exception, though, in the case of one particular ex-slave who rose to considerable prominence within Xhosa society, one Ngxukumeshe, alias Hermanus Matroos. The details of his career are not of importance here, although it must be mentioned that it was his knowledge of both colonial and Xhosa culture and politics that enabled him to function as a peculiarly tricky and effective politician on all sides of the complicated network of alliances and enmities on the frontier of the Cape colony and the Xhosa in the first half of the nineteenth century. He died in 1851, shot by British soldiers in an attack on Fort Beaufort. By the end of his life, during which he had fought for Ngqika against Ndlambe, had been interpreter both for Ngqika and the British, held land on the Blinkwater in the Kat River settlement and then had risen in revolt against the British in 1850, he had acquired a reputation for exceedingly fast political feet. He had also managed to gain a very important position within Xhosa society. His heir was one of the four main councillors of the Ngqika chiefs, a position that was essentially hereditary, not appointive. The family was certainly fully assimilated to the Xhosa. His grandson was described after his death as 'although illiterate, a walking encyclopedia of Native Law and custom'. Clearly, this had been achieved largely as a result of Ngxukumeshe's political skill and his descendants' personalities. Nevertheless, it is an indication of just how fully he had been incorporated into Xhosa society.

There is some doubt as to Ngxukumeshe's ancestry. Sir Andries Stockenström, who could have known, wrote that he was the son of an escaped slave and a Gqunukwebe woman, while later Xhosa tradition claims that he himself was the escaper. Probably the latter is the truth, as Ngxukumeshe would not have wanted to reveal his direct servile status in his initial meetings with the colonists - which occurred well before the emancipation of colonial slaves in 1834 - but rather would have stressed Gqunukwebe antecedents, even if non-existent, at a period when he was claiming land in the Kat River settlement. However this may have been, he and his descendants gained their position because they were able to build up kinship relationships within the milieu of Ngqika's followers. In 1932, the story ran thus:

He was a slave who had run away to Rharhabe and hid himself from the Boers, he arrived and married a daughter of the amaJwara, and since then the Somanas [the name of his grandson] have been Jwara.

This may be taken as a paradigm for the way in which very many far more obscure escaped slaves found a new life among the Xhosa.²⁴

Not all were assimilated, though. One of the servants who accompanied James Alexander on his expedition to Namibia in

1836, Magasee, a Bengali, was an ex-slave who had lived thirteen years among the Xhosa before returning to the colony after emancipation. Alexander hoped that this experience would have given him valuable skills for the expedition into the wilds, but on the whole he was disappointed in Magasee. He may have had the skills, but he did not have the attitude a captain in the British army expected from an ex-slave. He was far too concerned to maintain the independence he had won for himself, even though he had now been forced into wage employment.²⁵

The Xhosa and other Cape Nguni were not the only peoples to receive escaped slaves. From the 1760s, along and to the north of the Orange there were numerous small groups of herders, hunters and raiders who were only too happy to acquire all the manpower they could, and were too far from the colonial border and its authorities for there to be any incentive to send the runaways back to their masters. Thus it was that slaves from such districts as the Bokkeveld or the Sneeuwberg would head north rather than east. They could hope to become full members, even founder members, of the new communities that were slowly distilling out of the human chaos caused along the Orange by the coming of firearms and, more concretely, by the raids on the relatively settled Khoikhoi communities of the middle Orange by Bastards from Namaqualand and, then, in the 1780s by such boers as Adriaan van Zyl and Petrus Pienaar and by the later Oorlam leader Jager Afrikaner.²⁶ From then on, through at least till the 1830s, the Transorangia frontier zone, both in Namibia and east towards the Vaal and its tributaries, was held by a mêlée of competing groups, each contesting for land, for cattle and for followers. It is thus not surprising that escaped slaves could often find a niche in which to maintain themselves in freedom.²⁷

Some of these slaves became members of the Oorlam groups that fought out control of Namibia in the course of the nineteenth century. At least one of the minor leaders allied to Jonker Afrikaner, Amraal, was himself born a slave in Clanwilliam, and there must have been many others of less exalted status in the followers of Afrikaner and the other leaders of the central and southern highlands of Namibia.²⁸

Others again seem to have allied with the !Kora Khoikhoi as raiders who lived along the banks of the Orange River, from where they launched expeditions north to the Tswana, east to the Griqua and south across the Bushman flats to the most northerly colonial farms. George Thompson described the problems these northern farmers had to contend with, when he wrote, in connection with his temporary host, T.A. Theron, in the Hantam, as follows:

Here I also learned that four slaves belonging to a neighbouring farmer had just absconded, taking with them six horses and as many muskets, and had fled, as was supposed, to join the marauding banditti or runaways and Bastards who have

their retreats about the banks of the Gariep [the Orange].²⁹

The raids lasted until 1879, and indeed, one of the leaders of the 'rebels' was a man named Donker Malgas. He was said to have been a Xhosa, who had been in service of the farmers and had later claimed land in Griqualand West, but, in this context, it is his name which may give the clue, as Malgas is a contraction of Malagasy, and is a well known ex-slave name, being also found among the so-called 'Coloureds' in the Transkei. Had Donker 'become' a Xhosa after being a slave, and running away?³⁰

Obviously the colonial government did all it could to stop this haemorrhage of labour away from the northern districts of the colony. In particular they put pressure on the Bastard captaincies - later baptised Griquas by the missionary John Campbell - who needed the contacts with the colony to allow them to live the sort of life for which they hankered and pursue their sub-imperialist ambitions towards the Tswana. Various of the Griquas had themselves been runaways before they re-established their identity north of the Orange. Martin Legassick has even speculated that Adam Kok I, the patriarch of the Griquas, was himself an escaped slave, a supposition perhaps supported by the fact that there seems to be no record of his emancipation. It is, however, perhaps even more likely that he was the son of an escapee by a Guriqua woman. In 1713, one Claas (? Cornelis) Kok is reported to have been among a group of slaves who had reached the Guriqua, and seems neither to have been captured by the whites nor to have returned voluntarily to his master.³¹ If he had then been at least partially assimilated among the Guriqua Khoi, who lived towards the northern edge of the colony at the time, he could have acquired a Khoi wife and become the forefather of the Kok family.

Despite the fact that many of them were the descendants of runaway slaves, the Griquas were themselves quite prepared to hand back to the colony any runaway slaves who happened to fall into their hands. It was an easier way for them to gain the approbation of the colonial authorities than by joining the colonial forces, as Lord Charles Somerset, the governor, wanted. Probably their policy towards runaways was not always consistent, especially in the difficult years of the Hartenaar and Bergenaar rebellions. Certainly the colonial governor's approval was by no means always obtained for the Griquas' actions, but their policy towards the slaves did aid their effort to be considered as the northern bulwark of the colony, with the benefits that would accrue to such allies.

In 1814, under pressure from the missionary Campbell, the Griquas included in their laws the following clause:

That all persons flying from justice in the Colony, in consequence of some crime they have committed, and coming among them, shall be delivered up to such persons as may be sent in pursuit of them.³²

The missionaries themselves were at times prepared to send male-factors back to the colony, as were the Griquas themselves.³³ On the other hand, not all the Griquas obeyed their own laws all the time. In 1816, three slaves from a farm in the Sneeuwberg escaped to the Orange River. The Landrost of Graaff-Reinet Andries Stockenström, investigated the matter, as he believed that the plot had concerned more than just those three and discovered that

the slaves of . . . field cornet [Andries Burger] and his brother Schalk Burger had for some time back been planning such a scheme, proposed by one of those now absent, who had been enticed thereto by some Bastards who had visited Graaff-Reinet, with a party of missionaries some time before, and had promised him a safe retreat where he never again would be found; but the remainder not being able to procure horses were left behind, as the principals fearing that their plot would be discovered, would wait no longer.

At the same time, Stockenström believed that there were several other slaves who had escaped from the colony and who had been planning to join the Tswana but found that the latter were so exasperated by the raids of Coenraad de Buys and other fugitives from the colony that they would not accept any escaped slaves into their ranks. Stockenström therefore allowed three burghers to go to the Griquas to recover these slaves, and wrote to the missionary at Griqua Town, William Anderson, to persuade him to return the slaves to them.³⁴

In the event they had little success. One of the slaves who had escaped from Andries Burger later achieved a certain amount of fame. Indeed he was one of the two runaways to the north, of whom a certain amount is known. His name was Joseph Arend and he was later to become Robert Moffat's first convert. He had been born at the Cape in about 1781 and trained as a builder and thatcher, after the manner of the Cape interior. By his mid-thirties, Burger allowed him a certain amount of independence. For instance, he was hired out as a servant to John Campbell during his first itineration through the South African mission field. The relative independence of a skilled tradesman, partially at least the master of his own time, could not easily be reconciled with the discipline a slave-owner wished to impose on his property. It was, he later recalled, 'severe treatment from his master [that] had determined him to abscond beyond the limits of the colony'. He described it as a harrowing experience:

He was two months on the journey from his master's house, north of Graaff Reynet, till he reached the Great Orange river, seventeen days of which he lived on the bark of mimosa tree. His strength was so reduced by hunger that he could only proceed very slowly. On the 17th day he thought he must have died had he not shot a Guinea fowl. On reaching a Coranna

kraal, on the Great River, he was so exhausted that for eleven days he was hardly able to move from the spot on which he lay down. The Corannas treated him kindly, and he remained with them six months.³⁵

At this stage, living in all probability on the middle reaches of the Orange, around modern Bethulie, Arend was out of reach of organised Griqua power, as the Griquas did not move to Philippolis for another decade. Nevertheless, when he heard that the Griquas had sent three escaped slaves back to the colony, he decided to make sure he remained out of their grasp. Moreover, he had evidently stolen a gun and probably, despite his description of the journey, a horse - something that Campbell with his evangelical rectitude did not mention - and preferred to make better use of it, and his various skills, than was possible in the precarious, uncertain and essentially poverty-stricken life of the !Kora. Perhaps, in addition, he had already met Coenraad de Buys, the giant Afrikaner frontiersman who at this time was moving north from the Lang Kloof to Transorangia with the clan he had himself propagated. This was largely because, it would seem, his trading activities with the Xhosa had gone sour on him, as the customers to whom he had given goods on credit had reneged on him and his Cape Town backers were now dunning him.³⁶ At all events, the two, Joseph Arend and Coenraad de Buys, with the latter's adherents, formed a formidable partnership in the dangerous business of interior elephant hunting, trading and raiding. Arend was soon able to amass a considerable quantity of ivory, but because neither he nor Buys could sell directly to the colony, they made an abortive attempt to open up trade links with Delagoa Bay (Maputo).³⁷ In time, though, Buys disappeared and died, while Arend, with his stock of ivory and cattle, settled down near the new mission station of Kuruman.

Unlike many of the runaways, Arend had not rejected all aspects of colonial culture. Rather he wished to gain full acceptance into it - a far-sighted decision with his progeny in mind. That and no doubt a genuine religious calling - for there were few whose evidences of conversion satisfied the fastidious Moffat, the strictest of all missionaries in this regard - led him first to build the mission house and church in Kuruman and then to be received into the church as Moffat's first full convert. But his 'owner' was also to be satisfied. Through the mediation of the traveller George Thompson, Arend used some of the ivory he had collected to buy himself free, for 1,500 Rixdollars.³⁸ Within the orbit of colonial South Africa, even far beyond its borders, property rights still had to be respected even by those men and women who were the property.

The other northern runaway of whom much is known, Frederick Opperman, had an even more dramatic life. In 1891, in extreme old age, he was interviewed by the Rev. D.D. Stormont and his life story published in the 'Christian Express'.³⁹ Oral history is nothing new in South African, or any other, historical writing.

Perhaps there is a certain embellishment in what Opperman told Stormont, or in Stormont's retelling, but it cannot be dismissed as make-believe. As Stormont wrote of the hundred-year-old Opperman, 'the strength of his body is gone, his limbs have become loose, his sense frail, but the eye of faith is clear, his inner man is growing into the likeness of Christ. . . . By the manifold phases of life through which he had to pass, he had become one of the remarkable persons of South Africa.' The testimony of a man who could so impress a dour Scots minister must be accepted, especially as certain of the story's details can be corroborated.

For Frederick Opperman, the crucial moment of decision to desert from his master came in 1825. He was a skilled smith, working in his master's forge in Graaff-Reinet, when he was told that he and his children were going to be sold, as his master was retiring to Cape Town, and would only need Frederick's wife with him as a cook. The rest of his slaves were to be sold, the one to this master, the other to that. Frederick tried to buy himself free with the cow, goats, sheep and cash that he had managed to gather together by working on Sundays, but he did not have enough to satisfy his master, despite the intervention of the missionary of Graaff-Reinet, to whose congregation Frederick's wife belonged. All he was able to do was to purchase the liberty of their youngest child, their only son, who was aged two. This cost him £60. The child, although now free, was left with his mother, who would bring him up as well as she could.

Frederick was sold to Wynand Pretorius, a young waggon-maker who lived in Cradock. For a few months he worked in the waggon shop, turning out a new waggon every few weeks, which sold for £60. At the weekends, he was able to ride over to Graaff-Reinet for a few hours with his wife, although this journey took twelve hours each way and he had only the time between noon on Saturday and daybreak on Monday to make the return trip. Moreover, Frederick was expected to carry bricks from the kiln to where Pretorius was having a house built, so that the masons could use them for their day's work, and then, after spending three hours at this chore, begin his day's work on the waggons at five in the morning. It was, he later recalled, 'a life like a badly treated dog'. When he heard that his wife was to go down to Swellendam with his old master, he asked Pretorius for leave to visit her for the last time. When this favour was refused, he decided to run away.

Of his trip to the Orange, Frederick told nothing. Once across it, he joined up with the !Kora band led by Titus, in the neighbourhood, probably, of modern Bethulie, and at this time changed his name to Opperman, in the hope of thus concealing his identity. He was far too skilled for his anonymity to last, however, especially as his great speciality, the mending of firearms, made him particularly welcome, and well known, throughout Transorangia. The unwanted consequence of this was that Wynand Pretorius also came to hear of where his ex-slave was hiding out.

Although the colonists as yet had no formal power north of the Orange River, there were enough of them there, trekking north to make use of grazing lands as the rains of the Sneeuwberg and the flats had failed, for a kidnapping to be feasible. Indeed, Frederick Opperman was captured by a Boer named Badenhorst and his son, who hoped to claim the £50 reward Pretorius had offered for him. Nevertheless, he managed to escape, after breaking his rawhide bonds, leaving his adversaries tied up on the ground and giving his biographer the opportunity for a moralistic tale on the way Opperman resisted the temptation to murder his adversaries. A few years later, he was once again recaptured, this time by the Griquas, and, perhaps as a result of the enmity between the Philippolis Captaincy and Jan Bloem, under whom Opperman was now serving, he was once again handed over to the colonists, to the most important official on the northern frontier, Veldcornet Gideon Joubert. This time his captors managed to convey him over the Great River, but shortly afterwards he was once again able to slip his bonds and to return north to freedom.

After his first recapture, Opperman had moved away from the dangers of Titus's kraal, where there were too many Boers coming north with smuggled brandy and firearms, to the rather more substantial group, the Springbok !Kora under Jan Bloem. Here he would be safe from kidnapping, though not, as we have seen from capture by the Griquas. By this stage, Bloem had become one of the main leaders of the raiding opposition to Mzilikazi's Ndebele for control of the southern highveld. Opperman certainly served with Bloem on one of the great commando raids against the Ndebele, that invariably ended in little short of disaster for the undisciplined Griqua and !Kora hordes. Perhaps indeed he was on both the expeditions of 1828 and 1834, but the chronology is necessarily hazy and Opperman probably telescoped events together in his old age. Eventually, though, Opperman decided to leave Bloem and come under the suzerainty of the Philippolis Griquas, since, by the later 1830s, there was no danger of his being sent back to his 'owner'. He did indeed agree to buy himself free, but only after emancipation had been announced, and to the end of his life he felt bitter about the trickery that had been imposed on him in this matter. Nevertheless, since he was able to gain control of several farms in the region of modern Bethanie, the mission station, and since he had been on one thoroughly successful trading expedition to the Tswana - he remembered it as yielding 3,300 pounds of ivory - he became, by the standards of the Transorangia interior, an exceedingly wealthy man. Towards the end of his life 'he counted his horses by hundreds, his cattle by thousands, his sheep by ten thousands'.

It is pleasant to record that, after the emancipation of slaves made it possible, Frederick Opperman went south again to try and find his wife and children. His wife had died years before from dropsy, but he found his son, Adam, and his three

daughters living near Swellendam. Eventually they too came to join their father in the Free State. The daughters all married white men, attracted by the substantial dowries provided by the Opperman patriarch, while Adam later took over his father's position as head of the community, marrying the daughter of a trekboer and a !Kora woman.

The Oppermans were, in fact, never closely integrated into the life of the Philippolis Griqua community. Their links were always closer with the !Kora, with Bethany, and with the mission station founded there in 1840 by the Berlin missionary society. Adam Opperman was always one of the leading members of the church, while Frederick was received into it in his extreme old age, struggling through his catechism when he was well over eighty. Also perhaps as a result of their marriage alliances, the Oppermans were far closer to the Afrikaner farmers and burghers of the Orange Free State than were the Griquas in general. Adam Opperman indeed fought with the Free State forces in their abortive attack on Moshoeshoe in 1865 and was next to Louw Wepenaar when the commander of the Free State forces was killed on the pass up Thaba Bosio.⁴⁰ This may not have a very close connection with the white farmers, of course. The Springbok !Kora had scores of their own to settle with Moshweshwe and the Sotho. All the same, the Oppermans had decided not to trek with the Griquas to Nomansland in 1860, but rather remained in the Orange Free State. Despite their military prowess they were never fully accepted as burghers of that state, however, as their ancestry and their relation to the mission were too well known. Nevertheless, they retained their rich farms, which to this day are owned and lived on by their descendants, who are protected by an entail in Adam Opperman's will.⁴¹

Ngxukumeshe, Joseph Arend and Frederick Opperman were obviously exceptional figures in most ways, even among runaway slaves, above all in that they have left traces in the historical records by which some idea can be gained of paths of assimilation into African societies, or at least into the frontier society of the nineteenth century. Ngxukumeshe and his descendants 'became' Xhosa, largely by being able to marry into the Jwara family. Joseph Arend did not 'become' a Motswana, for he preferred accommodation with the mission than with the Tlhaping or the Kwena. Maybe his relationship with Coenraad de Buys, who had raided Tlhaping and Kwena cattle, precluded him from settling on land shown him by a Tswana ruler and taking a Tswana wife and becoming indistinguishable at least at this distance, from the mass of the Batswana. Opperman was indeed, for a time, a !Kora, and his relationship with the Springbokke remained strong throughout his life, but as he grew richer as a farmer his alliances swung more and more towards his fellow stock barons. Nevertheless, unless the complaints of the frontier farmers were completely unfounded, and unless all the groups of escaped slaves who attempted to reach 'Cafferland' failed to

get there, there must have been many more, living out their lives anonymously, with their background long forgotten, even by their descendants. They were among the troupes of Jonker Afrikaner in his attacks on the Herero.⁴² They, like so many other refugees, would have been taken in by Moshoeshoe in his attempt to build up a new society, a new state, out of the ruins of the Difaqane.⁴³ Moshoeshoe did not have purely altruistic motives when he searched around the Voortrekkers waggons to check they had no slaves or apprentices with them. He already knew of slaves who had left the colony, perhaps because they had been manumitted, perhaps because they had run away. Adam Krotz, who had brought the French missionaries to him, was one of these.⁴⁴ If names are anything to go by, they were among the early traders along the 'Missionaries' Road' deep into Botswana.⁴⁵ They were among the Xhosa who so regularly fought the advance of the white colonists in an attempt to keep control of their lands, and among the Thembu who, favoured by the chances of geography, attempted with little more success eventually, to achieve the same end by bargaining, by conciliation. But who they were, how they managed it, where they fit in to South African societies, these questions remain riddles, without the detailed answers that only cases can give. They covered their tracks too well, since to maintain their freedom they had to be secretive of their slavery.

8 The impossibility of rebellion

It is by no means coincidental that those outbreaks of popular discontent among Cape slaves which can with most justice be described as rebellions both occurred after the British takeover of the Cape in 1806. In 1808 and 1825 there were attempts among the Cape slaves to build some sort of mass movement and there are traces of a desire, in the event entirely abortive, of taking over the colony and dismantling its social system. On both occasions, the tensions caused by the tentative moves towards the reform of the slave system throughout the British Empire gave the slaves the impetus to move from almost entirely individual forms of resistance to more collective action. The mistaken belief that freedom was theirs for the taking led to a small number of slaves directly challenging the colonial system, in one case remarkably peaceably, in the other with all the gore of a Hollywood melodrama. Clearly, then, these movements are of crucial importance to any investigation of slave consciousness or rather to the problem whether there was any genuine sense of community among the Cape slaves.

Obviously, it cannot be argued that there was any correlation between the degrees of oppression and the form of resistance to it. Rebellions occurred when they did because of a perceived change in the coherence and ideology of the masters, not because of a sudden surge of militancy on the part of the slaves, among whom there had always been very many militant individuals, nor because slave conditions suddenly became more vicious.¹ Indeed, in the eighteenth century, there had been one attempt to take freedom, at the moment when rumours of foreign attack were flying around the colony. This ended tragically for Willem van der Caab and Fuyk, since they could not persuade any slaves at all to join them, but nevertheless they were executed for sedition.² Again, according to the British army officer Robert Percival, a witness exceedingly hostile to the Dutch, such an outburst might have occurred in the 1790s but for the intervention, in this sense entirely fortuitous, of the British. He claimed that the party strife between Patriots, or Jacobins in his terminology, and Orangists had reached such a pitch that civil war was in the offing, during which 'a total emancipation of slaves was to have taken place, and they let loose against their masters; such a scene would have been dreadful, and all the virtuous inhabitants already trembled for their safety.'³ Percival was exaggerating. Even when they took power in the Netherlands, the Patriots were far too concerned with the stability and wealth of their

infant state ever to have got round even to proposing the emancipation of slaves.⁴ It is inconceivable that any great number of the Cape patriots, who were very largely respectable, prosperous slave-owners, would have taken any such radical action.⁵ Whatever their disagreements, the Patriots and the VOC officials, their main adversaries, were agreed as to the necessity of maintaining the basic order of Cape society. Their accord in this always overrode their conflicts. Nevertheless, it may well have been the case that the political uncertainty and disputes of the last years of VOC rule, relatively innocuous though they were, may have given the groundswell of conflict between master and slave a somewhat different surface froth.

The first of the two outbreaks that will be analysed in this chapter occurred in October 1808.⁶ The main characters involved were a Mauritian slave, Louis, and two Irishmen, James Hooper and Michael Kelly. Louis, a light-skinned mulatto, was a tailor in Cape Town, working on his own account, and indeed, himself hiring in other slaves to work as his assistants. Indeed he was married to a free woman, whose name is only given as Ann, to whom he was hired by his mistress, Maria Grové, the separated wife of William Kirsten. Louis was able to live with his wife, away from the supervision of his mistress, and, barring the rent which he had to pay for himself, as it were, he was able to lead a life in many ways more free than slave. Then at some time late in 1808 Ann died. None of the details are known, except that this occurred after the insurrection, but it is very conceivable that she had been sick for some time and that Louis, who was too valuable to be able to purchase his own freedom, was not only confronted with the imminent death of a wife, with all the shocks that that entails, but also with the end of his independence, for the chances that he would be able to reconstruct such a way of life were slim. He may have been driven to rebellion as a consequence.

These, of course, are conjectures. What is certain is that Louis was very much a member of the Cape Town slave craftsman elite, even though he had not been born in South Africa. With this went a degree of freedom of movement and action that was most exceptional within slave society. Louis was already a leader among the Cape Town slaves, and on this prestige he could build when he made the decision to rebel. No doubt he expected that, having led the force of rebels in from the country, he would be able to transfer the prestige he already enjoyed into concrete authority.

Louis's prestige, and perhaps his light skin, gave him the opportunity of meeting the two Irishmen. They had arrived in Cape Town during the course of 1808, from the ships of the East India Company in which they had served. Kelly had been a common sailor, while Hooper was the captain's servant. Despite their nationality, they do not seem to have had any connection with their Irish revolutionary contemporaries. Rather the insurrection

began as a result of the conversations between Louis and James Hooper, which were conducted through the medium of another slave, Abraham of the Cape, who had to interpret since Louis knew scant English and the two Irishmen no other language. Nevertheless, the key interchange between them came when Hooper and Kelly informed Louis and Abraham that there were no slaves in their own country - a fervent Irish nationalist might have thought otherwise, especially in 1808 - nor in England, Scotland or America (!). It was then agreed - precisely by whom and on whose initiative was a matter of importance for the sentencing judge, but not for the historian - that it was unjustifiable that slavery existed at the Cape. Therefore plans were made to rectify this unfortunate state of affairs.

The plan that the four men concocted in the course of 1808 was simple. First they would gather together as many slaves as possible, inciting them 'to insurrection and rebellion', as their sentence later put it, and march on Cape Town, first capturing the battery on the Devil's Peak overlooking the town. Then they would send a letter to the governor demanding the liberty of the slaves. Should this be refused, they would then capture the magazines, storm the prison and fight for their freedom. Louis was to become governor or chief of the blacks, while Hooper was to become one of his chief advisors. The revolution would then be complete, although what form of new society they envisaged is unknown, and probably was even to the principals.

In many ways it was a propitious moment to attempt a revolt. The political changes that had brought the Cape four governments in the previous thirteen years had made it obvious to the slaves that the order of things they knew was not unchangeable, even if none of the four governments had done much to change their own situation. What had been done, of course, was that the international slave trade had been abolished the previous year. But the British were still far from sure that their grasp over the harbours and bays of the Cape was strong enough to prevent illegal slaving.⁷ Therefore they could not rely entirely on the more conventional methods of preventing the slave trade. In 1808 the governor, the Irish landowning Earl of Caledon, instituted a committee to investigate the antecedents of every slave who had changed hands within the previous six months. No less than 110 slaves were found who could not be properly accounted for, and who were set free.⁸ Indeed, by Caledon's proclamation, any slave giving information leading to conviction under this heading was himself to be set free.

As a consequence of these investigations the knowledge of the changes in imperial policy penetrated deeply into the countryside. The slaves could hope that their dreams, which until then could only be realised by escape, would now be effectuated by government action. Therefore the message of the insurrection, that the slaves were indeed free now and that the masters were to be forced to leave the colony, fell on ears that were ready to receive it.

On Tuesday 25 October 1808 Louis, James Hooper, Michael Kelly and Abraham set out for Salt River, near Cape Town, in a hired waggon. Immediately on leaving Salt River, they fell in with Adonis of Ceylon, who had run away from his master two weeks previously. He was a fisherman who had caught nothing and did not dare face his master. He was invited by Louis on to the waggon, and informed of their plan, in which he immediately agreed to co-operate, although in fact he had no option. They passed one night in the open and, next day, they came to the farm of Petrus Gerhardus Louw, Vogelgezang in the Swartland, just north of modern Malmesbury. They went there because Louis was an old acquaintance of Jephtha van Batavia, one of Louw's slaves. Jephtha had been consulted on the plans and found willing to join the plot. Hooper and Abraham had indeed already been to Louw's farm to prepare the slaves there for the purpose. Louis had been able to provide himself with an imposing blue jacket with a red collar and cuffs, a new hat, two swords, one large and one small, two silver and two gold epaulets and some ostrich feathers. Louis was thus able to pose as a Spanish sea-captain, with the two Irishmen as his officers and Abraham as their servant. Louw was away and would not come back that night but his wife Jacomina Loubser made them welcome, provided forage for their horses, and set the best meal she could manage before them on the table. Hooper was very attentive to his putative captain during the meal, ensuring that he had the best possible morsels from the various dishes. Then Louis, Hooper and Kelly were shown to a room in the farmhouse and went to sleep.

They were now in the heart of the major grain-growing district of the colony. All the travellers who passed through the area commented on the fertility of the well-watered hills in the southern Swartland, the Koebergen and the Tijgerbergen.⁹ Even with the long period of fallow that was still thought necessary, the land was sufficient and there was a steady stream of waggons carrying corn to the market in Cape Town, a day or two's journey away.¹⁰ The land was fruitful; the market was near, especially as it was not necessary to cross the Cape flats before reaching the town. As a consequence the Swartland farmers, even if not quite as prosperous as their wine-growing fellows near Stellenbosch, were in general prosperous and owned large numbers of slaves. Louw himself owned 15 male and 6 female slaves. He had 3 men and 2 women Khoisan working for him, as well as 28 horses, 60 trekoxen and 300 sheep. In total he cultivated thirty morgen of land.¹¹ All in all, the Swartland was the most suitable area for quickly gathering a large force of slaves and marching on Cape Town.

In the event, though, the two Irishmen were not prepared to go through with the plan. At first light on the morning of 27, October Hooper and Kelly took the epaulets and the swords from Louis, left the house through the window and made themselves scarce. It was left to Louis to take the initiative. This he was

well able to do. He called the workers on Louw's farm, ten slaves and one Khoi, together, and informed them that they were now to be free. It was, so he said, the order of the governor and the fiscaal that all the Christians should be bound and brought to Cape Town, where they would be sent overseas, and the land would belong to the slaves.

The slaves believed this, and not only because they wanted to. Louis clearly had the sort of personality that convinces people quickly, and his uniform certainly helped to persuade those who were uncertain that he was a man of authority. He also showed them a large piece of paper which, so he said, confirmed what he was saying. But it was a desire for freedom, and a general revulsion against their servile condition that moved Louw's slaves, and those who later joined them to take action. There is no indication of any particular specific grievances. In fact, after his investigations at the end of the insurrection, the Secretary of the Court of Justice, G. Beelaerts van Blokland, was able to report that

In the course of this whole investigation and interrogation of the matter, all the slaves and hottentots taken into custody, without exception, declared that they had not the least reasons for complaints against their masters, but on the contrary they had been well treated.¹²

He added that, although in some cases this statement had been made in answer to a direct question from the interrogating officer, in general it had been volunteered by the prisoners themselves. Clearly the slaves and Khoi knew what the whites wanted to hear, but, against this, there are enough complaints of maltreatment in the criminal records for it to be obvious that slaves were rarely so terrified that they did not report their real grievances. The motives behind the uprising were not local and specific. Rather, the slaves were attempting to change the entire structure of the society in which they lived.

To start these changes, Louis, Abraham, Adonis and Louw's slaves first spanned in the horse waggon, over the vehement protests of Jacomina Loubser, and set out for Cape Town.

The march on Cape Town on 27 October 1808 is one of the more remarkable events of South African history, reminiscent in some ways of the similar march some 152 years later.¹³ In the course of the day, the insurgents visited thirty farms, tying up those white men they were able to catch and loading them onto the waggons, but generally leaving the women and the children behind. One woman bribed a slave with a silver watch to let her son go free. Other slaves did not need to be bribed. Abraham van der Caab, who drove the waggon in which his master Adriaan de Waal was held, protected him against those who wanted to bind him tight. He is also said to have protected two white women against those who threatened them and to have 'opposed the breaking of things'.¹⁴ Nor was he the only slave who acted to

protect his master's family. On Christian Storm's farm, the slaves and the whites disappeared into the countryside together on hearing of the march's approach. As everywhere, slavery was an ambivalent relationship, an ambivalence felt by both master and slave. The brutality inherent in the system could on occasion be balanced, or even cancelled out, by the fact of human contact, however predetermined and unequal were the roles that both master and slave had to play.

In general, though, the slaves from the farms along the route were persuaded with little difficulty to join the parties. Since the route lay through the rich wheat districts of the Koeberg and the Tiggerberg, the cavalcade quickly snowballed, so that Louis was required to divide his forces into three separate groups, each with its own leader. Nevertheless, on their approach to Salt River, on the outskirts of Cape Town, from where Louis and the Irishmen had begun their journey into the countryside two days earlier, the three parties were to come together again for the final push to ensure freedom of all the slaves in the colony. By this stage they numbered well over three hundred men, women and children, slaves and Khoi.

There is no indication that the group that joined in the rebellion was anything but a typical cross-section of the Cape agricultural slave population. On the other hand, even the barest details, such as name, sex, status and owner (where appropriate) are known for only 98 of the participants, out of the several hundred who joined the march. In many ways this group was not typical of the rebels. They were held for further investigation - and in 51 cases trial - after the dispersal of the marchers. Certainly there were no Europeans among those captured and later released, apart from the slaves' prisoners, so that in this respect Hooper and Kelly are thoroughly unrepresentative, as are the four Cape Town slaves, Louis, Abraham, Adonis van Ceylon, the runaway fisherman, and David van der Caab, the driver of the horse waggon which had been hired to take Louis, Abraham and the Irish into the countryside. In addition, all those held were males, clearly a consequence of judicial preselection. But at least the ethnic breakdown of those held must have been fairly typical of the grain farms of the time. Among those held there were 5 Khoi, and 16 whose birth-place is not given. Of the other 71, 25 had been born in the Cape, 26 in Mozambique, 5 in Madagascar, 6 in India, 8 in the Indonesian archipelago and 1 (in addition to Louis) in Mauritius. In this, the national composition of the marchers paralleled the shift in the Cape slave population towards the Cape-born and the Mozambiquans, in the latter case probably largely deriving from the extensive slave trade with the Portuguese colony in the years of the First British Occupation.¹⁵ But whether this had any significant effect on the militancy of such a heterogeneous group is most doubtful.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this march was its peaceful nature. The farmers did not attempt to defend their

families. Presumably the sight of such a large and disciplined force, was at once such a confirmation of their worst nightmares as to reduce them to a state of shock, and sufficiently overpowering, and well-armed, to make resistance seem pointless. Moreover the slaves moved so fast that they were able to catch most of the farmers by surprise, still in their own houses. Only Hendrik Prehn was able to fight back, but even then he had been bound by the insurgents before he was able to break loose, grab a gun loaded with small shot and fire it at his assailants. None of them was wounded, but at this they moved off without molesting him any further.

The slaves, too, acted with considerable moderation. Except for those lost to the processes of justice, later, the rebellion cost no lives. There were few atrocities for the prosecutor to make play of later in court. The major exception was the raping of Jacoba Christina Baard, the wife of Pieter van der Westhuisen, by Cupido van Java, who put the muzzle of his gun to her chest and forced her to go with him into one of the outhouses of her farm. For the rest, the farmers were merely severely manhandled. Adriaan Louw, a man of over seventy, seems to have got off worst.¹⁶ He was grabbed by the hair in his own house, hit over the head and on his back with the butt of a musket and pulled along the floor to the waggons. He was then beaten with the flat of a sword and tied up on a waggon. Later, however, the slaves realised the difficulty of guarding their prisoners and left Louw and five others behind at the next farm they visited, which belonged to Hendrik van Niekerk.

It was property rather than persons that suffered most. At some farms the insurgents contented themselves with mustering the waggons, horses, arms and ammunition of the whites, with assembling the workforce, bringing some in from the wheat and barley fields or from the waggon-maker's shop, and with leading off the owners, sometimes bound, sometimes loose, but always under armed guard. In a few farms the cellars were opened and wine distributed among the slaves, but there is no indication of widespread drunkenness. However, at least seven farms were fully looted, with windows smashed, chests and trunks broken open and their contents distributed, doors ripped off and the estate papers torn to pieces. Here many shots were fired into the air, but none were directed at any person. Why some farms should receive this sort of treatment, and others not, is uncertain, but it is suggestive that the farm which suffered worst was Christian Storm's, where all the resident slaves had taken themselves off and hidden in the bushes on the approach of the party. Thus they could not moderate their fellows in defence of their master and home.

As well as being, for once, in a position to inflict physical indignity on their masters and mistresses, and to threaten far more, the slaves were able to rejoice in the reversal of fortunes. For a few hours, the world was turned upside down. Abraham, one of the original leaders of the plot, expressed this most

clearly. To one of the slave women who was seen weeping for her master, he exclaimed that she should not cry for a Christian. Somewhat later he explained to her in more detail: 'Tomorrow the troupe will hoist a red flag and fight itself free, and then the slave women will all be able to say *Jij* to their mistresses.' As the criminal sentence later explained, this, the familiar second person singular, is 'a disrespectful expression in the Dutch language', certainly not to be used by a social inferior to a superior.¹⁷ Rather its use is one of the most expressive demonstrations of rank in the language, and indeed still is in modern Afrikaans. Abraham was announcing the coming reversal of the social order. For a day the slaves were the *baasen*.

This Saturnalia could not last. Although they were able to move very fast, the slaves had not been able to prevent any news of the uprising preceding their coming to Cape Town. Between nine and ten in the evening of the 27th, Caledon heard of the approach of the insurgents. He immediately ordered out detachments of both infantry and cavalry, intercepting the slave parties at the Salt River, towards Blauwberg and in the Tijgerberg. The slaves realised that the promises of freedom had not been given and would not be given. Once again no fight was made. The dragoons and other forces captured 326 men and women, and held them in the Cape Town forts and on a farm in the Tijgerberg. How many escaped is unknown. Certainly many did. The governor's instructions for guards to be posted on the Franschoek, Hottentots Holland and Roodezand passes were certainly not in vain.¹⁸ But most of the slaves would have found their way back to the farms on which they lived, where no doubt the discipline of slave labour was once again established in all its brutality. At least one of them, Lodewyk, a boy of no more than fourteen, who had ridden a horse and wielded a sword during the march but who had then left the marchers and gone home, was sent back to the Cape to be tried.

The principals of the rebellion, too, had all escaped from the initial round-up, but nevertheless were soon all captured. The two Irishmen, of course, had left before the uprising began, but they were soon captured near Saldanha Bay by the dragoons and sent to Cape Town. Louis wandered around for a day or two until hunger forced him to give himself up at the military camp in Wynberg, on the slopes of Table Mountain.

The Cape judicial system was then faced with a problem of administering justice to a far larger number of potential convicts than had ever previously confronted them at any one time. In addition, the governor and the fiscaal rightly believed that many of those implicated in the revolt had been more or less forced to join in and had committed no real act of collaboration other than by their presence in the parties. These slaves were to be distinguished from those who could be accused of some criminal act. Thus in the first round, after a summary extra-judicial examination, 244 of those captured, 'who were found to be merely passive' were sent back to their masters with a severe warning.

Later another 45 who had been more seriously interrogated were set free 'once again with such domestic correction as may be found to be suitable'.¹⁹ In total 47 slaves, 2 Khoi and 2 Europeans were brought to trial.²⁰

Despite the large number of testimonies they had to take, the court moved with considerable despatch. On 8 December it delivered its verdict. It considered that 7 of the defendants, Louis, Abraham, Adonis, Kelly, Hooper and two of Louw's slaves who had been forewarned of the uprising, were guilty of high treason and that, with one exception, the others brought before them were guilty of various degrees of public violence. Sixteen of them were to be hung and almost all the others committed to Robben Island for varying terms. When the sentence was sent on to the governor for confirmation, however, Caledon only confirmed 5 of the death sentences, on Louis, Hooper, Abraham and Louw's two slaves, Cupido (who had also committed rape on the way to Cape Town) and Jephtha. The others who had been sentenced to hang were put on Robben Island, either for life or for fifteen years, and many of those for whom this had been the original fate were, in fact, released, or returned to their masters, after witnessing the punishment of their fellows. The only exception was Michael Kelly. Caledon suspended his execution until a decision of the British government on his plea for mercy was known, but then, some little time later, he was shipped off to Britain where he seems to have been set free.

Caledon, who was one of the most humane and intelligent of the nineteenth-century British governors of the Cape, did not see the need for savage punishment of any but the instigators of the uprising. It was, as always, better for the rulers to paint the insurrection as being the work of a few agitators from outside, but indeed this was one of the rare occasions for which such a thesis is applicable. Louis, Hooper and Abraham, the prime instigators of the uprising, did come from Cape Town into the countryside to begin the revolt, even if to do so they took up contacts, in the first instance with two men, Cupido and Jephtha, who, they knew, shared their views. But to concentrate on this is to miss the groundswell of discontent. The slaves who joined the march had no specific grievances against their masters. What they did have was a general revulsion against masters. Only on one farm was there any widespread aversion to joining the march. In almost all other cases, the slaves had not the slightest qualms in taking action to rid themselves of their masters.

Caledon indeed seems to have realised that it was necessary to restore calm to the countryside. Five months after the final pronouncement of sentence against the insurgents, he issued a proclamation in which he offered a pardon to all runaway slaves - except those guilty of capital offences - who returned to their masters, and assured them that there would be no reprisals and that their masters would treat them well.²¹ Certainly he was trying to do everything to prevent a repetition of the events of

October 1808, but it is doubtful whether the proclamation had any great effect. Slaves continued to run away in great numbers, and there are continued reports of simmering unrest and individual acts of resistance. As we have seen, for instance, Hanglip was still occupied, and the slaves living there were making their living by a regular system of banditry.

Only on one other occasion, apparently, was there any attempt to raise the slaves in general rebellion. In the actual event, this rising did not differ so very much from a number of other movements when the slaves and Khoi of a particular farm rose, murdered the whites living there and then headed off to the north, to join the outlaw bands. The events in the Bokkeveld in February 1825 were perhaps more bloody than most, but they were certainly not an exception to a recurring pattern.²² Indeed only 12 slaves and Khoi were brought to trial after the rising was put down, and no more than 4 others, it would seem, were drawn into the action, but not brought to trial because they were not implicated in the 'crimes'. Rather it was the ideology behind the murders that was exceptional. In prosecuting, the *fiscaal*, D. Denyssen, made specific reference both to the recent events in Demerara and to the rising of 1808.²³ He noted that:

Since that time the complaints of slaves against their masters for ill-treatment have considerably augmented; and notwithstanding that much has been done on the part of Government to ameliorate considerably the state of Slavery in this Colony, still however the fire of discontent at the frustrated hope of a general freedom appears to have been smothering [sic, ?smouldering] under the ashes, so that the smallest blast of wind is but necessary to make the flame burst out again more violently than ever.²⁴

Apparently, what Denyssen meant by the amelioration in the state of slavery was provided by the proclamations of March 1823 which, in imitation of the Trinidad order in council, regulated the amount of work slaves might be required to perform, demanded that they should be given Sundays off, limited the punishment that a master might inflict on his slaves to twenty-five stripes and made somewhat pious exhortations as to the food and clothing that a slave was to receive. It also confirmed the slave's right to complain of his or her ill-treatment to the local magistrate.²⁵ At the same time, the coming to the Cape of the Commissioners of Enquiry, who were to investigate the whole system of the colony's government, was seen as a threat to the established order of subordination, at least by those who did not know exactly what the Commissioners were about.

It took a long time for news of these developments to reach the Cold Bokkeveld, some 150 kilometres north-east of Cape Town, and by the time they had done so, the news, in all probability, would have been distorted. The Cold Bokkeveld is a

fertile high plateau on which grain, fruit and vegetables, and poultry (especially turkeys) could easily be produced, but the distance from the Cape Town market and the high mountain passes on the way there meant that production was generally limited to what could be consumed locally. Dried fruit and pulses were taken to market, and many of the farms had small irrigation channels to ensure their crops. Nevertheless, the main business of the Bokkeveld was sheep raising. In 1805 it had been reckoned that there were 30,000 sheep on the plateau, where the climate was cool and thus *lamziekte*, one of the main scourges of Cape stock farmers, did not occur. On the other hand, in winter, the Cold Bokkeveld lives up to its name, often freezing and with occasional falls of snow, so that in that season the sheep and cattle were driven down on to the Karoo to the east, to benefit from the flush of grass caused by the winter rains, and to escape the mountain colds.²⁶ On one occasion, for instance, Galant, the slave who was later to lead the rebellion, had had to spend twenty-six days in the Karoo, collecting fifty-eight oxen that his master had left there.

In 1825, Houd den beke (literally Shut your mouth) was one of the most isolated farms in the Cold Bokkeveld, lying at the southern end of the Skurwdeberg. It was owned by Willem Nicolaus van der Merwe, a 36-year-old married man. He was relatively prosperous, owning 3 men and 3 women slaves, as well as 1 child of either sex, while 2 adult male Khoi, 4 women and 11 Khoi children also worked for him. These slaves and Khoi were concerned with the management of 26 horses, the same number of trekoxen, 56 breeding cattle, some 300 sheep, 52 goats and 9 pigs - and very probably some poultry as well. He also managed to grow wheat (92 mud in 1825), barley (70 mud), rye (31 mud) and clover (5 mud), which, presumably he had taken to market in his two waggons for in a good year, as 1825 must have been, this was far too much for a single farm's consumption.²⁷

Van der Merwe was a religious man, allowing meetings to be held on his farm by the Rev. M.C. Vos, the Cape born *dominee* who had begun preaching the gospel to the slaves thirty years earlier and had now retired to the nearby village of Tullbagh.²⁸ Van der Merwe himself also gathered together the labourers on his farm twice a week to sing psalms, and he would preach to them, although some of the 'volk' were able to avoid these gatherings by claiming they were too tired.²⁹

The strongest personality on the farm, however, did not belong to Willem van der Merwe, but to one of his slaves, Galant, a 26-year-old man whom Willem had inherited from his mother. For instance, even though by this date the sexual imbalance in the colony had evened out, it is still proof of his strength of will that Galant had two wives, one slave and one Khoi woman, one of the few cases of polygamy known among the slaves.³⁰ His relation to the masters was equally determined by this strength of character. Johannes Dalree, an Italian bywoner and

tailor on the farm,³¹ reported that:

Galant had more to say there than his master himself, he never answered his master with *Sir* or *Master* [*Mijnheer*, or *Baas*, presumably] but merely, yes, without even looking at him; but that came from his Master having looked over so many things, and because he was too indulgent to him, that made him so.³²

Van der Merwe's behaviour was by no means consistent. He did not allow the total control over his farm to be abrogated by his slave. After he was captured, Galant was examined by the Doctor in Cape Town and was found to be covered in scars. He had old wounds on his back and rump, caused by being flogged by ratans and a rope's end in the prisons of Worcester and Tulbagh, to which he had been sent on two distinct occasions, as well as various others on his shins, thighs and forehead which had come from various floggings from his master with sticks and a sjambok. These he had received after a conflict of wills between him and Van der Merwe over the course of the previous year. The clash had come to the boil when, one day, Galant had gone into the kitchen and asked Betje, one of his wives, why the food was so bad, and why they had nothing to eat except soup. Betje replied that she could do nothing else with the materials she was given. Unfortunately for Galant, his master happened to overhear this conversation, and demanded to know who had made these remarks. Galant replied that it was him, whereupon, as Galant later described it, possibly exaggerating,

my Master got up and went into the room and brought a sambok and an ox-thong with which he bound my arms and in this manner hoisted me up to the beam when he broke a stick to pieces on my body and said that we must eat what he gave us even if he gave us ordure. When I went to complain to the landrost, he was not at home, on which my master had me made fast to a pole by the undersheriff and flogged. This took place a year before the last ploughing time [i.e. in the winter of 1823]. After I had received my punishment, my master took me home, and when I came into the house he tied me to a ladder and flogged me again, but of that I did not complain.³³

Later in the year he once again went to Worcester, the seat of the landrost to complain of a flogging, given him after he had spent too long on a neighbouring farm looking for a lost bullock, but 'my master said I had been there to cabal'. Clearly well before the eventual uprising that would cost him his life Willem van der Merwe realised that something was up, even though this sort of conspiracy must have been the perennial fear of every owner on every farm in the Cape. During this last flogging Galant was wearing a jacket for which he had paid a tailor eight Rixdollars - it is notable that even in the depths of the country a slave was openly so involved in the cash economy on his own

account - and this was torn to pieces. At about the same time, too, the cattle which he considered his own were taken away, to which one of his companions would later attribute his blood-thirstiness. Once again he went to Worcester to complain to the landroost, but once again he was brought back again, this time with the admonition to Van der Merwe not to use a sjambok on him, as 'the Landroost then said that if they wanted to flog a Negro they must make use of a quince switch as thick as the undersheriff's ratan, or a thong'.³⁴

It seems as if Willem van der Merwe had got into a contest of wills from which, in the end, there could only be one winner. On his return from Worcester, Galant was accused by Van der Merwe of having stolen ten mud of flour and two mud of peas. While it is by no means impossible that Galant had used his visit to Worcester to dispose of goods stolen from his master, this accusation was absurd, since a fully laden waggon only held ten mud. Galant was flogged again, and was incensed again, so that once again the journey to Worcester, about seventy-five kilometres from the farm, was made by all the participants. Galant demanded to be allowed to call as witnesses against his master those people to whom he was said to have sold the stolen goods, but this was refused. There then followed a court case before the landroost which, at least as described by the victim, was an archetypal example of the use of the law, not to render justice - by whatever code - but to maintain the social order, although of course that can also be considered by some as justice. Galant described it as follows:

The Landroost called us in and my master said that everything I said was lies. I asked the Landroost to be allowed to speak, but he said he held short proceedings, which consisted in a flogging.³⁵

Captain Charles Trappes, the army officer who was landroost of Worcester, seems to have been aware that he was acting with a high-handedness too great even for the Cape Colony of 1824. Galant claimed that, immediately after this 'trial', he had overheard a conversation between Trappes and Van der Merwe in which the latter was advised to be careful in his dealings because if the Court of Justice got to hear of what he had done, Galant might be confiscated. Not unnaturally this gave Galant hope. Maybe, even if the local manifestations of government were unjust and corrupt, the governor in Cape Town might dispense true justice. Galant's first reaction, though, after yet another flogging given for maltreating a stallion he was attempting to break in, was himself to set off to Cape Town, taking a gun to defend himself. A patrol of twelve armed men went off after him, but even though they failed to catch him they made it impossible for Galant to leave the Bokkeveld through the passes to Cape Town. Galant was therefore forced to return to the farm, where he was once again beaten, with a stick and, next morning, with ox-hide thongs.

Although the clash of wills between Galant and Van der Merwe was unusual, the use of heavy corporal punishment was not. The court case that followed the rebellion gives the impression that Van der Merwe could only maintain his authority with the lash. Both men and women were flogged, the latter illegally. Indeed the other slaves thought that, presumably with the exception of this long drawn-out episode, Galant was better treated than they were. As Anthony described it:

Achilles and I had the most work to do, and therefore we were the most scolded and flogged. Galant had not much to do; he accompanied the Master when he rode out, or went on messages.³⁶

Nevertheless, they did not complain, even though they felt that they were badly overworked, underfed and regularly whipped. Abel, another of the slaves, explained that it did not pay to enter accusations against a master, and he would not do so, 'because I saw that so many complained, but that they came off badly.'³⁷ Galant, too, smarting not only from his numerous wounds but also from the loss of the dominant position on the farm that his personality had won for him, decided not to complain again,

but remained at home, when the freedom of the slaves I had so frequently heard of came into my head, because I complained so often, but only got flogged.³⁸

In the normal course of events, Galant would have had to wait a decade before he became legally free, and another four years before this meant any real freedom of movement, with the ending of 'apprenticeship'.³⁹ Naturally, in 1824 neither he nor anyone else could predict that the British would abolish legal servitude in their colonies in such a short time. The freedom Galant knew was coming was an illusion, even more of one than the legal freedom turned out to be. His wishes, and the fears of the master class, exaggerated vague rumours and turned into immediate reality the hopes of the abolitionists who, in 1823, had founded the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery.⁴⁰ Along the line between London and the Cold Bokkeveld the news of this movement, or at least of the various ameliorative measures, had been magnified and distorted to give Galant his delusive - and fatal - hopes.

Once again, all that is known of the exaggerations and distortions comes from Galant's interrogation. To what extent was he remembering his thoughts and feelings accurately, and to what extent was he truly relating his memories? That is unknown. Indeed, other prisoners denied playing the role that Galant had said they had. But in a sense, in this matter truth is irrelevant. Galant was able to persuade his fellows to undertake highly dangerous and ultimately fatal actions not only because of their

oppression by van der Merwe but also because he could offer them the illusion that justice and the government were on their side, and that therefore their struggle was not hopeless.

He believed this as a result of a number of conversations between the masters and the slaves (and Khoi). They related to the various newspapers that had come from Cape Town and to the reactions that the masters had to the news they contained - as often as not reactions that they cannot have intended the slaves to hear. But the first discussions were cryptic. Willem van der Merwe told Galant that in another country 'a black cat had been hatched under a white hen', and asked him what he thought this meant.⁴¹ Galant replied that he could have no idea, but his master must have thought that it was an omen for the freedom of the slaves because he then asked two Mozambiqueans, Achilles and Anthony, if they had any intention of returning to their own country,

to which they answered yes, but said they could not find the way there, but that they would go if the Governor would send them, although they were afraid that their parents were dead and that they should not be known by their nation.

This strange conversation, not one that could be expected from a determined slave-owner, can only have created a sense of uncertainty and expectation on the farm.

This anxiety was increased after Elsie du Plessis, Willem van der Merwe's wife, told Betje of the contents of the newspapers that had come from Cape Town. What seems to have been reports of the growth in strength of the abolitionist movement in Britain and of the 1823 proclamation for the amelioration of slave conditions became distorted along the chain of transmission into two very remarkable, quasi-millenarian hopes for the slaves. As Galant remembered it, he understood from Betje's reports of Elsie du Plessis's discussion:

that there was another great nation and that was unknown; that there were orders come to make the Slaves free, and that if it was not done the other nation would then come to fight against the Farmers. My mistress afterwards further told me that it was also said in the Newspapers that the Slaves must be free, but if the Farmers would not allow it, then it would not take place.

The rumours continued to come. Sometime later there was another newspaper of which, as Galant recalled matters the 'mistress had said that if we would go to the King for the money and bring it to her on the table, that then we might be free', apparently a reference to the assertion of the possibility of self-purchase.⁴²

It was not just hearing that the slaves had been set free that drove Galant to rebellion. After all he had been to Worcester to

the landrost often enough to be able to check this sort of rumour, even if he knew the landrost to be in collusion with the farmers. What incensed him more, and made it necessary for him to take action himself was the reaction of the farmers, especially of his master, and specifically their refusal to implement the acts of government. In fact there was no more than a general grumble about the limiting of the farmers' freedom of action for, as the abolitionist missionary Dr Philip commented, analysing the 1823 proclamation, 'if Parliament stop here, we need not trouble ourselves about the matter for there is nothing here but can be evaded,'⁴³ But, given the (erroneous) knowledge that Galant possessed, the conversations he overheard were far more sinister. The various newspapers had indeed mentioned that there was opposition to the measures among the farming community. In the Cold Bokkeveld the grievances were expressed more vehemently. Elsie du Plessis was phlegmatic, saying that the limitations came because there were so many white children among the black slaves⁴⁴ (did this refer to her own farm, and, if so, what were the psychological consequences for the relationships there?) but her husband was not. Galant heard Willem van der Merwe telling his namesake (but apparently no close relation) Barend van der Merwe that there was no point in sending Galant to be flogged in Worcester 'for that the black people had more to say with the Magistrate of late than the Christians' - Galant would not have agreed - and that he would have to flog Galant himself.⁴⁵ Further, the two complained of the taxes that were now levied on the slaves and which had been imposed by the Commissioners of Enquiry.⁴⁶ Willem then told his companion that he must keep himself armed in order to shoot the first commissioner or Englishman who came to the country to make the slaves free, together with the slaves all in one heap. Later Van der Merwe repeated the theme to another neighbour, Barend Lubbe, who replied that he had no knowledge of these matters,

. . . he not having any slaves had not once inquired about it . . . my master [Willem] replied that although he had not any Slaves, he must nevertheless stand up for his Country, further saying that he would shoot the first Commissioner, Englishman, or magistrate who should come to his place to make the Slaves free, but first the Slaves. Lubbe then asked Van der Merwe whether he was not afraid if he fought against the Magistrates that the Slaves would attack him from behind, to which my master answered for that reason the Slaves must be first shot.⁴⁷

On at least two other occasions he made similar comments to others of his neighbours. Presumably he did not know that his slaves were listening, but on a farm nothing could escape their attentions.

The rumours of freedom, and the ruminations of the farmers, were all relayed to the court by Galant, the leader of the pris-

ing. His slave wife, Betje, whom he said had told him the stories, denied having heard them. Exactly what the true chain of transmission was is not certain, since Galant admitted hearing the stories from the slaves whom he had met in Tulbagh.⁴⁸ But in a sense exactly how the slaves came to hear what they did is irrelevant. If they did not believe Galant's stories - or at the very least want to believe them - they would not have risen against their masters. After the uprising had been suppressed, they came to realise the falsity of their temporary beliefs, and this realisation must have influenced their testimony. But Galant was clearly able to convince his fellows that they were being deprived of their rights, and that they should claim them, by force.

But this was not the whole basis for the uprising, as the *fiscaal* later pointed out while prosecuting. On the one hand, Galant was able to persuade a number of Khoi to join him, and 'although they lived in the service and under the control of the Christian inhabitants [they] had nothing to do with the idea of a release from a state of slavery, which did not exist.'⁴⁹ In legal terms, though perhaps not in terms of experience, he was of course quite right. Moreover Galant was ambivalent as to the strategy that should be employed. Eventually he was accused of sedition as a result

of having stirred up and put himself as Captain at the head of a gang composed of slaves and Hottentots belonging to different places, with the wicked intention of attacking their masters' places and those of other Christian inhabitants, of murdering their masters and all those who should offer resistance, and of forming from the slaves and Hottentots in the service of the Colonists a faction which should assist them in the execution of their plans, maintain them in the possession of the places they were to attack, and enable them to penetrate to Cape Town; but not succeeding, then to take the road to the Great or Orange River and to join the enemies of the Colony there.⁵⁰

In other words, they intended to rebel, but if this did not prove feasible, then they would revert to the old pattern of slave and Khoisan resistance on the northern fringes of the settled Cape Colony.

In the event, there seems to have been no real chance that they would take any but the latter course. On the night of 1/2 February 1825, Galant and Abel, a slave of Barend van der Merwe, together with three Khoi who had been working on Willem van der Merwe's farm, set off to put their plans into operation. They began at the farm of Abel's master, where they were able to capture a number of guns, with ammunition. Indeed, as a huntsman and shepherd, Abel already had a gun with a few rounds of ammunition in his possession. However, the barking of dogs had given the alarm, and Barend, his wife and children

were all able to escape under cover of darkness, the latter being assisted by Goliath, one of the slaves who did not join in the plot. Barend was seen by the attackers as he rode away, and shots were fired at him, but he received no more than a slight wound in the heel, so that he survived.

The attackers then returned to Willem van der Merwe's farm with Klaas, another of Barend's slaves. As a precaution against premature detection, they had left Betje tied up when they first left, but they now released her and lay in ambush among the pear trees and quince bushes until first light. Two other slaves, the Mozambiquans Achilles and Anthony, and two more Khoi, Valentine and Vlak, had by this time joined in the action. Their wait was not in vain. They expected that Van der Merwe would come out at first light, to inspect the sheep in the kraal, and indeed he did so, accompanied by J.H. Janse van Rensburg, who seems to have been staying there by chance.⁵¹ The attackers then slipped into the house behind them to grab the guns that were hanging there. In doing so they disturbed Elsie du Plessis, who wrestled with them and tried to prevent them taking the guns. In the scuffle a shot was fired, and she was hit in the hip. This shot alarmed Van de Merwe and Van Rensburg and they came dashing back to the house. At the same time the slaves and Khoi moved out again, so that a classic siege began, with the whites inside and the slaves and Khoi, who by now had all the weapons on the farm, surrounding the building.

This situation did not last long. Van Rensburg managed to get out and on to a horse but was pursued by Abel, who had captured a faster mount, overtaken and forced back into the house. Those outside then had to decide what to do next. There was still considerable uncertainty, but Galant was resolute. As Achilles remembered it, he had said to Galant:

now you will begin and to-morrow we shall all stand with our hands tied and be taken to Cape Town. . . . Galant said, let the Commando come; the whole Bokkeveld will begin and we will shoot at them to the upper Country. I will stand with my gun on the Lion's head at the Cape and face the gentlemen.⁵²

The other slaves, overcome by the force of Galant's personality, and by the fact that the dependable slaves had the guns, joined him in the attack. The initial suggestion was that they should burn the house down, but the maids who had left the house after their mistress had been shot, refused to allow this, as it would mean that the women and children would die. Nevertheless, to begin with Willem van der Merwe could not work out what was going on. He put his head out of the door to begin negotiations. Galant's reaction was immediate. First he shouted at him 'Moerneuker' (a precise translation of this insult is 'Mother-fucker') 'do you still prate?'⁵³ A moment later they saw his head behind a glass window, as he was checking that all the entrances were fully secure. Abel saw him there and shot at him through

the glass, grazing his head. Van der Merwe first said a prayer to ease his wife's suffering and then opened the door a fraction and asked Abel 'why we fired at him, when he had not done us any harm.' Abel shouted back that he would not do so again, but, notwithstanding this and in accordance with an order he had previously given to his fellows, Galant put a bullet through Van der Merwe's head. Then the whole group drove in through the back door into the kitchen, where the women had locked themselves in. Galant found a crowbar and smashed the door down. Elsie du Plessis had hidden in the clay oven, but this did not help her. Galant again used the crowbar to break it open, and then the whole group shot their guns into the oven, so that the whole structure disintegrated. Elsie du Plessis fell backwards and was covered with rubbish, though, remarkably, she survived. Van Rensburg went to help her, but was himself shot dead, as was the schoolmaster Jan Verlee, who had arrived on the farm with his wife and child only two days previously. Galant ordered Abel to knock the brains of Verlee's baby out against a wall, but he was restrained from doing so. He did take a sjambok to Martha Swanepoel, the wife of the dead schoolmaster. So by now the insurgents had the farm fully under their control.

It was then time for them to consolidate their victory, Galant was heard to exclaim:

Whitehead I have got already, but now I must have Isaac van der Merwe and Jan Abraham du Plessis, my gun is good and I am also good.⁵⁴

He himself denied making such a definite statement, claiming that all he was doing was opening the discussion of the possible courses of action. After drinking some brandy they set off. But in the event they had little choice. First they visited the house of the Italian tailor and bywoner, Jan Dalree, but he was not in, and then they went back to the farm where the night's operations had begun. Barend van der Merwe had not returned, nor had his wife, but they found a number of Khoi and slaves whom they were able to force to join the party. One of the slaves, Moses, later tried to escape from their grasp, but in so doing he only managed, inadvertently, to reveal the hiding place of that Goliath who had led Barend van der Merwe's wife and children to safety. Galant threatened to shoot them if they made any more attempts to escape from the band, and so they had to go along with him.

In terms of strategy, the initial failure of the slaves to eliminate Barend van der Merwe meant that any chance they might have had of building a large movement had disappeared. In any case the Bokkeveld was probably too thinly populated for the critical mass to build up, without which a challenge to the colonial order could not be at all dangerous. But the alarm was raised far too quickly for such a hypothesis to be tested. Barend van der Merwe, still in his nightclothes, reached the house of Jan Dalree, where he also found another schoolmaster,

a Prussian called William Pearson. Pearson was sent away across the mountains to the farm of yet another Van der Merwe, Isaak. From there, the message of the murders went to the veldcornet, W.F. du Toit, who collected a commando together and set off in pursuit of the slaves. After visiting the carnage at Houd den beke, they followed the spoor of the rebels, catching them in the course of the day. Galant showed fight, firing on the commando, but those who were less committed slipped away as soon as the pursuers appeared. In the end, however, all were caught, although Abel managed to remain at liberty for another day or two.

The trial was a formality. Advocate Hofmeyr, acting for the defence, made no attempt to deny the charges, or to save the lives of Galant and Abel, the leaders of the conspiracy. As he said:

We have too great an interest in the maintainance of Justice and are too well aware of the necessity of establishing and preserving good order in Society, not to know that those who do evil must be punished, the same as the good rewarded.⁵⁵

All he was concerned to do was to persuade the court not to order the execution of any of the 'gang' except for Galant and Abel. In this he almost succeeded, although the court decided that one of the Khoi, Isaac Thys, should also hang. The others escaped this fate either because there was a suspicion that they were under eighteen or because they had attempted to restrain Galant and took no active part in the shooting of the three victims.

For all that the incipient rebellion had been crushed before it had begun, it did cause a certain panic within the colony. As soon as the news reached Cape Town, letters were sent to the Governor asking him to take steps to put a stop to what was believed to be a general conspiracy among the slaves. These representations found fruitful soil with Lord Charles Somerset, a rather jumpy character and a firm reactionary who 'had expressed his conviction that nothing more should ever be done for the slaves beyond what is granted to them' by the various Proclamations. His first intention was to call out the Burgher Militia, but he was persuaded that this would only aggravate matters, especially as the culprits had been caught.⁵⁶

Thereafter, after the trial, members of the Court of Justice continued with the theme. They wrote a letter to the governor warning of 'the terrible prospect of a general disturbance of tranquility and good order', because 'an idea and expectation of a general emancipation has spread itself among the Slaves in different parts of the Country, connected with Cape Town itself.' They continued:

This naturally engenders an animosity against [the Masters] whereof the consequences are incalculable, as leading to insub-

ordination, dissoluteness and actual resistance. . . . But such a state of things can produce no other effect than enmity between Master and Slave; and as this enmity is cherished and nourished under one roof, they more readily take up against one another the most trifling thing that occurs.⁵⁷

Within a few weeks, though, the country had settled down, even around Tulbagh despite the ill-advised actions of the landrost, Captain Trappes, who first read out a proclamation from the Colonial Secretary regarding the flogging of female slaves and then announced that it had been withdrawn. There was no further sign of a full-scale rebellion, for all that the old pattern of banditry and marronage continued. Right up till the Emancipation, and perhaps even afterwards, there were slave runaways in the mountains of the south-west Cape, living by robbery and off the land.⁵⁸ Slowly, though, these groups must have disappeared after their fellow slaves had become free, as it became possible, if difficult, for labourers to escape to the towns, or to another district. Eventually the necessity of taking to the hills disappeared out of the lives of those who worked on the farms beneath their slopes.

9 Conclusion

The examples of major resistance described in this book show clearly the limits of the community of action among Cape slaves. In 1825, for all Galant's hopes of building a mass movement and for all the quasi-millennarian impulses behind his and Abel's actions, there was never any chance that the rising would lead to anything but immediate defeat. The rulers of the Cape were so sure that they had the colony under control that, a momentary panic notwithstanding, they did not consider it necessary to engage in any widespread repression among the slaves. In 1808, for the first and last time, there was some semblance of widespread mobilisation among rural slaves, but the movement had no roots and withered away. To change the metaphor, it died on the day it was born, like a mayfly. It had no further consequences for the history of the Cape. Nor did the Hanglip group serve in any way as an example for fellow slaves. The examples that were followed were those of the individually successful, who got to Europe or to the Xhosa.

This pattern of individual, un-coordinated resistance was the consequence, first, of a pragmatic assessment of the probability of success. The slaves knew that they had no hope of turning the whole of Cape society upside down through combined rebellion. They had no chance of improving their own conditions of life in this way. Rather, rebellion would in all probability only lead to a terrible death. Therefore the only feasible method of escaping the rigours of slavery was by individual action, by running away.

However, this argument is, by itself, unconvincing. There have been enough examples of rebellions occurring under circumstances that were, to all extents and purposes, hopeless. Moreover, in other slave societies there have frequently been cases of resistance and escape which have been furthered by the bonds of co-operation within the slave community, even when the slaves took the thoroughly pragmatic view that any form of rising would be quickly and bloodily suppressed. The nature of Cape slave resistance must therefore be explained, in the first instance, by the nature of the slave community, which was so atomised that it could scarcely be called a community.

But that, of course, is only to push the problem one step further back. It then becomes necessary to inquire why no such community arose among the Cape slaves. The argument that has been presented in this book attempts to answer the problem in terms of the acculturation process among newly imported slaves.

It would be wrong to suggest that the Cape slaves failed to create institutions and mechanisms for incorporating new arrivals, since this would imply that this was in some sense attempted, consciously or unconsciously, but was stamped on by the masters. This was not the case, as no such attempt was made until Islam began to gain converts at the end of the eighteenth century. But neither did such institutions grow up of their own accord. Probably the highly imbalanced sex ratios and the lack of natural reproduction had something to do with this, by preventing the growth of the family and kinship as central elements of slave life. The incorporative effects of fictive kinship and the processes of socialisation from generation to generation could not come into play. At all events, no specific slave culture ever came into being at the Cape, except perhaps in Cape Town in the last decades of slavery.

For this reason the slaves had to take on the culture of the whites, at least in externals. The language they spoke, for instance, changed under the impact of so many people learning it as adults, but it remained recognisably Dutch, and the eastern *lingua franca*, whether creolised Portuguese or Malay, died out at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Indeed, this was the case with almost all slave groups in the New World. In other respects, too, the slaves had no option but to take on the ways of the whites, although this in no way meant that they were satisfied with their condition, only that their dissatisfaction was not channelled and co-ordinated. Resistance was regular, but it was hardly ever co-operative. The slaves had little except their bondage to bind them together.

As a result, when emancipation came, there was no tradition to be taken over, to help in the formation of new units of political action. As elsewhere in the British Empire, when slavery was abolished on 1 December 1834, the day passed quietly as, in well-attended church services, the slaves 'gave thanks to God and the British Government'.¹ Perhaps this was because they knew there were still four years to go before they could truly claim their freedom, as for that period they were legally bound to serve their masters as 'apprentices', under more or less the same conditions as before. Desertion remained a punishable offence. When apprenticeship came to an end, so a wealthy citizen of Cape Town later remembered it, there were:

a number of processions of Coloured people parading Cape Town, singing a Dutch song in which every verse ended 'Victoria! Victoria! daar waai de Engelschen vlag' (there the British flag is waving). My mother asked a Coloured girl to go on an errand for her, she said, 'No, I won't, we are free today'.²

It was only in 1838 that the ex-slaves could begin to make their own decisions as to how they would acquire a livelihood. In those years there was a large-scale migration into the town,

especially Cape Town but also Stellenbosch, on to the mission stations that had been founded in the south-west Cape in the 1830s, and even beyond the borders of the colony.³ In the 1870s there existed a small community known as Freemansland near modern Maclear on the northern boundary of the Transkei, while there were many ex-slaves, generally known as 'apprentices', among the Griquas.⁴

Nevertheless, in a remarkably short time, the old patterns reasserted themselves. At least in the countryside, the dominance of the landowning class has remained unbroken, as has the oppression of its labourers. Into the 1980s the violence of master against servant, and the biases of the legal system in favour of the former, have remained.⁵ Despite the immense changes in the techniques of agricultural production with mechanisation and far higher levels of capitalisation, many aspects of the relations of production on the farms of the south-west Cape today would have seemed familiar to those who owned them in 1830, or even 1750, and all too familiar to those who worked on them two hundred years ago. There were even echoes of old forms of resistance as when, in 1978, a labourer acquired a gun and took to the hills of the Piquetberg, living for several months from what he could collect in the veld and by robbing isolated farms.⁶ As one of William Faulkner's characters said of a similar situation: 'The past is never dead. It's not even past.'⁷

But this is to leap too far forward, away from slavery and its aftermath. Unfortunately there has been little study of the mechanisms whereby the control of the ruling class was re-established after the abolition of one of its main legal props, slavery.⁸ Nevertheless, it cannot but be significant that one of the major demands of the farmers was for stricter legislation to force Khoi to work for them by claiming they were 'vagrants'. While the initial moves towards a Vagrancy Act were largely concerned with the Khoi of the eastern Cape - and were rejected by the Colonial Office in London as contrary to Ordinance 50⁹ - after Emancipation the same call was taken up by the slave-owners of the west.¹⁰ Clearly the ex-slaves were continuing the class struggle of their days in bondage in much the same ways as previously, that is individually and with their feet. Nevertheless, it was not a struggle that, in the end, they could win. In the course of time, the masters were able to establish a bonded, harshly exploited, underpaid agricultural proletariat, often held in thralldom by addiction to Cape wine.

Such is not a condition conducive to political action. So-called 'coloured' politics have been almost exclusively urban and 'modernist' in orientation. Little use has been made of any tradition of slavery. Dr Abdurahman, the most respected of Cape politicians, was the grandson of a slave, it is true, but it is notable that in the legends about him, 'although his grandparents were ordinary slaves, they were said to be "worthy of respect"'.¹¹ In these terms the Cape elite has denied its slave past. In this sense the past is not only dead, it has never

existed. Until recently the political movements which there have been have centred around the educated and the upwardly mobile, who have tended to distance themselves from the mass of rural labourers, and from the slave past.

There was only one short-lived episode around 1930 when, briefly, something that approached a mass movement developed among the rural labourers of the Cape. Two militants from the African National Congress, Bransby Ndobe and Elliot Tonjeni, both members of the Communist Party, at least for a time, were able to organise meetings in many of the small towns and villages of the countryside, with the centre of activity being around Worcester. This led to a short period of intense conflict centred on, above all, the issue of working conditions and wages, but also over the competition that locally brewed beer was providing for Cape wine. The militants were evidently able to find fruitful soil for their work. They had many adherents among the Africans in the location at Worcester, but also among the 'Coloured' labourers who were their main target. Their success was such that the Cape Town radical weekly, 'Umsebenzi', began printing some of its articles in Afrikaans for the benefit of the western Cape labourers. But this short explosion did not last. The meetings were broken up by white vigilantes, and several people were killed. Ndobe and Tonjeni were banned from the western Cape, among the first victims of a judicial tactic later to become a major weapon of the South African government. The old order of labour relations and of oppression was quickly reinstated.¹²

During this campaign a variation of the African Nationalist Song 'Mayibuye' was composed in Afrikaans. It began with the line:

'Ons bruin mense, seuns van slawe' (We brown people, sons of slaves).¹³

This is one of the rare examples of the admission among the 'Coloureds' of their slave descent. In general this past has been denied. This is at least the impression of a relatively casual observer of modern Cape politics, and as such it is not based on deep research. It may be mistaken, but then so may be the most exhaustive study. More importantly, it is a view which is necessarily limited in its application to the elite of the 'Coloureds'. The world of academic research knows little of the life and actions of the farm labourers of the Cape, and can only guess at the experience of oppression that might be expressed, for instance, in the oral literature. But what little is known does not make it seem likely that expressions of communal consciousness among the descendants of ex-slaves and Khoisan bonded workers have ever been more than sporadic and easily repressed. Slavery left its victims isolated and atomised, so that they fought their masters one by one and were repressed one by one. This was as the ruling class desired. In contrast to many other parts of the world where slavery reigned, there is no sense in which

the Cape slaves and their descendants ever came to form a true community. All that united them was their legal status and their subordination to their masters, as farm workers, as unskilled labourers, as craftsmen and workmen and as domestic servants.

In a famous metaphor, Marx once described the French peasantry as 'formed by the simple addition of isomorphous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes'.¹⁴ This may not be an accurate description of the French peasantry of the mid-nineteenth century. Probably it is not. But barring the fact that they were not, socially, the same 'shape', it is a good approximation to the condition of the Cape slaves and their descendants. Neither on the basis of their historical heritage, nor on that of modern political statements is there any reason to expect that a form of consciousness would have risen to cut across the various divisions of Cape society to create some form of 'Coloured' nationalism. Such indeed might have been the inheritance left by a slave community with strong internal bonds. In the United States it has been argued that this was the case.¹⁵ But such an idea is laughable in modern South Africa. No 'Coloured' man or woman would ever claim that the 'Coloured' group was anything but a legal category, imposed by the oppressors from above. The reason for the clumsy terminology and punctuation upon which they insist is thus clear. The descendants of the ex-slaves do not consider themselves to be - and thus are not - a community. Just as their ancestors were, they are merely lumped together by the definition of the law of South Africa. Large numbers of them do share an economic status, it is true, as farm labourers, but even in the western Cape 'Coloureds' work frequently alongside Africans, and the divisions between the various sorts of people derive from the system of apartheid, not from the 'nationalism' of the participants.

Once again, this goes back to the inheritance of slavery. The slaves formed no community, although they may have been closer to being a 'class' than are their descendants. They built up no mechanisms for incorporating newcomers. They had no option but to take on the culture of their masters, although at the same time they were rejected by it. But they too rejected it, in so far as they were able to. It is out of this double, but always incomplete rejection, and out of the ambivalences it produced, that the history of the slaves and their descendants was created.

Appendix: The Hanglip maroons

In this appendix, the basic biographical data that is available on the fifty known Hanglip runaways (of the period 1724-1737) is given. In general it is very deficient, and on occasion, especially as regards the date of birth, rather approximate.

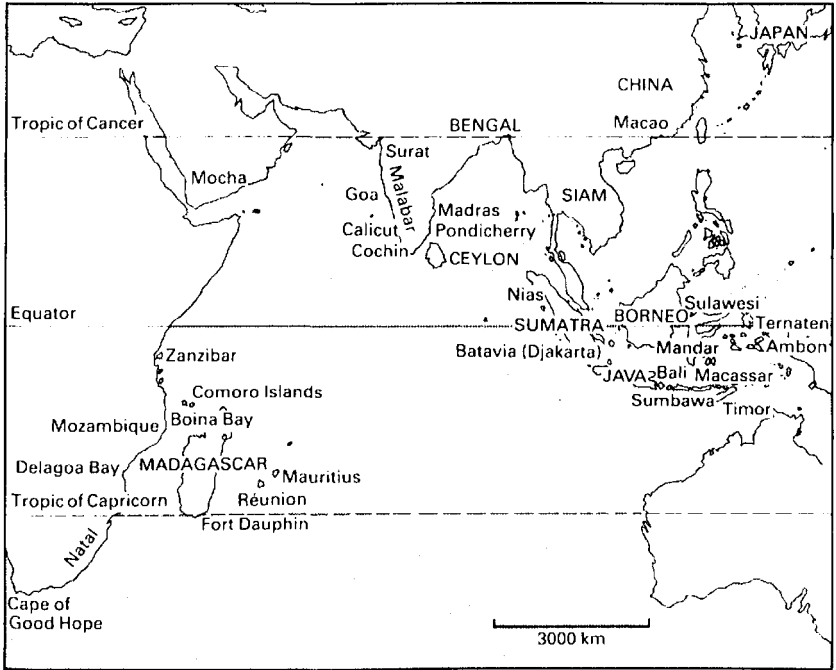
- 1 Adam, m., slave of Mattheus de Wolff, present in early 1730s.
- 2 Alexander, m., 1703 born Bengal, slave of Hendrick Thomas, with runaways 1733-5, then captured in Cape Town and sentenced to be flogged, branded, be pilloried under the gallows and to 25 years' hard labour in chains. (It was not known he had been in Hanglip.) Escaped September 1736, went to Hanglip. Was captured 1737. Sentenced to be broken without the coup de grace, after first having eight pieces of flesh pulled out with red-hot tongs.
- 3 Alexander, m., born 1705, Malabar, slave of Jochem Stolz. In Lena's group, 1730, captured, flogged and sent home.
- 4 Amil, m., born 1700, Madagascar slave of Jochem Stoltz, Tijgerberg. Went to Hanglip 1726, captured 1730, hung.
- 5 Andries, m., slave of Jan Zacharias Beck. In Hanglip before 1724.
- 6 Anthony, m., slave of Pieter Jurgen van der Heijde. In Hanglip 1728, stayed one month and then returned to his master.
- 7 Anna, f., born 1697, Madagascar, slave of Gysbert Verwey, Tijgerberg. In Hanglip from 1726, captured 1737, strangled.
- 8 Arend, m., slave of Cornelia Eenmaal, widow Smuts (?), there is no such person on the 'Geslagsregister van Ou Kaapse Families'). In Hanglip before 1725.
- 9 Aron, m., born 1707 Madagascar, slave of Paul Jordaan, Cape Town. Went to Hanglip 1736, captured 1737, flogged, branded, ten years' hard labour in chains.
- 10 Barkat, m., slave of Robert Schot, free black, in the Cape flats, went to Hanglip 1736.
- 11 Batjoe, m., slave of Nicholaas Brommert, In Hanglip, 1735-6.
- 12 Caesar, m. born 1700, Madagascar, slave of Jan Olivier. In Lena's group, 1730, flogged, branded, 10 years' hard labour in chains.
- 13 Christina, f., born 1705, Madagascar, slave of Jochem Stoltz. In Lena's group 1730, flogged, branded and sent home.
- 14 Colon, m., born 1697, Ceribon, (Java) slave of Abraham de Hann. Captured 1730, broken with coup de grace, as he had killed his fellow slave Joumath in escaping.

- 15 Cupido, m., slave of Ernst Heeger. In Hanglip c. 1730, went back to his master after six months.
- 16 Cupido, m., slave of schipper Jan de Heere. Went to Hanglip 1726-7, present 1736.
- 17 December, m., born Bali, slave of Hendrick Thomas. In Hanglip c. 1732, killed by Leander.
- 18 December, m., born 1700, Bali, slave of Jan de Waal, Cape Town. In Hanglip 1726-7, captured with Lena 1730, broken with coup de grace.
- 19 Diana, f., born 1711, Rio de la Goa, slave of Jacobus Marshun, Cape Town. Went to Hanglip 1736 - having spent some time in an exclusively 'Delagoan' group in the neighbourhood - captured 1737, when she was pregnant, strangled two months after the trial, after giving birth, only spoke the 'Rio de la Goa' language.
- 20 Dina, f., born 1712, Rio de la Goa, slave of widow Smiesing. In Hanglip from 1736, captured 1737, strangled.
- 21 Fortuyn, m., present 1736.
- 22 Eloris, m., present 1736.
- 23 January, m., slave of H. Mark, born 1717. In Hanglip from 1734, captured 1734, questioned and released, returned to Hanglip, captured 1737, hung.
- 24 January, alias Jamboe, m., born 1690, Bugis, slave of widow Nicholas Mulder, Cape Town. In Hanglip 1726-7, captured 1730, flogged, branded, hard labour in chains for life.
- 25 January, m., slave of Noach Backer, Cape Town. In Hanglip 1726-7.
- 26 Jochem, m., born at the Cape, slave of Gerrit Victor. In Hanglip from 1725, died c. 1729, killed by order of Leander.
- 27 Joseph, m., born 1697, Malabar, slave of Coenraad Gross. In Hanglip 1734, captured 1737, hung.
- 28 Joumath, m. slave of Johannes Cruywagen. In Hanglip before 1725, had brother in Cape Town, leader of splinter group, never captured.
- 29 Leander, m., born Bugis, slave of Dirk Brand. In Hanglip before 1725, leader of group, last seen running away from the commando, 1737.
- 30 Lena, f., born 1700, Cape Town, slave of VOC. In Hanglip 1725, captured 1730, flogged, branded, to work in heavy chains for life, in the Company's slave lodge, stole linen again in 1737.
- 31 Lijs, f., present 1736.
- 32 May, m., slave of schipper, Jan de Heere, Cape Town. In Hanglip 1726-7, killed by Joumath, after the split.
- 33 Meij, m., born 1698, Cochin, slave of Willem Das. In Hanglip from 1731, captured 1733, sentenced to work in chains until others caught, presumably dead by 1737.
- 34 Mars, m., slave of Jan de Heere. In Hanglip 1726-7, in Joumath's group, 1736.
- 35 Marthinus, m., born Cape, slave of Gideon Joubert. Went to Hanglip November 1736, with brother Pieter.

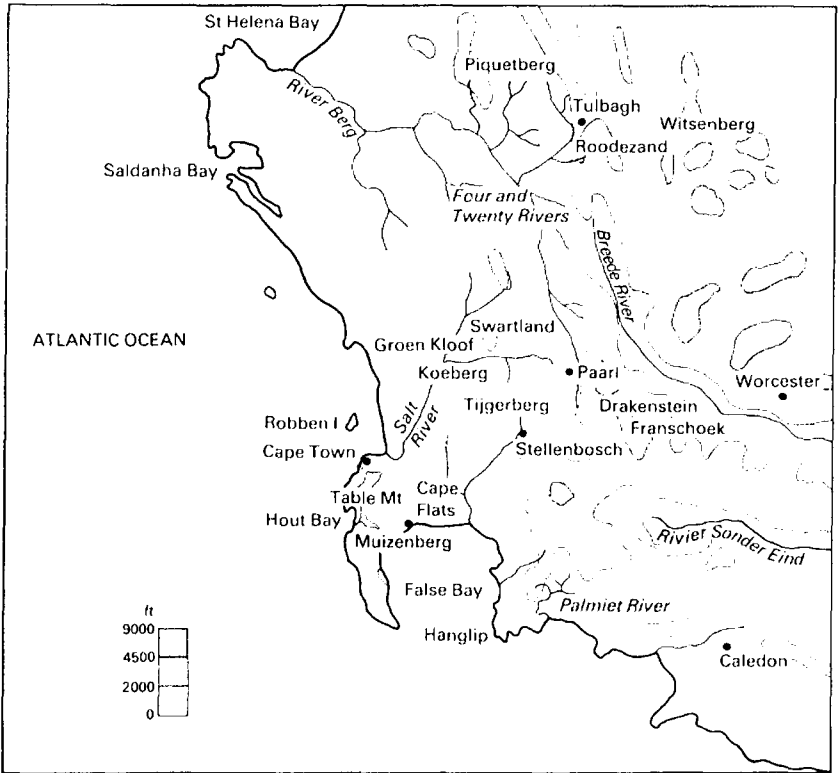
- 36 November, m., born 1699, Sumbawa, slave of Cornelis Heufke. Captured 1730, hung.
- 37 Perra, m., born 1702, Malabar, slave of Jacob de Vries, Cape Town. Went to Hanglip July 1736, gave himself up 1737 after group had broken up, hung.
- 38 Philander, m., born 1705, Ceylon, slave of Anthony Wagenaar. Went to Hanglip 1726, captured 1730, broken with coup de grace.
- 39 Pieter, m., born 1702, Malabar, slave of Johannes Swellen-grebel. Captured 1730, hung.
- 40 Pieter, m., born 1721, Cape Town, slave of Andries Grove, Rondebosch. Went to Hanglip, with his brother, November 1736, captured December 1736, flogged, three years in chains, serving his master.
- 41 Rosetta, f., born Rio de la Goa, slave of Jaconus Marshon. In Hanglip 1736.
- 42 Salomon, m., slave of repatriated burger Rogiers. In Hanglip from 1725.
- 43 Sambow, m., born 1707, Madagascar, slave of Ernest Heeger. Went to Hanglip 1730, captured 1737, broken without coup de grace.
- 44 Sara, f., slave of Gysbert Verwey. In Hanglip from 1725.
- 45 Scipio, m., slave of Gysbert Verwey, Tijgerberg. In Hanglip from 1725, killed by Leander, 1726.
- 46 September, m., born 1702, Bugis, slave of Jochem Stoltz. Captured 1730, flogged branded, sent home.
- 47 Simon, m., slave of schipper Jan de Heere, Cape Town. In Hanglip 1726-7.
- 48 Titus, m., slave of schipper Jan de Heere, Cape Town. In Hanglip 1726-7.
- 49 Toesina, m., slave of Johannes Cruywagen. In Hanglip from ? 1728, killed ? 1736, after firing on commando.
- 50 Venus, m., slave of Steven Niel. In Hanglip from ? 1728.

Maps

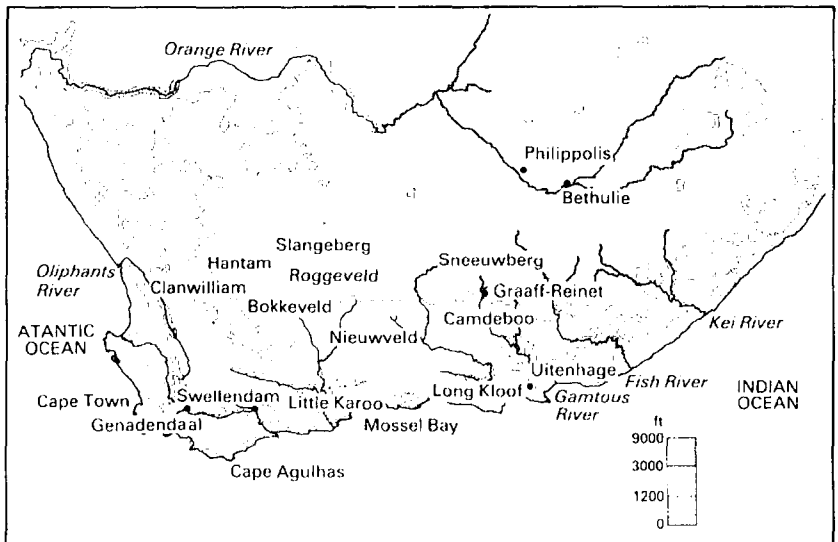
I THE INDIAN OCEAN



II THE SOUTH-WEST CAPE



III THE CAPE COLONY



Notes

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1 More insidiously, neither can the rock art be seen as the product of a harmonious society in tune with nature. Hunter-gatherer life was too harsh and too precarious for such a vision of the San to be justified. See John Wright, *San History and Non-San Historians*, 'SSA', IX (1979).
- 2 Robert Ross, *Oppression, Sexuality and Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope*, 'Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques', VI, 2(1979), 421-33.
- 3 Robert Ross, *The Rule of Law at the Cape of Good Hope in the Eighteenth Century*, 'Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History', VI, 1(1980), 7-8.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 6-7.
- 5 E.P. Thompson, 'The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays' (London, 1978), 345-6.
- 6 H. Aptheker, *Commentary*, in V. Rubin and A. Tuden (eds), 'Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies' (New York, 1979), 493.
- 7 Eugene D. Genovese, 'From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World' (Baton Rouge and London, 1979), 11-12.
- 8 Frank A. Bradlow and Margaret Cairns, 'The Early Cape Muslims: A Study of Their Mosques, Genealogy and Origins' (Cape Town, 1978), 90-102.
- 9 J.J. Oberholster, *Die Burgher Senaat, 1795-1828*, M.A. thesis, University of Stellenbosch (1936), 36, cited in William M. Freund, *The Cape under the Transitional Governments, 1795-1814*, in Richard Elphick and Herman Giliomee (eds), 'The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1820' (Cape Town and London, 1979), 235.
- 10 Case 12 contra Willem van de Caab and Fuyk, 22 Oct. 1772, VOC 4271.
- 11 H.C.W. Leibbrandt, 'Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope, Letters Despatched, 1696-1708' (Cape Town, 1896), 316.
- 12 See opgaaf roll, 1773, VOC 4276. In total 635 slaves out of 9902 (6.4%) lived in groups of fifty or more. For more details, see Chapter 2.
- 13 My approach derives from E.P. Thompson, *Eighteenth Century Society: Class Struggle without Class?*, 'Social History', III (1978), esp. 146-50.
- 14 See below, Chapter 2.
- 15 This is noted by M.I. Finley, *A Peculiar Institution?*, 'Times Literary Supplement', (2 July 1976).
- 16 I.D. du Plessis, 'The Cape Malays', 3rd edition (Cape Town, 1972).
- 17 For example, see Lawrence W. Levine, 'Black Culture and Black Consciousness; Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom', (New York, 1977); Monica Schuler, *Afro-American Slave Culture*, in 'Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques', VI, 1(1979), and Richard Price, *Commentary on Schuler*, op. cit.
- 18 George P. Rawick, 'From Sundown to Sunup: the Making of the Black Community' (Westport, Connecticut, 1972), xiii-xxi.
- 19 These are analysed in Chapter 7, below.
- 20 The most renowned works based on this sort of material are Eugene D. Genovese, 'Roll, Jordan, Roll: the World the Slaves Made' (New York, 1974); and Herbert G. Gutman, 'The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925' (Oxford, 1976).

- 21 The theses currently being written by Robert Shell, Mary Rayner and Nigel Worden will do much to increase our understanding of the slave economy of the Cape.
- 22 See J.L.M. Franken, *Vertolking aan die Kaap in Maleis en Portugees*, republished in *Taalhistories Bydraes* (Amsterdam and Cape Town, 1953); Richard Elphick, *Kraal and Castle: Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa* (New Haven and London, 1977), 181-8; James C. Armstrong, *The Slaves, 1652-1820*, in Elphick and Giliomee (eds), *'Shaping'*, 101-8.
- 23 See below, especially Chapter 5.
- 24 Case 22 contra Pieter Casper Hammes, 12 November 1768, VOC 4256; case 23 contra Fortuyn van Rio de la Goa, 29 May 1739, VOC 4142; case 7 contra Moses v.d. Caab, 20 Aug. 1775, VOC 4282; case 7 contra Ontong van Bougis, 6 May 1779, VOC 4293; case 10 contra Gedult van Maccasser, 31 March 1746, VOC 4168j case 25 contra April van Mallabar c.s., 27 December 1742, VOC 4155; case 16 contra Frans van Madagascar, 30 June 1768, VOC 4255.
- 25 Case 9 contra Willem van Wijk, 11 April 1743, VOC 4158.
- 26 Douglas Hay et al., *'Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth Century England'* (London, 1975), 14-15.
- 27 A knegt - translation servant - was a soldier released by the VOC to work on hire for a burgher, generally as a bailiff on a farm.
- 28 H.C.V. Leibbrandt, *'Precis on the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope, Requesten (Memorials) 1715-1806'*, 2 vols (Cape Town and London, 1905), I, 20.
- 29 This point is expanded below, Chapter 3.
- 30 Franken, *Vertolking*, passim.
- 31 It is largely for this reason that I have generally felt free to present my own translations of this material, rather than quoting it in the original.

CHAPTER 2 THE BEGINNING AND THE SETTING

- 1 Richard Price, *'Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas'* (New York, 1973), 1.
- 2 Jan van Riebeeck, *'Dagregister gehouden bij den Oppercoopman Jan Anthonisz Van Riebeeck'*, edited by D.B. Bosman and H.B. Thom, 3 vols (Cape Town, 1952-7), I 294-5.
- 3 W. Blommaert, *Het Invoeren van de slavernij aan de Kaap, 'AYB'*, I (1938), 25.
- 4 Van Riebeeck, *'Dagregister'*, II, 264-5.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 305.
- 6 In 1673, a group of runaways claimed they were intending to flee to the Portuguese in Angola. See Anna Boëseken, *'Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape, 1658-1700'* (Cape Town, 1977), 32.
- 7 It is a question how far this conduct exacerbated Khoikhoi-Dutch relations and contributed to the breaking out of the first war between them a year later.
- 8 Richard Elphick, *'Kraal and Castle, Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa'* (New Haven and London, 1977), 63, 103; Van Riebeeck, *'Dagregister'*, II, 310.
- 9 Van Riebeeck, *'Dagregister'*, 362-3.
- 10 This term, used throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for expeditions by the civilian militia, often accompanied by regular soldiers from the VOC's establishment, is in this context anachronistic.
- 11 Boëseken, *'Slaves and Free Blacks'*, 50.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 51-2; see also *'Dagregister'* for 12 July and 30 Aug. 1690, VOC 4028.
- 13 Boëseken, *'Slaves and Free Blacks'*, 147.
- 14 C.f. Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *'An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective'*, *ISHI Occasional Papers in Social Change*, no. 2 (Philadelphia, 1976).
- 15 Lionel Caplan, *Power and Status in South Asian Slavery*, in James L. Watson (ed.), *'Asian and African Systems of Slavery'* (Oxford, 1980), 180-3; Amal

Kumar Chattopadhyay, 'Slavery in the Bengal Presidency, 1772-1843' (London, 1977), esp. chs II-IV.; Heather Sutherland, 'Slavery and the Slave Trade in Indonesia, with special reference to Sulawesi, unpublished paper, 1979; Jacqueline Lineton, 'Pasompe Ugi': Bugis Migrants and Wanderers, 'Archipel', X (1975); Shula Marks and Richard Gray, 'Southern Africa and Madagascar, in Richard Gray (ed.), 'The Cambridge History of Africa, Volume 4, c. 1600 - c. 1790' (Cambridge, 1975), 462-8; J.M. Filliot, 'La Traité des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au 18ième siècle' (Paris, 1975); Edward A. Alpers, 'Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International Trade to the Later Nineteenth Century' (London, 1975), 126-7; Allen F. Isaacman, 'Mozambique, the Africanization of a European Institution, The Zambesi Prazos 1750-1902' (Madison, Milwaukee and London, 1972), 83-93; M.D.D. Newitt, 'Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi: Exploration, Land Tenure and Colonial Rule in East Africa', (London, 1975), 187-200. Patrick Harries, 'Slavery, Social Incorporation and Surplus Extraction: The Nature of Free and Unfree Labour in South-East Africa, 'JAH', XXII (1981), 312; H.C.V. Leibbrandt, 'Précis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope, Letters Received, 1695-1709' (London and Cape Town, 1896), 178; for the background see Benedicte Hjelje 'Slavery and Agricultural Bondage in South India in the Nineteenth Century' (Copenhagen, 1967); Dhamar Kumar, 'Land and Caste in South India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency during the Nineteenth Century' (Cambridge, 1965). Leibbrandt, 'Letters Received', passim, and Klaas van der Tempel, 'Wij hebben amok in ons schip', Aziaten in opstand tijdens twee terugreizen op het einde van de achttiende eeuw, in J.R. Bruijn and E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga (eds), 'Muitertij: Oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC' (Haarlem, 1980). Information on this is scarce, largely because the matter was certainly not legal enough to be announced in reports to the Heren XVII. Nevertheless see Armstrong, 'The Slaves, 81; J.L. Hattingh, 'n Ontleding van sekere aspekte van slawerny aan die Kaap in die sewentiende eeu, 'Kronos', I (1979), 40-78; R.C.-H. Shell, 'The Impact of the Cape Slave Trade and its Abolition on the Demography, Regional Distribution and Ethnic Composition of the Cape Slave Population, 1652-1825, Unpublished Paper, New Haven 1979.

17 Shell, Impact.

18 J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong, 'De Maleische archipel als ethnologisch studieveld' (Leiden, 1935), reprinted and translated in P.E. de Josselin de Jong (ed.), 'Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands: A Reader' (The Hague, 1977).

19 For this, see Raymond K. Kent, 'Early Kingdoms in Madagascar, 1500-1700' (New York, 1970).

20 This letter is printed in Franken, Vertolking 68.

21 O.F. Mentzel, 'A Geographical and Topographical Description of the Cape of Good Hope', edited by H.J. Mandelbrote, translated by G.V. Marais and J. Hoge, 3 vols (Cape Town, 1921-1944), 109. The original edition of this book, in German, was published in 1787, and refers to Mentzel's experience at the Cape in the 1730s and 1740s.

22 This man was generally a highly trusted slave of the Company, whose job description in the Company's books was 'tolk voor de justitie en de logie' (interpreter for Justice and the lodge), VOC 4365, 302.

23 Examples of these letters, collected from the Cape archives for the purpose of studying the development of Afrikaans, were published by L.C. van Oordt, 'Die Kaapse Taalgief', 10 nos (1947-1956), the first four were privately printed in Cape Town, the last six were published in 'Tydschrift vir wetenskap en kuns', X - XVI (1950-1956).

24 See above all Andrew Geddes Bain, 'Kaattje kekkelbek; or Life among the Hottentots' (reprinted, Cape Town, 1946), and A. van Selms, 'Arabies-Afrikaanse studies: I, 't Tweetalige Arabiesse en Afrikaanse Kategismus', Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel 14, no. 1 (Amsterdam 1951).

25 J.R. Bruijn, De personeelsbehoefte van de VOC overzee en aan boord, bezien

- in Aziatisch en Nederlands perspectief, 'Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden', XCI, 1(1976), 234-7.
- 26 Cited in M.J. Valkhoff, 'Studies in Portuguese and Creole, with Special Reference to South Africa' (Johannesburg, 1966), 161.
- 27 For examples, see H.B. Gutman, 'Black Family' and Allan Kulikoff, 'The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 'William and Mary Quarterly', XXXV (1978). The arguments presented by Mintz and Price, 'Anthropological Approach', for an early development of Afro-American culture in Surinam are less convincing, since the empirical material they provide is meagre in the extreme.
- 28 See below pp. 19-20.
- 29 Ross, 'Rule of Law'.
- 30 E.G. Mary Karasch, Rio de Janeiro: From Colonial Town to Imperial Capital, 1808-1850, in Robert Ross and G.J. Telkamp (eds), 'Colonial Cities' (The Hague, 1983).
- 31 R.C.-H. Shell, The Establishment and Spread of Islam at the Cape from the Beginning of Company Rule to 1838, B.A. Hons thesis, University of Cape Town, 1974.
- 32 For the baptism of slaves, see Richard Elphick and Robert Shell, Intergroup Relations: Khoikhoi, Settlers, Slaves and Free Blacks, 1652-1795, in Elphick and Giliomee (eds), 'Shaping', 121.
- 33 Valkhoff, 'Studies', 188-92.
- 34 Mintz and Price, 'Anthropological Approach', 7 (their italics).
- 35 In particular as a result of the research of Leonard Guelke in Waterloo, Canada, Robert Shell at Yale, Nigel Worden at Cambridge and in a research project of the Centre for the History of European Expansion of the Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, conducted by Pieter van Duin and myself.
- 36 On manumission, see Elphick and Shell, 'Intergroup Relations', 134-56.
- 37 See Robert Ross, The Occupations of Slaves in Eighteenth Century Cape Town, 'Studies in the History of Cape Town', II (1980).
- 38 C. de Jong, 'Reizen naar de Kaap de Goede Hoop . . . 1791-1797', 3 vols (Haarlem, 1802-3), 143-4.
- 39 W.J. Burchell, 'Travels in the Interior of South Africa', 2 vols, ed. I. Schapera (London, 1953), 28.
- 40 John Barrow, 'An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa', 2 vols (London, 1801-3), I, 41; Anne Barnard, 'The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas from the Cape and Elsewhere, 1793-1803', edited by A.M. Lewin Robinson (Cape Town, 1973), 38.
- 41 Ross, 'Rule of Law'; case 10 contra April van Maccasser, 27 March 1766, VOC 4247; case 15 contra Akir van Batavia c.s., 31 Oct. 1771, VOC 4267.
- 42 'Kaapse Archiefstukken, Resolutiën van de Raad van Politiek', 8 vols so far published (Pretoria and Cape Town, 1857-1975), II, 144 and IV, 365.
- 43 In 1773 there were approximately 1,500 white civilians, 330 free blacks, 2,400 burgher-owned slaves, only 660 company-owned slaves and a company establishment of about 2,000. See opgaaf roll VOC 4276, 'Dag-register', 30 June 1773, VOC 4274, and Armstrong Slaves, 86.
- 44 'Kaapse Plakkaatboek', 6 vols, ed. M.K. Jeffreys (Cape Town, 1944-1951), III, 3.
- 45 Case no. 16 contra September van Bougis, c.s., 4 September 1760, VOC 4223; see also Franken, Vertolking, 67-9.
- 46 RCP, 15 July 1760, 19 Aug. 1760, VOC 4222; 'Kaapse Plakkaatboek', III, 30-1.
- 47 Mentzel, 'Description', III, 110; Anders Sparrman, 'A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope toward the Antarctic Polar Circle, Round the World, and to the Country of the Hottentots and the Caffres from the Year 1772-1776', edited by V.S. Forbes, translated by J. and I. Rudner, 2 vols (Cape Town, 1975-6), II, 258-9; J.S. Stavorinus, 'Reizen van Zeeland over de Kaap de Goede Hoop . . . 1768-1771', 2 vols (Leiden, 1793), II, 181-5.
- 48 This section is based on Shell, Establishment and Spread of Islam, 11.
- 49 Armstrong, Slaves, 106, citing W. Helot to XVII, 4 April 1713, VOC 4068.
- 50 Case no. 14 contra Robbo van Bouton c.s., 5 August 1751, VOC 4185.

- 51 Case against August v.d. Caab c.s., 23 Nov. 1786, VOC 4323, and against Norman, same date. Norman denied the various accusations against him, but the prosecutors were certainly well aware what his reputation in Cape Town was. No doubt his reputation was justified.
- 52 RCP, 18 August 1761, VOC 4225.
- 53 Mentzel, 'Description', II, 125.
- 54 Case 27 contra Flora van Rio de la Goa, of 13 Nov. 1766, VOC 4247.
- 55 Case 27 contra Clara Tant, of 19 Dec. 1737, VOC 4135.
- 56 Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', I, 85.
- 57 Ibid., II, 679-80.
- 58 Case 19 contra Christiaan Lodewijk Clos, 14 October 1745, VOC 4165.
- 59 For typical examples, see Case 10 contra April van Maccassar c.s., 27 March 1766, VOC 4247 and case 18 contra Baatjoe van Boegis, 25 Jan. 1770, VOC 4264.
- 60 Case contra Caatje van de Caab c.s., 2 August 1725, VOC 4099.
- 61 'Kaapse Plakkaatboek', III, 3.
- 62 Case 5 contra Bellesoor van Bengalen c.s., 22 March 1736, VOC 4131; case 9 contra Pieter van de Caab c.s., 26 April 1736, VOC 4131.
- 63 'Gleanings in Africa' (London, 1806), 244.
- 64 Case 7 contra Marlang van Madagascar, 8 May 1727, VOC 4105.
- 65 M.D. Teenstra, 'De Vruchten Mijner Werkzaamheden, Gedurende Mijne Reize, Over de Kaap de Goede Hoop, naar Java en Terug, Over St. Helena, Naar de Nederlanden', edited F.C.L. Bosman (Cape Town, 1943), 195.
- 66 VOC 4276. Like all figures from the opgaaf rolls, the figures for stock, grain and wine must be considered too small. The reality, at a guess, varied between a quarter as large again and three times as large. Slave numbers, however, would have been accurate.
- 67 C. de Bosdari, 'Cape Dutch Houses and Farms', 2nd edition (Cape Town and Amsterdam, 1971), 69.
- 68 Since these were described as leggers, they contained around 575 litres each.
- 69 J.S. Stavorinus, 'Reizen', I, 61-3.
- 70 Case 22 contra January van Bengalen and April van Bengalen, 30 Sept. 1762, VOC 4232.
- 71 Robert Ross, *The Roman-Dutch Law of Inheritance, Landed Property and the Afrikaner Family Structure*, Conference Paper, London 1981.
- 72 Cited in P.J. van der Merwe, 'Die Trekboer, in die Geskiedenis van die Kaap Kolonie (1657-1842)', (Cape Town, 1938), 207.
- 73 Donald Moodie, 'The Record, Or a Series of Official Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa', 2nd edition (Amsterdam and Cape Town, 1960), 18, 20.
- 74 In fact, this can be much cleaner and tidier than would appear from such a description.
- 75 H. Swellengrebel, cited in Van der Merwe, 'Trekboer', 212.
- 76 J. Hoge, Martin Melck, 'Tydescrijft vir Wetenskap en Kuns', XII (1934), 203.
- 77 These figures derive from the opgaaf rolls, VOC 4276.
- 78 Nigel Worden, 'The Distribution of Slaves in the Cape Colony during the Eighteenth Century', *'South African Historical Journal'* X (1982).
- 79 Franklin W. Knight, 'Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century' (Madison, Wisconsin, 1970).
- 80 CA J 39, J 124, J 232, J 318, J 369, J 394. As a result of incomplete opgaaf lists it is impossible to give the full figures for the Colony as a whole, or for the Cape District, where there is the additional problem of distinguishing between Cape Town and the countryside.
- 81 British Parliamentary paper 215 of 1837-8, 'Accounts of Slave Compensation Claims', 243-81, 353, 361. It should be noted that the number of slave-owners is somewhat exaggerated in these figures and the population of slaves living in large groups very slightly underestimated, since a few owners may have filed more than one claim. In the few examples I noted

- (which I did not allow for), however, this never amounted to more than two slaves in the subsidiary claim.
- 82 This sketch is taken from Mentzel, who spent nearly two years in the 1730s living on a wheat farm in the Bottelary and from a manuscript by P.J. de Wit entitled *De burgher-boer of Land Edelman, zijnde een beknopte Zak almanach van het buyten leeven*, which was written for his sons in the last years of Dutch rule. De Wit, who in 1773 was the second-largest slaveholder in the colony, was primarily concerned with growing wine and vegetables. The manuscript is to be found as Accession 852 in the Cape archives.
 - 83 Mentzel, 'Description', III, 162; but see Anders Sparrman, 'Voyage', I, 251-2.
 - 84 Mentzel, 'Description', III, 183.
 - 85 Basil le Cordeur and Christopher Saunders (eds), 'The Kitchingman Papers' (Johannesburg, 1976), 124.
 - 86 H. Lichtenstein, 'Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806', translated by A. Plumtre, 2 vols (Cape Town, 1928-1930), II, 138.
 - 87 Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', I, 131: Case 22 contra Cupido van de Caab, 19 Dec. 1765, VOC 4243; case 13 contra Domingo van Bengalen, 8 Nov. 1781, VOC 10980. Case contra Nicholas Laubscher, 22 Sept. 1785, VOC 4318.
 - 88 See below, Chapter 4.
 - 89 Rob Shell, *personal communication*.
 - 90 See for instance, the comments of Frederick Opperman, below Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 3 THE STRUCTURE OF DOMINATION

- 1 Ross, Occupations, 8.
- 2 Ross, Oppression, 429-30.
- 3 Case contra Moses van Mozambique, CA. CJ 804, 310-14.
- 4 K.M. Jeffreys (ed.), 'Kaapse Archiefstukke, 1778-1782' (Cape Town, 1927-1931), 1782, I, 72.
- 5 Case 1 contra Jan Hendrick Hop, 24 Jan. 1743, VOC 4158. There was indeed a plakkaat against slaves getting arms into their control, even when they were defending stock against wild animals, 'Kaapse Plakkatboek', II, 45.
- 6 Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', II, 771. See also RCP, 22 Sept. 1772, VOC 4269.
- 7 Case 14 contra Augustus van Madagascar, 31 Oct. 1771, VOC 4267.
- 8 Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', I, 373.
- 9 Case 13 contra Theodorus Theeling, 16 May 1843, VOC 4158.
- 10 Case 12 contra Aron van Mallebaar, 2 May 1743, VOC 4158.
- 11 Case 30 contra Simon and Galant van Bougis, 31 Dec. 1761, VOC 4227.
- 12 Case 1 contra Pieter van der Westhuysen, 12 Jan 1769, VOC 4250.
- 13 Mentzel, 'Description', iii, 49-50.
- 14 J.L.M. Franken, 'Uit die Lewe van 'n Beroemde Afrikaner, Christiaan Hendrik Persoon', *Annale van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch*, Year XV, Series B no. 4 (1937); Case 11 contra C.D. Persoon, 14 July 1763, VOC 4237; case 2 contra Baatjoe van Bougis, 25 Jan 1770, VOC 4264.
- 15 See below. note 27.
- 16 Case against Maurits van Mauritius, 8 March 1802, CA CJ 800.
- 17 Case 33 contra Jacob van Madagascar c.s., 21 May 1733, VOC 4123. These expectations were not unreasonable. See below, Chapter 6.
- 18 Case 7 contra Tallone van Bougis, c.s., 18 March 1751, VOC 4185.
- 19 Case contra Anthoni van Goa, 27 March 1721, VOC 4088.
- 20 Case 6 contra Moses van Jamby, 1 March 1766, VOC 4243.
- 21 Case 1 contra Gallent van Madagascar, 11 June 1733, VOC 4120; Case 14 contra Willem van de Caab, 27 Sept. 1740, VOC 4155; Case contra Ontong van Siam, 1 Dec. 1785, VOC 4318.
- 22 Case contra Valentyn van Bengalen c.s., 29 July 1779, VOC 4293.

- 23 Case 14 contra Coridon van Mallabar, 28 May 1739, VOC 4142; case 1 contra Anthony van Bengalen, 31 March 1740, VOC 4146.
- 24 Indeed, in the former of the two cases mentioned above, this is exactly what happened.
- 25 Case 17 contra July van Maccasser, 5 July 1764, VOC 4240; Case 4 contra Absolom van Bougis, 13 April 1775, VOC 4282; case 9 contra Job van Maccasser c.s., 1 July 1779, VOC 4293; case 10 contra Valentyn van Bengalen, 29 July 1779, VOC 4293.
- 26 Case no 8 contra Baatjoe van Timor, 22 March 1744, VOC 4062; case 9 contra Anthony van Bengalen, 2 May 1770, VOC 4264.
- 27 Case 16 contra Mei van Bougis, 27 Aug. 1761, VOC 4227; case 12 contra Anna Bockelenberg, 11 Aug. 1763, VOC 4237.
- 28 Case 3 contra Galant van Malabaar, 4 July 1743, VOC 4158; case 8 contra Floris van Nias, 5 July 1775, VOC 4282.
- 29 Case 13 contra Aaron van Ternaten en January van Rio de la Goa, 15 July 1745, VOC 4165.
- 30 Case 14 contra Hamad van Mandaar, 28 May 1739, VOC 4142; case 21 contra Joseph van Mallebaar, 4 July 1743, VOC 4158; case 8 contra Floris van Nias, 5 July 1775, VOC 4282.
- 31 Case 22 contra Simon van Mallebaar, 20 June 1709, VOC 4063.
- 32 Case 20 contra September van Mandhaar, 13 June 1744, VOC 4162.
- 33 Case 17 contra Lijs van de Caab, 23 Sept. 1734, VOC 3126; case 14 contra Arij van de Caab c.s., 1 Sept. 1740, VOC 4146; case 5 contra Slamath van Mandhaar c.s., 26 April 1742, VOC 4155; case 7 contra David van Maccassar, 5 March 1744, VOC 4162; case 14 contra Phenix van Timor c.s., 15 July 1744, VOC 4165; case 26 contra Fortuyn van Bougis, 15 Dec. 1757, VOC 4209; case 25 contra Katjang van Mandhaar, 19 Nov. 1761, VOC 4227; case 12 contra Kardoos van Madagascar c.s., 30 July 1767, VOC 4251; case contra April van Mallebaar, 6 June 1782, VOC 10981; case contra Sorreman van Batavia, 29 Nov. 1787, VOC 10986; case contra Baatjoe van Bougis c.s., 6 Aug. 1789, VOC 4344.
- 34 Ross, Rule of Law, 7-9.
- 35 See above Chapter 1. For more information see Robert Ross, Cape Town: Synthesis in the Dialectic of Continents, in Robert Ross and G.J. Telkamp (eds), 'Colonial Cities' (The Hague, 1983).
- 36 For their activities, see above, Chapter 2.
- 37 See below, Chapter 6 and 'RCP' 17 August 1738, VOC 4137, 165.
- 38 Each of the magistrates had his own Coffers: VOC 4365, 302. During the Batavian period these matters were further systematised with the appointment of an Onderschout and Politie-Ruiters in each district. See G.W. Eybers (ed.), 'Bepalingen en Instructiën voor het Bestuur van de Buitendistricten van de Kaap de Goede Hoop (1805)' (Amsterdam, 1922), 170-8.
- 39 RCP 7 Aug 1743, VOC 4157, 255.
- 40 P.J. van der Merwe, 'Die Noordwaartse Beweging van die Boere voor die Groot Trek (1770-1843)' (The Hague, 1938), 25-7; Shula Marks, Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, 'JAH' XIII (1972), 70-5; G. Tylden, The Development of the Commando System in South Africa, 1715-1792, 'Africana Notes and News', XII (1959), 303-13; P.E. Roux, 'Die Verdedigingsstelsel aan die Kaap onder die Hollands-Oostindiese Kompanie (1652-1795)' (Stellenbosch, 1925).
- 41 J.L. Hattingh, Slawe en Vryswartes in Die Stellenbosse Distrik, 1679-1795, unpublished paper, 1979, 13.
- 42 CA C 442, LR Stellenbosch to Governor, 16.2.1742, 43-4; case contra Slamath van Mandhaar c.s., 26 March 1742, VOC 4155.
- 43 Case contra August van Madagascar, 19 Jan. 1809, CA CJ 803; this point will be further elaborated in Nigel Worden's thesis.

CHAPTER 4 THE SLAVES AND THE KHOISAN

- 1 For a recent survey see P.T. Robertshaw, *The Origin of Pastoralism in the Cape*, 'South African Historical Journal', X (1978), 117-33.
- 2 This is an ecological frontier, being more or less the western boundary of reliable summer rains. As a result the main crops of the mixed agriculturalists, Bantu-speaking Xhosa and Thembu, could not be grown further west. See Robert Ross, *Ethnic Identity, Demographic Crises and Xhosa-Khoikhoi Relationships*, 'History in Africa', VI (1980).
- 3 Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 25.
- 4 The only crop the Khoikhoi are known actually to have cultivated was dagga, the southern African variety of cannabis. See Brian du Toit, *Man and Cannabis in Africa: A Study of Diffusion*, 'African Economic History', I (1976).
- 5 The problems of nomenclature are discussed in a controversy between Anna Boeseken and Richard Elphick in five articles all entitled *The Meaning, Origin and Use of the Terms Khoikhoi, San and Khoisan*, published in 'Cabo', I and II (1972-1975).
- 6 This is discussed in Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 23-68; for recent archaeological material, see Robertshaw, *Origins of Pastoralism*, and F.R. Schweitzer, *Archeological Evidence for Sheep at the Cape*, 'South African Archeological Bulletin', XXIX (1974).
- 7 Gerrit Harinck, *Interaction between Xhosa and Khoi; Emphasis on the Period 1620-1750* in L.M. Thompson (ed.), *African Societies in Southern Africa* (London, 1969), 163.
- 8 E.E. Mossop (ed.), 'Journals of the Expeditions of the Honourable Ensign Olof Bergh (1682 and 1683) and the Ensign Isaq Schrijver (1689)' (Cape Town, 1931), 233.
- 9 Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', Chapter 8.
- 10 'RCP', I, 203.
- 11 Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 133; Donald Moodie, 'The Record . . .', Pt. I, 364; Robert Ross, *The Changing Legal Position of the Khoisan in the Cape Colony, 1652-1809*, 'African Perspectives', VI (1982).
- 12 'RCP', II, 309.
- 13 See e.g. Case contra Jacob van Madagascar c.s., 18 July 1720, VOC 4086 1.
- 14 E.E. Mossop (ed.), 'The Journals of Brink and Rhenius' (Cape Town, 1947), xii - xiii.
- 15 On these, see Robert Ross, *The !Kora Wars on the Orange River, 1830-1880*, 'JAH', XVI (1975), 561-7; and Teresa Strauss, 'War along the Orange: the Korana and the Northern Border Wars of 1868-9 and 1878-9', *Communications Centre of African Studies, University of Cape Town* (Cape Town, 1979), 1-27.
- 16 See e.g. case contra Pedro of Mosambique c.s., 28 March 1818, CA CJ 812; Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 45.
- 17 'RCP', II, 315; 'Record', Pt I, 374.
- 18 'RCP', II, 307-8.
- 19 Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 227-8.
- 20 P.L. Scholtz, *Die Historiese Ontwikkeling van die Onder-Oliphants River*, 'AB' (1966 I), 38-41.
- 21 C.f. the behaviour of the group led by Augustus van Batavia in 1707. This case is the only one to my knowledge, in which the sentence is available in print. See Ian Colvin (ed.), 'The Cape of Adventure . . .' (London, 1912), 231-6.
- 22 Almost the only real hard evidence for the mortality among the Khoisan during the smallpox epidemic of 1713 refers to the deaths of several captains among the Khoikhoi who lived near the Piquetberg. See Robert Ross, *Smallpox at the Cape of Good Hope in the Eighteenth Century*, in 'African Historical Demography', Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh (1977), 415-6.
- 23 Case 1 contra Tromp van Madagascar c.s., 3 Feb. 1714, VOC 4074.
- 24 Case 2 contra Frederick c.s., 25 Feb. 1779, VOC 4294; see also Sparrman,

- 'Travels' II, 113, who writes of the d'Ganu San (known to the Europeans as the Sneese of Chinese Hottentots) who were notorious 'resisters', that 'many of them . . . had been good servicable slaves', but he was very loose in his use of the term slave, including de facto as well as de jure servitude under it, and his physical description of these people, for what that is worth, would seem to indicate that they were exclusively autochthonous. See also Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 28, 30.
- 25 Case 18 contra Pluto van Mozambique c.s., 20 Oct. 1765, VOC 4243.
- 26 The forthcoming Ph D thesis of Susan Newton-King will greatly illuminate this matter. In the meantime, see her Background to the Khoikhoi Rebellion of 1799-1803, 'SSA', X (1981) and Susan Newton-King and V.C. Malherbe, 'The Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Eastern Cape (1799-1803)', Communications no. 5 (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1981).
- 27 E.C. Godée Molsbergen (ed.), 'Reizen in Zuid-Afrika in de Hollandse Tijd', 4 vols (The Hague, 1916-1932), II, 73.
- 28 'RCC', VI, 81: XVI, 489.
- 29 Leo Fouché and Anna Boëseken (eds), 'Dagboek van Adam Tas', 2nd edition (Cape Town, 1970), 32, 74, 78, 110.
- 30 Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 179.
- 31 This will be demonstrated in the forthcoming work on the eighteenth century Cape economy by Pieter van Duin and Robert Ross.
- 32 Elphick, 'Kraal and Castle', 180.
- 33 Bernhard Krüger, 'The Pear Tree Blossoms: A History of the Moravian Mission Stations in South Africa' (Genadendal, 1966), 53-5, 101-4.
- 34 L.F. Maingard, Studies in Korana History, Customs and Language, 'Bantu Studies' VI (1932), 111; H. Vedder, The Nama, in H. Vedder (ed.), 'The Native Tribes of South West Africa' (Cape Town, 1928), 114-18.
- 35 Moodie, 'The Record', Pt I, 8.
- 36 See e.g. Sec. to Govt. to Landrost Swellendam, 15 Feb. 1771, VOC 4266; and 8 April 1774, VOC 4300.
- 37 Ch. Mentzel, 'Description', II, 126.
- 38 Case 10 contra Theunis Roelofsz van Christiaansand, 16 Oct. 1727, VOC 4104.
- 39 C.G. Botha (ed.), 'Collectanea' (Cape Town, 1924), 114.
- 40 'RCC', XXIX, 442.
- 41 Case contra Ary van Bengalen and Jacob Smit, 13 Sept. 1709, VOC 4063.
- 42 Case contra Simon of Mallebaar, 20 June 1709, VOC 4063.
- 43 Case contra Jacob van Madagascar c.s., 18 July 1720, VOC 4086; case contra Franciscus Xavier van Tranquebar c.s. 22 Jan. 1722, VOC 4091; case 8 contra Jacob van Madagascar c.s. 21 May 1733, VOC 4123; case 1 contra Oranje van Mozambique, 3 Jan. 1765, VOC 4243; case 8 contra April van de Caab, 8 June 1752, VOC 4185; see also Chapter 5 below.
- 44 Case 19 contra Anthony van Mallabaar, 28 May 1744, VOC 4162.
- 45 N.A. Worden, Violence, Crime and Social relationships on Cape slave farmsteads in the Eighteenth Century, unpublished paper, 1980, 11.
- 46 Case 11 contra January van Ambon, 2 March 1744, VOC 4162.
- 47 Case 1 contra Titus van Mocha, 28 Jan. 1746, VOC 4188.
- 48 Case 16 contra Alexander van Mallebaar and Goliath van Rio de la Goa, 5 Sept. 1748, VOC 4176.
- 49 Case 9 contra Martyn Blaauw, 9 May 1765, VOC 4244.
- 50 Case 24 contra Aly van Madagascar, and Valreep van Mallabaar, 19 Sept. 1743, VOC 4158.
- 51 Richard Elphick, The Khoisan to c. 1770, in Elphick and Giliomee (eds), 'Shaping', 31.
- 52 Case 8 contra Varken c.s., 12 May 1735, VOC 4128; case 6 contra Andries van Ceylon, 10 Feb. 1724, VOC 4097.
- 53 Case 7 contra Samson c.s., 5 June 1773, VOC 4275.
- 54 Case 3 contra December van Ball, 19 Feb. 1756, VOC 4835.
- 55 E.g. Case 1 contra Ruiters and Jantje, 1 March 1736, VOC 4131; case 6 contra Dirk, 29 March 1736, VOC 4131.

- 56 E.g. Case contra Gerrit Martinus, 22 Sept. 1785, VOC 4318; case 11 contra Adolf van de Caab, 8 July 1745, VOC 4165.
- 57 E.g. case 18 contra Frederick, 15 Sept. 1746, VOC 4168; case 15 contra Abraham de Vries, 12 Sept. 1782, VOC 4305.
- 58 Elphick, Khoisan, 33.
- 59 Case 10 contra April van Bengalen, 21 Aug. 1770, VOC 4264.
- 60 Ross, Oppression, Sexuality and Slavery.
- 61 Worden, Violence, Crime and Social Relationships, 17.
- 62 Case against Felix van Boegis and Mitta, 7 Aug. 1798, CA CJ 797.
- 63 E.g. Case 14 contra Mey van Nias, 17 Sept. 1750, VOC 4182.
- 64 Case 6 contra Maart van Boegis, 4 July 1776 (sic), VOC 4285. c.f. Sparrman, 'Travels', I, 102.
- 65 Case contra Pieter van Bengalen & October van Mallebaar, 13 Dec. 1725, VOC 4099.
- 66 E.g. Case 3 contra Patentie van Boegis, 3 Feb. 1741, VOC 4151; case 9 contra Cupido van Pondicherry, 19 June 1760, VOC 4223; case 1 contra Japhta van Sambouwa, 6 Jan. 1774, VOC 4275, case 3 contra Caesar van Madagascar, 4 July 1776, VOC 4285; case 7 contra Cupido van de Caab, 8 July 1778, VOC 4291.
- 67 Case contra Daniel Dikkop, 3 Feb. 1787, VOC 4336.
- 68 Case 13 contra Suyverman and Couragie, 16 June 1768, VOC 4255.
- 69 Le Cordeur and Saunders (eds), 'Kitchingman Papers', 50.
- 70 K.M. Jeffreys (ed.), 'Kaapse Archiefstukke 1781', 30; for an actual occurrence, see case contra Jochem van de Caab, 12 Sept. 1800, CA CJ 798, 297.
- 71 Newton-King, Background; See also E.J. Hobsbawm, 'Primitive Rebels' (Manchester, 1959), James C. Scott, 'The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia' (New Haven and London, 1976).
- 72 Case 24 contra Sporhaan van Rio de la Goa and Hendrik, 9 July 1744, VOC 4162; case 31 contra Marcus van Boegis and Cupido, 31 Dec. 1761, VOC 4227.
- 73 Worden, Violence, Crime and Social Relationships, 11.
- 74 Case 9 contra Uithaalter, 26 May 1754, VOC 4196.
- 75 His exclamation against his master is quoted on p. 33 above.
- 76 Case against Maurits van Madagascar c.s., 8 March 1802, CA CJ 800.
- 77 Even if James Read's accusations before the 'Black Circuit' of 1812 did by no means all stand up in a court of law, they are certainly frequently well enough substantiated for a historian. On this see the Circuit report, 'RCC' IX, 54-129; for previous examples, see the work of Susie Newton-King.
- 78 W. Bird, 'State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822', reprint (Cape Town, 1966), 6; John Philip, 'Researches in South Africa', 2 vols (London, 1828), I, 142.
- 79 This will be demonstrated in a forthcoming publication by D. van Arkel, C. Quispel and R. Ross.
- 80 Philip, 'Researches', I, 151-2.
- 81 For a survey of these, see V.C. Malherbe, *Diversification and Mobility of Khoikhoi Labour in the Eastern Districts of the Cape Colony prior to the Labour Law of 1 November 1809*, MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978.
- 82 On this see Colin Bundy, *The Abolition [sic] of the Masters and Servants Act, 'South African Labour Bulletin'*, II (1975); Robert Ross, *Pre-industrial and Industrial Racial Stratification in South Africa*, in Robert Ross (ed.), 'Racism and Colonialism' (The Hague, 1982).
- 83 J.G. de Jongh, *Die ontwikkeling van die Durbanvillegebied met spesiale verwysing na die jare 1800-1853*, MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1977, 71.
- 84 Cited in Stanley Trapido, *The Origins of the Cape Franchise Qualifications of 1853*, 'JAH', V (1964), 53.
- 85 This subject is admirably discussed in V.A. February, 'Mind Your Colour: The Image of the 'Coloured' in South African Literature' (London, 1981); see also, Sheila Patterson, 'Colour and Culture in South Africa' (London, 1953), 165.
- 86 William Dower, 'The Early Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East'

(reprinted Durban, 1978), 17, 19.

CHAPTER 5 HANGLIP

- 1 DR 12.3. 1736, and previous dates for the weather, VOC 4131. RCP 20. 3.1736, VOC 4130, 136; O.F. Mentzel, 'Life at the Cape in the Mid-eighteenth Century; Being the Biography of Rudolph Siegfried Allemann, Captain of the Military Forces at the Cape of Good Hope', translated by M. Greenlees (Cape Town, 1919), 100-1. This fire helped hasten the transition of Cape Town's architecture from thatched to flat roofs. See G.E. Pearse, 'Eighteenth Century Architecture in South Africa', 3rd edition (Cape Town, 1968), 8.
- 2 DR 12.12.1735, VOC 4128, 850; also 'Kaapse Plakkaatboek', II, 160.
- 3 Most of the detailed information concerning this group derives from the following court cases: case 9 of 9 Nov. 1730, contra Lean v.d. Caab c.s., VOC 4115; case 15 of 30 March 1737, contra Mey van Couchin, VOC 4123; case 1 of 17 Jan 1737 contra Alexander v. Bengalen c.s, VOC 4123; case 3 of 31 Jan. 1737 contra Pieter v. d. Caab, case 4 of 28 March 1737 contra Perra van Mallabaar, case 6 of 28 March 1737 contra Aron van Madagascar. I have not attempted to provide indication of precisely where within this mass of material each item of information is to be found, since there is immense repetition and few contradictions, if any.
- 4 'RCP' VII, 122.
- 5 It is not certain whether their relationship had begun before the pair left Cape Town.
- 6 This was made particularly clear by the problems encountered when the Meermin was wrecked on this coast in 1766. See 'RCP' 28.2.1766, VOC 4246.
- 7 'RCP' 27 Nov. 1736, VOC 4130, 223.
- 8 A few references are to be found in the archives of the 'Burgerh Krijgsraad' and the 'Burgerh Raad' in the Cape Archives, for which I am most grateful to Nigel Worden. However, both these collections are very incomplete.
- 9 Case 11 contra Galant van Macassar and Anthony van Macassar, 11 June 1733, VOC 4123.
- 10 Several caves containing archeological deposits deriving from these peoples are known along the Hanglip coast. Dr Andy Smith of the University of Cape Town has begun a programme of excavation in the area.
- 11 Both meanings are to be found in the 'Grote Afrikannse Woordenboek'. Whilst the word is currently more commonly used for 'whelks', it is most unlikely that any group of people living along the coast would have eaten only whelks to the exclusion of the commoner (and larger) limpets.
- 12 Literally 'iron pig roots'. These are the arum lily, *Zantedeschia aethiopica*. See C.A. Smith, 'Common Names of South African Plants', Botanical Survey Memoir, XXXV (Pretoria, 1961), 552.
- 13 This is the generic South African word for the plant food that is gathered in the countryside, rather than being cultivated.
- 14 This is a major theme in the archeology of the Western Cape. See for example J.E. Parkington, 'Seasonal Mobility in the Late Stone Age, 'African Studies', XXXI (1972), 223-43.
- 15 See Richard Price (ed.), 'Maroon Societies', especially pp. 13-15.
- 16 There are numerous descriptions of this experience. One of the best can be found in Lady Anne Barnard, 'Letters', 46.
- 17 Robert Ross, Occupations, 4-6.
- 18 'RCP' 27 Nov. 1736, VOC 4130, 223.
- 19 Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', I, 85; II, 679.
- 20 These were a standard Dutch method of storing wealth, being highly transportable and easily exchangeable. See e.g. Jan de Vries, 'The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age' (New Haven and London, 1974) 218.
- 21 For full details of the various runaways, their owners, origins, eventual fate, see Appendix.
- 22 The parallels with the use of nicknames among other bandit groups are

- clear. See for instance R.C. Cobb, 'Reactions to the French Revolution' (London, 1972), esp. 68, 186-8.
- 23 This was far from an abnormal proportion. See Robert Ross, *Oppression*, 424.
- 24 The Bugis are one of the major ethnic groups on that island.
- 25 These were the farms of Hendrick Thomas, Johannes Swellengrebel and Cornelis Heufke. The fourth owner was Robert Schot, a free black from Bengal.
- 26 The tax lists in question are to be found in VOC 4129.
- 27 See Richard Elphick and Robert Shell, *Intergroup Relations*, 144.
- 28 It included the rich wheat areas of the Tiggerberg and Koeberg and spread north to Saldanha bay.
- 29 Although he did have a farm from which one of his slaves, Titus, stole a gun.
- 30 'RCP', VIII, II, 189.
- 31 Knegten were men who, though officially still in the service of the VOC, had been hired out to farmers and others and were generally employed in supervisory roles. As time went on, men born at the Cape and with full burgher status increasingly came to take on these roles.
- 32 See above, Chapter 4.
- 33 The reference is of course to E.J. Hobsbawm, 'Bandits' (London, 1969).
- 34 See Case 12 of 11 June 1733, contra Alexander v. Bengal and Rebecca v. Mallabar, VOC 4123 and Case 20 of 22 December 1736 contra Alexander v. Bengal, VOC 4131. For his escape see below.
- 35 Case 13 contra Lena van de Caab, 15 Aug. 1737, VOC 4135.
- 36 However, it was able to capture two other slaves who had nothing to do with the Hanglip group. See above.
- 37 Case 9 contra Valentijn van de Caab c.s., 26 May 1735, VOC 4128. This was not unusual since the Cape Town retail trade in foodstuffs was almost entirely in slave hands.
- 38 Robert Ross, *Rule of Law*.
- 39 Case 16 contra Titus van Madagascar, c.s., 27 Oct. 1735, VOC 4128.
- 40 Robert Ross, *Cape Town*, and above.
- 41 Case 5 contra Bellisoer v. Bengalen c.s., 22 March 1736, VOC 4131; case 9 contra Pieter van de Caab c.s., 26 April 1736, VOC 4131.
- 42 Case 1 contra Pieter Coridon c.s., 2 Jan. 1738, VOC 4138.
- 43 'Kaapse Plakkaatboek', II, 159.
- 44 In Dutch 'een opblaser', Cf. modern Afrikaans 'opblaas'.
- 45 Burgerraaden to Jan Swart, 28 Nov. 1736 and *ibid.* to Michiel Hendrik, Michiel Nieman and Jurriaan Appel, same date, both in CA BRD 12, 138, 140. I owe these references to Nigel Worden.
- 46 Information in court, 14 March 1737, VOC 4135.
- 47 Case 24 contra Aly van Madagascar and Valreep van Mallabaar, 19 Sept. 1743, VOC.
- 48 C.F.J. Muller, *Uit die vroegste geskiedenis van Kaap Vals: die voorgeskieiedenis van 'n natuurreservaat*, 'Historia' XVII (1972).
- 49 July 1741, CA C 652, 197.
- 50 Muller, *Kaap Vals*, 81.
- 51 William Paterson, 'A Narrative of four journeys into the Country of the Hottentots and Caffraria in the Years 1777, 1778, 1779' (London, 1789), cited in Muller. 'Kaap Vals', 40.
- 52 Case 11 contra Fortuyn van Sambouwa, 6 June 1765, VOC 4243.
- 53 Sec. to Gov., to LR Stellenbosch, 17 Oct. 1772, VOC 4270.
- 54 Case of 24 Aug. 1786 contra Carolus van Madagascar c.s., VOC 4323.
- 55 V.d. Riet to Gov. 2 April 1797 and 14 April 1797, CA BO 50, 59-61.
- 56 The diaries and papers of Samuel Hudson are housed in the South African Public Library, Cape Town and in the Cape Archives and are being prepared for publication (in the Van Riebeeck society series) by Robert Shell, to whom I am most grateful for this reference.
- 57 The most likely candidate for this cavern are the caves at Dapratsegat on Kogelbaay, unless there is an otherwise unknown cave in the rocky coast

- between Rooiels and Pringel Bay, to the north of the most suggestively named Drostersgat. See Map South Africa 1:50,000 Sheet 3418 BD Hanglip and 3418 BB Somerset West.
- 58 Cf. Lichtenstein, 'Travels', I, 168. Here he is describing Michell's Pass between Wolsley and Ceres.
- 59 Teenstra, 'Vruchten', 89.
- 60 Ibid., 140; they were of course making biltong.
- 61 This qualification derives not from the fetishism that believes that a document is necessarily the purest, or the only pure, form of evidence, but rather from the belief that the statements of the prisoners as to their life on the run is more likely to be factual - though containing other forms of bias - than the stories retailed by a farmer to a foreign traveller after dinner. On the other hand, I would not like to guarantee that confirmatory material does not exist in the Cape archives judicial series which I failed to find.
- 62 See case contra Joumat van de Caab and Salie van Mozambique, 16 Sept. 1819, CA CJ 812; case contra Leander van de Caab and Hester Bandies, 18 March 1819, CA CJ 812; case contra Salomon c.s., 31 Jan. 1820, CA CJ 813; case contra Abraham van de Caab, c.s., 21 Dec. 1820, CA CJ 814. The evidence and confessions in these cases is to be found in CA CJ 564, 495-530, CA 1/SWM 3/22 and CA 1/SWM 10/7, 143-4.
- 63 'RCC' XXI, 142.
- 64 Still by far the best treatment of this theme is J.S. Marais, 'The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937' (London, 1939), Chapter VI.
- 65 This information, deriving from archeological reports in manuscript in the South African Museum, was relayed to me by Dr Andy Smith.
- 66 Muller, Kaap Vals.
- 67 For instance, this is the crux of Anton Blok's criticism of Hobsbawm's concept of social banditry. See his *The Peasant and the Brigand: Social Banditry Reconsidered*, 'Comparative Studies in Society and History', XIV (1972).
- 68 Of course, no one, least of all those with experience of Southern Africa and its historiography, would contend that academic historians have not frequently played a major part in this process of myth making.

CHAPTER 6 THE SLAVES AND THE SAILORS

- 1 Leibbrandt, 'Letters Despatched', 263.
- 2 Cited in David Brion Davis, 'The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823' (Ithaca and London, 1975), 495.
- 3 'Groot Plakkaatboek' (Amsterdam, 1796), IX, 526-8. See also G.G. Visagie, 'Regspiegeling en Reg aan die Kaap van 1652 tot 1806' (Cape Town, 1969), 88; Raymond Buve, *Surinaamse slaven en vrije negers in Amsterdam gedurende de Achttiende Eeuw*, 'Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde', CXIX (1963); Gerrit Schutte, *Zedelijke verplichting en gezonde staatkunde: denken en doen rondom de slavernij in Nederland en Koloniën eind 18e eeuw*, 'Dokumentatieblad Werkgroep 18e Eeuw', (1979), 40-41.
- 4 C. Beyers, 'Die Kaapse Patriotte, gedurende die laatste kwart van die achttiende eeu en die voortleving van hul denkbeeld', 2nd edition (Pretoria, 1967), 333-5.
- 5 Bruijn, *Personneelsbehoefte*, 236: Anna Boëseken, *Die Nederlandse Kommissarissen en die 18de eeuse samenleving aan die Kaap*, 'AYB' (1944), 17-18.
- 6 Ross, *Occupations*.
- 7 C.P. Thunberg, 'Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia . . . between . . . 1770 and 1779, 4 vols, (London, 1795), I, 99.
- 8 On this in general see C.F.J. Muller, *Die geskiedenis van die visserij aan die Kaap tot die middel van die agtiende eeu*, 'AYB' (1942, I); Ross, *Occupations*.
- 9 *Kaapse Plakkaatboek*, II, 114-15, 180-1.
- 10 Case no 8 contra Nicolaas Wijs, 25 March 1738, VOC 2138.

- 11 Case contra Willem van Ceylon and Elias Goosens, 17 May 1725, VOC 4099.
- 12 'Kaapse Archiefstukke, 1779', 41-3; CA CJ 2939, 269f, 293.
- 13 Bruijn, *Personeelsbehoefte*, 220.
- 14 M.P. de Chavonnes and Baron van Imhoff, 'The Reports of de Chavonnes and His Council and Van Imhoff on the Cape', introduction by J.X. Merriman (Cape Town, 1918), 88.
- 15 On this see Gerrit Schutte, *Company and Colonists at the Cape*, in Elphick and Giliomee (eds), 'Shaping', 187.
- 16 J.R. Bruijn and E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga, 'Muitertij: oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC' (Haarlem, 1980).
- 17 The legal records are so full of this material that, in default of full-scale analysis, precise reference is superfluous.
- 18 Joshua Penny, 'The Life and Adventures of Joshua Penny . . .' (New York, 1815).
- 19 Lichtenstein, 'Travels', I, 385; see also below, Chapter 7.
- 20 Case contra Simon of Mallebaar, 20 June 1709, VOC 4063.
- 21 'RCP', 18 May 1773, VOC 4274.
- 22 'RCP', 24 July 1753, VOC 4191, f. 471.
- 23 Jaap R. Bruijn, *Between Batavia and the Cape: Shipping Patterns of the Dutch East India Company*, 'Journal of Southeast Asian Studies', XI (1980), 252-6.
- 24 'Kaapse Archiefstukken, 1778', 59, 255.
- 25 It is mentioned in the essay by Samuel Hudson on Slaves to be found in the Cape archives which Robert Shell is preparing for publication. I must thank Robert Shell for showing me this essay.
- 26 Case 4 contra Christiaan Schoonheer and Cootje van de Caab, 10 March 1735, VOC 4128; case contra Dam van Maccassar, 12 Sept. 1743, VOC 4158.
- 27 'RCP', 8 April 1737, VOC 4134; 275; 6 Feb. 1738, VOC 4134, 458; 20 Feb. 1739, VOC 4137, 228; 5 Feb. 1740, VOC 4141, 443; 14 March 1741, VOC 4149, 487; 5 March 1742, VOC 4149, 684; 16 Feb. 1745, VOC 4164, 217.
- 28 'Kaapse Archiefstukken, 1779', 111.
- 29 He had been sent by his owner to Colombo, apparently to be sold but the Court of Justice there gave him his freedom, 'RCP' 26.5.1772, VOC 4269: Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', II, 425.
- 30 Mentzel, 'Life at the Cape', 12-27; Thunberg, 'Travels', I, 73.
- 31 'RCP' 17 May 1742, VOC 4153, 326; 12 March 1743, VOC 4157, 195; cases contra Joseph van der Cust, 7 June 1742, VOC 4155, Thomasz Jansz van der Caab, 22 Aug. 1743, VOC 4158, Jan van der Caab, 18 Feb. 1751, VOC 4185, Jacob van der Caab 20 April 1752, VOC 4190.
- 32 'RCC' VI, 453.
- 33 It is interesting to speculate that one of his shipmates might have been the Jamaican ex-slave Charlie Bobbie who thirteen years earlier had left his master's service (in Britain) and taken service as a cook in this very frigate. See Edward Brathwaite, 'The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica' (Oxford, 1971), 159.
- 34 CA GH 48/2/36, 674-92.
- 35 CA GH 48/2/36, 668-73, 694-712.
- 36 Roger Buckley, 'Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815' (New Haven and London, 1979), 78-9.
- 37 'RCC' XII, 310-11; CA GH 48/1/2, 149, decision of 30 Nov. 1822.
- 38 Case 22 contra Thomas van Mallabaar, 24 Nov. 1746, VOC 4168.
- 39 The number of cases of sailors brawling in Cape Town's bars is too great for detailed reference to be necessary.
- 40 Leibbrandt, 'Requesten', I, 85, II, 679-80.
- 41 Robin Hallett, 'Violence and Social Life in Cape Town in the 1900s', 'Studies in the History of Cape Town', II (1980): Don Pinnock, 'From Argie Boys to Skolly Gangsters: The Lumpenproletariat Challenge of the Street-corner Armies in District Six, 1900-1951', 'Studies in the History of Cape Town', III (1980). The best evocation of life in twentieth-century District Six is Alex La Guma's novel, 'A Walk in the Night' (London, 1962).

CHAPTER 7 THE SLAVES AND THE AFRICANS

- 1 On this, see particularly, Richard Hofstadter, 'The Progressive Historians' (New York, 1968), 56-8. It could be argued that the close relations between the runaway slaves and the Indians in the USA, especially in the south-east, meant that this was the case there too. See Peter H. Wood, 'Black Majority Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion' (New York, 1974) and Kenneth W. Porter, Relations between Negroes and Indians within the Present Limits of the United States, 'Journal of Negro History' XVII (1932) and Florida Slaves and Free Negroes in the Seminole War, 1835-1842, 'Journal of Negro History', XXVIII (1943).
- 2 Case 14 contra Baatjoe van Samboua c.s., 18 May 1746, VOC 4168.
- 3 The number is somewhat debatable. One of the slaves claimed there were only 39 in the party, but Jacob, in his confession, gave a list of the various owners from whom the runaways had absconded, leading to the total of 45 escapers.
- 4 G. McC. Theal, 'History of South Africa under the Administration of the Dutch East India Company, (1652-1795)', 2 vols (London, 1897), I, 406, 411.
- 5 Case against Ary van Bengalen and Jacob Smit, 13 Sept. 1709, VOC 4063.
- 6 Case contra Job van Madagascar c.s., 1 Aug. 1779, VOC 4293; Case 24 contra Aly van Madagascar, 19 Sept. 1743, VOC 4158.
- 7 Nigel Worden, Rural Slave Ownership in the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein Districts of the Cape Colony during the Eighteenth Century, unpublished paper, 1980.
- 8 D.G. van Reenen, 'Die Joernaal van Dirk Gysbert van Reenen', 1803, edited by W. Blommaert and J.A. Wiid (Cape Town, 1937), 289.
- 9 Moodie, 'Record', V, 54.
- 10 Sir George Cory, 'The Rise of South Africa', 6 vols, 2nd edition (Cape Town, 1966), III, 18, citing Grahamstown Archives, letter of 19 Nov 1824.
- 11 Moodie, 'Record', III, 19.
- 12 Lichtenstein, 'Travels', I, 385; van Reenen, 'Joernaal', 101.
- 13 Van Reenen, 'Joernaal', 121.
- 14 Van Oordt, 'Kaapse Taalarchief', III, 17.
- 15 Cuyler to Govt. 7 Dec. 1808, CA Moodie Afschriften 12, 110, I owe this reference to Canby Malherbe.
- 16 H.B. Giliomee, Die Administrasietydperk van Lord Caledon (1807-1811), 'AYB' (1966, II), 321.
- 17 J.S. Marais, 'Maynier and the First Boer Republic' (Cape Town, 1944), 25-6.
- 18 H.A. Reyburn, Studies in Cape Frontier History: V Reprisals, 'The Critic' (1935), 59.
- 19 Sparrman, 'Travels', II, 126.
- 20 Moodie, 'Record', V, 41.
- 21 O.F. Raum, A Topological Analysis of Xhosa Society, in H.J. Greschat and H. Jungraithmayr (eds), 'Kalima Na Dini, Wort und Religion' (Stuttgart, 1969), 332; J.B. Peires, Xhosa Expansion before 1800, 'SSA' VI (1976), 9; Robert Ross, Ethnic Identity.
- 22 Raum, Topological Analysis, 329.
- 23 Ludwig Alberti, 'Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa in 1807', translated by William Fehr (Cape Town, 1968), 72.
- 24 Tony Kirk, Progress and Decline in the Kat River Settlement, 1829-1854, 'JAY', XIV (1973), 415. Nzulu Lwazi (Pseudonym for S.E.K. Mohayi), Unquika, 'Umteteli wa Bantu', 20 August 1932, translation by Jeff Peires; see also Resurgam, Somana, Hlangawise, Late Headman of Kentani: An Appreciation, Umteteli wa Bantu, 4 August 1932; J. Hare to G. Napier, 28 August 1843, CA GH 8/12. I owe thanks to Jeff Peires not only for providing me with all these references, but also for alerting me to Ngxuknmeshe/Hermanus in the first place.
- 25 J.E. Alexander, 'An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa', 2 vols (London, 1838), I, 5.
- 26 Robert Ross, The 'Kora Wars, 565.

- 27 The concept of the frontier zone for this area was developed by Martin Legassick in his thesis, *The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries: 1780 - 1840: The Politics of a Frontier Zone*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles (1970).
- 28 Heinrich Vedder, 'South West Africa in Early Times', translated by C.G. Hall (London, 1938), 171-2.
- 29 George Thompson, 'Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa', edited by V.S. Forbes, 2 vols (Cape Town, 1967-8), II, 14.
- 30 Martin Legassick, *The Northern Frontier to 1820: The Emergence of the Griqua People*, in Elphick and Giliomee (eds), 'Shaping', 286; see also case against Tromp van Madagascar c.s., 3 Feb 1714, VOC 4073.
- 31 Strauss, 'War along the Orange', 72.
- 32 John Campbell, Cape Town, 28 Jan. 1814, 'RCC' IX, 319.
- 33 See e.g. Thom to Directors L.M.S., 25 Jan. 1817, Archives of the Congregational Council for World Missions (formerly London Missionary Society), School of Oriental and African Studies, London, Philip Papers, 1/1/D.
- 34 See *Ibid.* and, in more detail, Stockenström to Anderson, 12 Dec. 1816, 'RCC' XI, 224 and Stockenström to Bird, 14 Dec. 1816, 'RCC' XI, 228-30.
- 35 John Campbell, 'Travels in South Africa, Undertaken on Behalf of the London Missionary Society, being a Narrative of a Second Journey in the Interior of that Land', 2 vols (London, 1822), II, 356.
- 36 Roger Wagner, Coenraad de Buys in Transorangia, 'SSA', IV (1974), 1.
- 37 Wagner, Coenraad de Buys, 4-5, describes the various accounts that Arend gave of his trip.
- 38 Thompson, 'Travels', I, 99, 129.
- 39 'A.K.', Frederick Opperman, Cape Slave, 'Christian Express' (July, 1891), reprinted in Francis Wilson and Dominique Perrot (eds), 'Outlook on A Century' (Lovedale, 1973), 41-9, where 'A.K.' is identified as a pseudonym for Stormont.
- 40 This is recorded in the Steytler collection, Orange Free State Archives.
- 41 H.J. van Aswegen, *Die verhouding tussen Blank en Nie-Blank in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902*, 'AYB' (1971 - actually 1977), 63-7.
- 42 The best description of these wars is still Vedder, 'Early Times', although this is crying out for revision.
- 43 W.F. Lye, *The Distribution of Sotho Peoples after the Difaqane*, in L.M. Thompson (ed.), 'African Societies in Southern Africa' (London, 1969), esp. 203-4, describing the process whereby the Sotho state incorporated refugees.
- 44 Peter Sanders, 'Moshoeshe, Chief of the Sotho' (London, 1975), 47-8, 77.
- 45 The most notable of these figures, for instance, was named Adam January (alias Apé), a classic slave name. On him see Robert Ross, 'Adam Kok's Griquas: A study in the Development of Stratification in South Africa' (Cambridge, 1976), 71, 85, and the sources cited there.

CHAPTER 8 THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REBELLION

- 1 This surely is the thrust of Genovese's argument in 'From Rebellion to Revolution'.
- 2 Case 12 of 22 October 1772, VOC 4271.
- 3 Robert Percival, 'An Account of the Cape of Good Hope' (London, 1804; reprinted New York, 1969), 307.
- 4 On this see G.J. Schutte, *Zedelijke verplichting and his 'De Nederlandse Patriotten en de Koloniën: Een onderzoek naar hun denkbeelden en optreden, 1770 - 1800'* (Groningen, 1974).
- 5 On this see Beyers, 'Kaapse Patriotte' and Robert Ross, *The Rise of the Cape Gentry*, 'SSA', XII (1981).
- 6 This description is based on D.C. Joubert, *Die Slawe-opstand van 1808 in die Koe-Tijgerberg en Swartland distrikte*, unpublished MA thesis,

- UNISA (1946) and on the sentence of the insurgents, printed in 'RCC' VI, 408-41. Only direct quotations are identified with full page references.
- 7 Rightly. See Shell, Impact of the Cape Slave Trade.
 - 8 'RCC' VI, 319-20; also Joubert, Slawe-opstand, 8-9.
 - 9 Barrow. 'Travels', II, 342; Sparrman, 'Voyage', I, 90; Alexander, 'Expedition', I, 12; W.B.E. Paravicini di Capelli, 'Reizen in de Binnenlanden van Zuid-Afrika' (Cape Town, 1965), 212-13; G.McC. Theal (ed.), 'Belangrijke Historische Dokumenten over Zuid-Afrika, Deel III' (London, 1911), 328.
 - 10 de Jongh, Durbanville, 44.
 - 11 Opgaaf for 1809, CA J42, 13.
 - 12 Cited in Joubert, Slawe-opstand, 21.
 - 13 Tom Lodge, The Cape Town Troubles, March-April 1960, 'Journal of South African Studies', IV (1978).
 - 14 'RCC' VI, 434-5.
 - 15 On this see Shell, Impact of the Cape Slave Trade.
 - 16 He was almost certainly the uncle of the Petrus Gerhardus Louw on whose farm the insurrection had begun.
 - 17 'RCC' VI, 420; Joubert, Slawe-opstand, 70.
 - 18 Joubert, Slawe-opstand, 9-10.
 - 19 Ibid., 22.
 - 20 It is notable that the number either tried or released exceeds by fourteen the number said to have been arrested in the first sweep. Clearly more than just the principals got away from the first round-up, but were later arrested.
 - 21 'RCC' VII, 7.
 - 22 See the events described in Chapter 4 above.
 - 23 See Michael Craton, The Late Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies, 1806-1832, 'Past and Present', 85 (1979), 105-8.
 - 24 'RCC' XX, 315.
 - 25 'RCC' XV, 336-42; on these measures, see also Mary Rayner, Slaves, Slave-Owners and the British State: The Cape Colony 1806-1834, 'SSA', XII (1981), 15-32.
 - 26 P.J. van der Merwe, 'Trek, Studies oor die Mobiliteit van die Pioniersbevolking aan die Kaap' (Cape Town, 1945), 120-3; Theal (ed.), 'Belangrijke Historische Dokumenten', III, 244-5.
 - 27 Opgaaf list, Worcester, 1825, CA J 421.
 - 28 G. and G. Fagan, 'Church Street in the Land of Waveren' (Tulbagh, 1975), 35.
 - 29 The witness, Lea, used the word 'volk' ('people') which has the connotation 'labourer' in Afrikaans, 'RCC' XX, 197, 291.
 - 30 Serial monogamy was of course common, and necessary when there was such a danger of the separation of man and wife by sale.
 - 31 In fact he had his own house some way away from the main buildings.
 - 32 'RCC' XX, 297.
 - 33 Ibid., 212-213.
 - 34 Ibid., 214.
 - 35 Ibid., 215.
 - 36 Ibid., 245.
 - 37 Ibid., 221.
 - 38 Ibid., 216.
 - 39 Even though slavery was abolished in the Cape Colony on 1 December 1834, for the first four years thereafter the ex-slaves were forced to work for their masters under virtually the same conditions as theretofore, in theory as training for their new freedom. On this see Marais, 'Cape Coloured People', 186-98, E.C.W. Hengherr, Emancipation - and After: A Study of Cape Slavery and the Issues Arising from it, 1830-1843, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town (1953); I.E. Edwards, 'Towards Emancipation: A Study in South African Slavery' (Cardiff, 1942), 178-86.
 - 40 Davis, 'Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution', 36.
 - 41 'RCC' XX, 208.

- 42 Ibid., 209; This practice had only become enshrined in the law in 1826, although as part of the Trinidad Ordinance in Council, it had certainly been a subject of discussion earlier, See Edwards, 'Towards Emancipation', 227, 235. It was certainly not unknown in the eighteenth century, see Elphick and Shell, Intergroup Relations, in Elphick and Giliomee (eds), 'Shaping', 144.
- 43 Cited in Edwards, 'Towards Emancipation', 93.
- 44 'RCC' XX, 209.
- 45 Ibid., 210; Barend is described as his 'brother' in one letter, *ibid.*, 304, but, according to the C.C. de Villiers, 'Geslagsregisters van die Ou Kaapse Families', 2nd edition revised by C. Pama, 3 vols (Cape Town and Amsterdam, 1966), II, 593, W.M. van der Merwe had no brother Barend.
- 46 In 1823, for the first time, a capitation tax was levied on slaves. In Tulbagh district, the yield in 1824 was Rds 4198. The rate was 2 Rds per adult male, 1 Rd per adult female and 4 sk for each child. See 'RCC' XX, 126, 370.
- 47 Ibid., 210.
- 48 Ibid., 277.
- 49 Ibid., 192.
- 50 Ibid., 191.
- 51 He was almost certainly Johannes Hendrick Janse van Rensburg Willemsz., a thirty year old bachelor; de Villiers, 'Geslagsregisters', II, 774.
- 52 'RCC' XX, 282.
- 53 Ibid., 223.
- 54 Ibid., 311.
- 55 Ibid., 331.
- 56 Ibid., 407.
- 57 Ibid., 385-7.
- 58 See the Reports of the Protector of Slaves, Public Record Office, London, CO 53/48, 120; for an even later instance, perhaps post-dating emancipation, Alexander, 'Expedition', I, 29.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

- 1 Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban to Spring Rice (the British Colonial Secretary, cited in Edwards, 'Towards Emancipation', 175; cf. W.A. Green, 'British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865' (London, 1976). It should be noted that abolition at the Cape was a few months later than in the British West Indian Colonies.
- 2 J.G. Steytler, Remembrances from 1832-1900, 'Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library', XXV (1971). Although Steytler remembered this as occurring at abolition, it must have been the end of apprenticeship, as in 1834 Victoria was not yet on the British throne.
- 3 Hengherr, Emancipation - and after; Marais, 'Cape Coloured People', ch. VIII.
- 4 Ross, 'Adam Kok's Griquas', 109.
- 5 For instance, in 1977, a farmer from near Worcester was sentenced to three years in gaol for flogging and stringing up two of his labourers so severely that one of them died. The other claimed compensation. 'Die Burger', 6 Dec. 1979.
- 6 Personal investigation, 1979.
- 7 By Gavin Stevens in 'Intruder in the Dust', cited in C. Vann Woodward, 'The Burden of Southern History' (Baton Rouge, 1968), 38.
- 8 For an attempt to conceptualise this, see the forthcoming joint work by Dick van Arkel, Chris Quispel and myself.
- 9 W.M. MacMillan, 'The Cape Colour Question: A Historical Survey' (London, 1927), 243-6.
- 10 This is very clearly brought out in the 'Masters and Servants Blue Book', published by the Cape Government in 1849.
- 11 R.E. van der Ross, 'The Founding of the African Peoples' Organization

- in Cape Town in 1903 and the role of Dr Abdurahman' (Pasadena, 1975), 17, cited in February, 'Mind Your Colour', 179.
- 12 On this episode see Edward Roux, 'Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa', 2nd edn, (Madison, Milwaukee and London, 1966), 232-41. H.J. and R.E. Simons, 'Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950' (Harmondsworth, 1969), 401, 424-30, in which a certain ambivalence as to the party membership of Ndobe and Tonjeni is shown.
 - 13 Roux, 'Time Longer than Rope', 233.
 - 14 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, in the Penguin edition, 'Surveys from Exile' (Harmondsworth, 1973), 239.
 - 15 This contrast is seen, for instance, by George M. Frederickson, 'White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History' (New York, 1981), 263. I am not competent to judge whether the analysis of the importance of the slave community for later nationalism in the USA is accurate or exaggerated.

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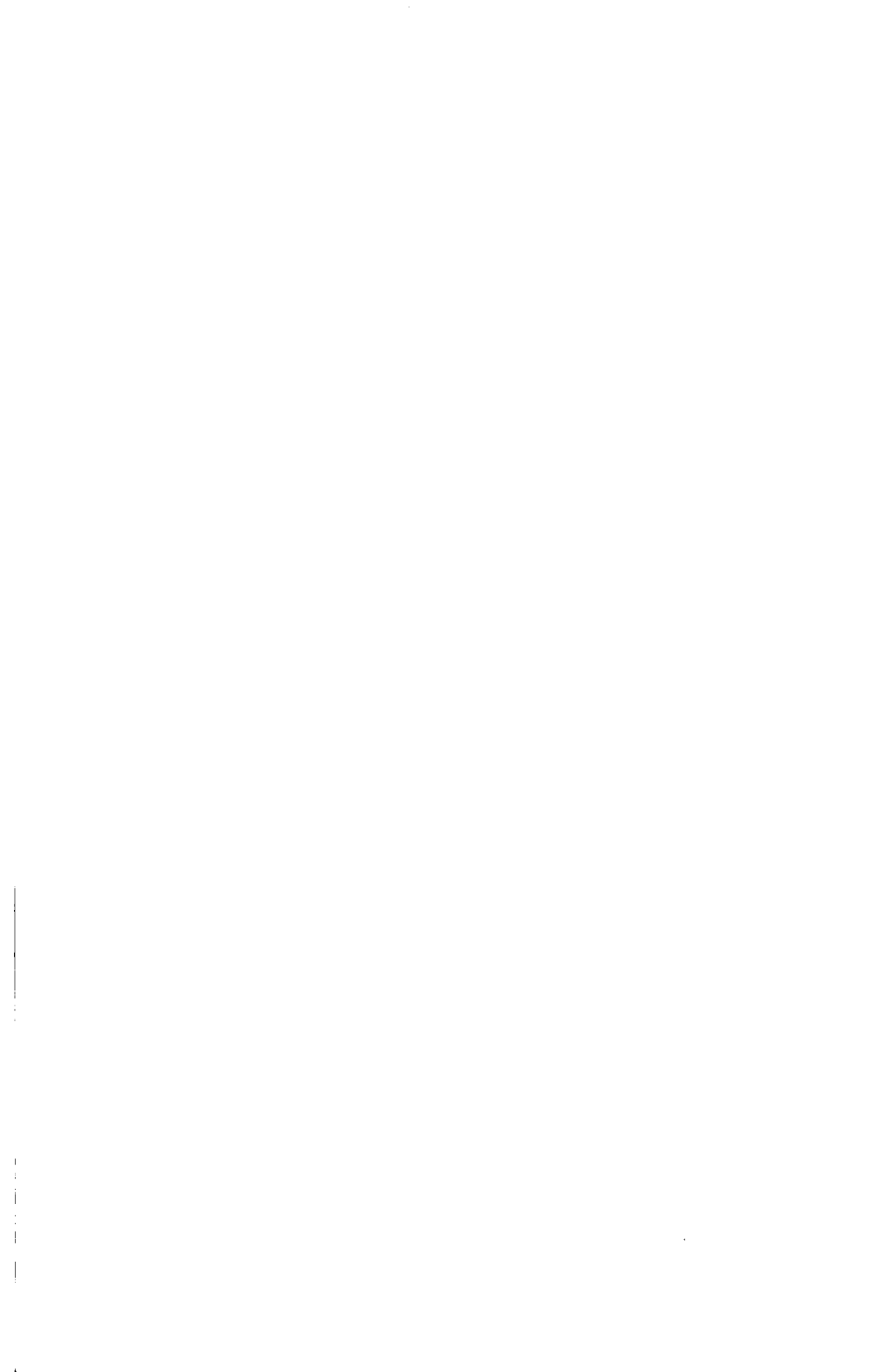
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